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THE DESIRE OF THE WOMAN: GENESIS 3:16 REVISITED

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Abstract

This paper sought to interpret *tᵉšûqâ* as used in Gen 3:16 through an analysis of structure and clause functions within the pericope (3:14-19) and to relate the text to the theme of conflict. The study focused on the divine pronouncement against the woman (3:16) after the entrance of sin. As part of the pronouncement, God told the woman that her desire (*tᵉšûqâ*) shall be against her husband but he shall rule (*māšal*) over her (3:16b). Placing 3:16b within the bigger structure, this study concludes that the woman's "desire" (*tᵉšûqâ*) and the man's "rule" (*māšal*) in 3:16 occur in a context where the woman's desire is to control the man, but the man was mandated to rule over her. This conclusion is further applied to the theme of conflict from a theological and practical perspective.

Keywords: *tᵉšûqâ, māšal*, Gen. 3:16, Conflict, Women, text-semantics

1. Introduction

Genesis 3:14-19 presents divine pronouncements against the serpent, the woman, and the man following the eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.[1] In verse 16, the term *tᵉšûqâ* is used that has received two major differing interpretations among scholars.[2] One interpretation,

[1]These verses are often understood as a curse, though the word "curse" is used only on the serpent (v. 14) and the land (v. 17). While some of the pronouncements are negative, there is a picture of hope for the human race as God promises to crush the head of the serpent through the seed of the woman.

[2]There are other interpretations, including: "desire that makes her the willing slave of man" (John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* [Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 1930], 82); "psychological dependence on man" (Gini Andrews, *Your Half of the Apple: God and the Single Girl* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1972], 51); "desire bordering upon disease" C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, The Pentateuch [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1886],

represented by Susan Foh, is that *tᵉšûqâ* denotes the woman's desire to contend with and exercise control over the man. Foh states:

> Contrary to the usual interpretations of commentators, the desire of the woman in Gen 3:16b does not make the wife (more) submissive to her husband so that he may rule over her. Her desire is to contend with him for leadership in their relationship. This desire is a result of and a just punishment for sin, but it is not God's decretive will for the woman. Consequently, the man must actively seek to rule his wife.[3]

The second and traditional position is that *tᵉšûqâ* refers to the woman's longing for intimacy from the man. This is represented by Irvin A. Busenitz:

> Lexical and etymological studies of the words of Gen 3:16b yield little help for interpreting the meaning of the woman's desire for [the] man. Contextual evidence, however, indicates that the woman's desire for the man and his rule over her are not the punishment but the conditions in which the woman will suffer punishment. Although there are linguistic and thematic parallels between Gen 3:16b and Gen 4:7, contextual differences and interpretive problems indicate that Gen 4:7 cannot be used to interpret the meaning of 'desire' in Gen 3:16. Cant 7:10[11] provides a better context for understanding the word. It may be concluded that, in spite of the Fall, the woman will have a longing for intimacy with man involving more than sexual intimacy.[4]

Apart from Gen 3:16, *tᵉšûqâ* occurs in only two other places in the Old Testament (OT): Gen 4:7 is used to support the interpretation of *tᵉšûqâ* as "desire to control," while Song of Solomon 7:10[11] is used to support the

1:103); the woman's desires as subservient to her husband's, (see John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948], 1:172; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* [Jerusalem: The Magna Press, 1961], 165; and woman's economic dependence on man, (H. G. Stigers, *A Commentary on Genesis* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976], 80; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, The JPS Torah commentary [Philadelphia, PA: Jewish, 1989], 28).

[3]Susan Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1974/75): 383. See also Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 251.

[4]Irvin A. Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man: Genesis 3;16 Reconsidered," *Grace Theological Journal* 7.2 (1986): 203. See also See Richard M. Davidson, "The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 3," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26/2 (1988): 129-130.

"sexual intimacy" interpretation. As Busenitz has noted, lexical and etymological study alone cannot resolve the problem.[5] Gordon J. Wenham has raised a similar concern:

> Such an interpretation of 'urge' is required in the very closely parallel passage in 4:7, where sin's urge is said to be for Cain, but he must master it. Here in 3:16 woman's desire for independence would be contrasted with an injunction to man to master her. There is a logical simplicity about Foh's interpretation that makes it attractive, but given the rarity of the term 'urge' . . . certainty is impossible.[6]

It appears that either of the two major interpretations has its own interests in the feminism divide[7] and this has eventually made lexical and contextual considerations subservient to scholarly presuppositions. In this brief reexamination of the nuance of *tᵉšûqâ*, it is recommended that the validity of any interpretation of Gen 3:16 must be based not on mere intra-clausal and proof-text study (i.e., lexical semantics) but rather on an analysis of structure and clause functions (i.e., text semantics) within the pericope. We begin with a sketch of the literary context, propose a structure for verses 14-19 through which we suggest a pragmatic function of verse 16b which contains the words *tᵉšûqâ* "desire" and *māšal* "rule," and then discuss the theme of conflict within the context of verses 15-16.

2. The Context

At the end of Gen 2, the man and the woman are in the Garden of Eden, having received the instructions on what to do ("tend and keep"), what to eat ("of every tree"), and what not to eat ("the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"). In chap. 3, the serpent appears in the narrative. While the man's activity and initiative are the focus in chap. 2, chap. 3 focuses more on the woman's initiative. The serpent relates to the woman as if she were

[5]Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man," 203.

[6]Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, 1998), 81-82.

[7]Cf. Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?" 376.

the leader in the garden and she accepts such responsibility.[8] It has been suggested that the serpent's purpose was to overthrow the man through the woman.[9] And in fact, the serpent succeeded. To be sure, both the man and the woman failed to exercise their authority; if the woman failed to exercise her authority over the serpent, the man also failed to exercise his leadership role by yielding to the woman against the Lord's command.[10] And the Lord, in pronouncing the sentence, would emphasize the man's surrender of his leadership role to the woman: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife" (v. 17).[11] Whether from the standpoint of the serpent or the woman, sin entered the human family through usurpation of authority.[12] And issues of authority and control will surface in the divine

[8]John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "An Overview of Central Concerns: Questions and Answers," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 73.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 82; Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 95-112.

[11]Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 82, notes that "the sentence on the man is the longest and fullest, since he bore the greatest responsibility in following his wife's advice instead of heeding God's instructions personally given to him." See also Craig L. Blomberg, "Women in Ministry: A Complementarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 131; John Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 37.

[12]This is based on the understanding that God had given leadership responsibility to the man. Though Gen 2 illustrates that man and woman are created equal in essence [the woman is the only comparable partner to the man (2:18-20), both share the same nature and so can be joined in holy matrimony (vv. 22-24), etc], there is a marked focus on the man in the chapter. It appears that divine actions in Gen 2, both before and after the creation of the woman, set the platform for male leadership in the garden. The man takes priority of place not only in terms of creation sequence but also in terms of responsibility within the human family. This primary leadership function of the man does not disrupt the dominion mandate given to the man and the woman in the human-animal relationship. Though there is a school of thought that argues that there is sameness in creation, in function, family function, and in God's sight between the male and female [See Linda L. Bellevillle, Women in Ministry: an egalitarian perspective, in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 19-103], the leadership function of man in Gen 2 is deducible from several factors. First, the man is the one directly charged with oversight responsibility in the garden (2:15). Second, the woman is said

pronouncements that follow (3:14-19). If the serpent usurped the woman's authority as a ruler over the animals including the serpent itself, then God would restore her authority by enabling her "seed" to bruise the serpent's head (v. 15). Similarly, if the woman usurped the man's role as head of the human family, then God would restore that role by making him "rule" over the woman (v. 16).

3. Structure of Genesis 3:14-19 and Function of 3:16b

The key words in this verse are *tᵉšûqâ* "desire" and *māšal* "rule." The word *tᵉšûqâ* appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible (HB) (Gen 3:16; 4:7; Song 7:10). In Gen 3:16, *tᵉšûqâ* is often understood as "sexual desire."[13] This interpretation is influenced largely by the usage of the term in Song 7:10, where it occurs in a man-woman relationship context. Within the context of Gen 3, advocates find support for this interpretation by arguing that since verse 16 is replete with conception and birth imagery, *tᵉšûqâ* must refer to woman's sexual desire. However, the exact relationship between the woman's "sexual desire" and the man's "rule" (*māšal*) is often not delineated. Although such an interpretation is possible, another interpretation has strongly been defended, namely that *tᵉšûqâ* denotes a woman's desire for control over the man. This interpretation receives

> to be created for the man as his "help" (2:18). Craig L. Blomberg observes rightly that "what makes an *ʾēzer* a 'helper' in each context is that he or she comes to the aid of someone else who bears the primary responsibility for the activity in question. It may be significant that the man is never said to be an *ʾēzer* of his wife." [Craig L. Blomberg, "Women in Ministry: A Complementarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 129-130.]. Third, before the creation of the woman the man is given the responsibility to name the animals (vv. 18-20). [Thomas R. Schreiner, "Women in Ministry: Another Complementarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 295]. Fourth, the woman is not only created "out of man" but also "brought" to the man (2:22-23). Finally, in this verse the man appreciates the woman as invaluable gift from God and names her. We conclude that whereas Gen 1 highlights the equality of man and woman - God creates them equal in nature (i.e., image of God) and places stewardship responsibility on the two over the earth, Gen 2 speaks of equality of man and woman as comparable partners but entrusts the man with leadership responsibility within the human family.

[13]See Davidson, "The Theology of Sexuality," 129-130; Linda A. Belleville, "Women in Ministry: An Egalitarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 33.

strong support from Gen 4:7, an adjacent text that repeats keywords from 3:16b in a context where sin desires to control Cain. If scholars continue to focus on mere word studies, they will only return to the two main positions represented by Foh and Buzinitz, and consensus will remain far from sight. The meaning of *tᵉšûqâ* is often studied without due consideration given to the structure of the *pericope* (vv. 14-19). Lexical considerations, however, are always incomplete without proper study at the text level (e.g., context, structure, and pragmatic functions).

The following structure can be observed in Gen 3:14-19:

A Serpent: harsh conditions, change in food, and death (v. 14)
  B Serpent vs. Woman: strife between serpent and woman's seed (v. 15)
    C Woman: harsh conditions—labor - pain in childbirth (v. 16a)[14]
  B[1] Woman vs. Man: strife between woman and man (v. 16b)
A[1] Man: harsh conditions, struggle for food, and death (vv. 17-19)

From this structure, we can observe similarities in the pronouncements against the serpent and the man (**A** and **A**[1]). It will also be noted that the progression of the pronouncements is not simply Serpent—Woman—Man, even though this is what most interpreters seem to observe. Rather, the progression is Serpent—Serpent vs. Woman—Woman—Woman vs. Man—Man. Important elements are missed if one ignores the complete progression. It is critical to proper understanding of the question of this study to note that the divine pronouncement upon the woman-man relationship in **B**[1] ("And against your husband [is] your desire, but he shall rule over you," v. 16) parallels the judgment upon the serpent-woman relationship in **B** ("He [woman's seed] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel," v. 15).[15] Both sentences describe relationships characterized by strife and desire for mastery. The idea of strife is explicit in verse 15 as the Lord Himself introduces enmity between the woman and

[14]Among other things, the structure above shows that the woman stands at the center of the divine judgment because it was through her that sin entered the human family. At the same time, the focus of the divine judgment upon the woman's childbirth gives hope to humanity, for it is through her "seed" that the serpent will be destroyed.

[15]See Jacques B. Doukhan, "Genesis," *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2916), 104, who has noted that "the immediate context of this verse [v. 16], most notably its close literary connection with the preceding verse (3:15), suggests that 3:16 should be read in the light of 3:15."

the serpent and between the descendants of both.[16] In verse 16, strife in the woman-man relationship is implied by the fact that the man's "rule" (*māšal*) is a reversal of the woman's "desire" (*tᵉšûqâ*),[17] just as in verse 15 the struggle between the serpent and the woman's "seed" brings about a reversal of situation. Moreover, just as verse 15 introduces pain and conflict into the serpent-woman/seed relationship, so does verse 16 introduce pain and conflict into the woman-man relationship. In this context, the Hebrew particle *ʾel* in verse 16 is best translated "against" rather than "for/towards."[18] Similarly, in verse 16 the conjunction (*wᵉ*) plus the personal pronoun (*hûʾ*) is used adversatively, and should be rendered "but he" instead of "and he." Putting all together, we state that the second part of verse 16 does not continue the labour-pain pronouncement on the woman; rather, it functions as the divine pronouncement upon the *relationship* between the woman and the man and thus structurally and thematically parallels the judgment upon the *relationship* between the serpent and the woman in verse 15.

What then should *tᵉšûqâ* and *māšal* mean? As a linguistic rule, the meanings of individual words must be controlled by the functions of the clauses and the context within which they are set.[19] This is to say that if, within verses 14-19, verse 16b presents a struggle in the woman-man

[16]See Afolarin O. Ojewole, "The Seed in Genesis 3:15: An Exegetical and Intertextual Study" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2002), 155-165, 183-190.

[17]Katherine C. Bushnell has argued against translating *tᵉšûqâ* as "desire," asserting that in the Ancient Versions of the Bible "out of the 28 known renderings of *teshuqa* . . . the word is rendered 'turning' 21 times. In the 7 remaining renderings, only 2 seem to agree; all the others disagree." Bushnell then renders the verse as "thou art turning away to thy husband, and he will rule over thee" (Katherine C. Bushnell, *God's Word to Woman* [Minneapolis, MN: Christians for Biblical Equality, 2003], 139). However, the explanation of *tᵉšûqâ* in this study also captures the nuace of "turning" as Bushnell contends.

[18]In view of the similar context of strife in 4:7, the particle *ʾel* is best rendered "against." *BDB* s.v. "*ʾel*" suggests that "where the motion or direction implied appears from the context to be of a hostile character," *ʾel* conveys the sense "against." Although many scholars interpret Gen 3:16 based on Song 7:10, we notice that in Song 7:10 the context of strife in relationship is absent. Further, in Song 7 the man's positive "desire" is "for/upon" (Heb. *ʾal*) not "against" (*ʾel*) the woman.

[19]See C. H. J. van der Merwe, "Discourse Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Grammar," in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse* Linguistics, ed. R. D. Bergen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 16; Walter R. Bodine, "Introduction: Discourse Analysis— What It Is and What It Offers," in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature*, ed. Walter R. Bodine (Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1995), 1-3; Susan Anne Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 159.

relationship, then *tᵉšûqâ* and *māšal* must relate to this struggle. Foh may thus be correct in interpreting *tᵉšûqâ* to mean the woman's "desire" to "contend with him [the man] for leadership in their relationship."[20] This then allows us to look to the adjacent text of Gen 4:7—where both *tᵉšûqâ* and *māšal* are used in a similar context—for additional support in understanding the nuances of the terms. If the pragmatic function of Gen 3:16b as described above is correct, then 4:7 provides a better analogy for the interpretation than does Song 7:10[11].[21] As in 3:16, 4:7 presents a tension between *tᵉšûqâ* and *māšal* with striking structural similarity:

> 3:16 And against (ʾ *el*) your man [is] your desire (*tᵉšûqâ*), but he must rule (*māšal*) over you
> 4:7 And against (ʾ *el*) you [is] its desire (*tᵉšûqâ*), but you must rule (*māšal*) over it

In 4:7 sin's "desire" (*tᵉšûqâ*) and Cain's "rule" (*māšal*) occur in a context where sin seeks to overpower Cain, but Cain is encouraged to rule over it. The woman's "desire" (*tᵉšûqâ*) and the man's "rule" (*māšal*) in 3:16 occur in a similar context where the woman's desire is to control the man,[22] a path which she had taken by first eating of the fruit and having the man eat of it, with devastating results. Thus, the appetitive desire (indicated by *taʾ ᵃwâ* and *ḥ āmad* in 3:6) with which the woman coveted the fruit would now turn into a different kind of desire (*tᵉšûqâ*) directed against the man.

The verb *māšal* does not in itself convey the negative associations of the word "dominate." *Māšal* has several nuances within the semantic range of "rule" —for example, to "rule" over siblings (Gen 37:8), slaves (Exod 21:8), nations (Deut 15:6), to "take charge" over someone's possessions (Gen 24:2; Ps 105:21), to control (Gen 4:7; Ps 19:14), or to exercise self-control (Prov 16:32). Its noun form is used twice in Gen 1:16 to denote the "ruling" of the luminaries over day and night. The "rule" of humans over the earth and

[20]Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?" 383.

[21]Ibid., 379, even insists that the understanding of *tᵉšûqâ* as desire to contend or control also holds for Song 7:10 because here too "the immediate context is that of possession: 'I am my beloved's'."

[22]So also Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 94, who concludes, "The chiastic structure of the phrase pairs the terms 'desire' and 'rule over', suggesting that her desire will be to dominate. This interpretation of an ambiguous passage is validated by the same pairing in the unambiguous context of 4:7." See also Matthews, 251; C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P. & R., 2005), 160.

the animal creation is conveyed by *rāḏāh* "rule, govern" instead of *māšal*. The man is not to rule over the woman as both would rule over the animals. In the context of Genesis 3, *māšal* conveys man's leadership in the marriage relationship.[23] It has already been indicated that the woman exercised authority over the man by influencing him to partake of the fruit. This is explicitly indicated in verse 17 with the invective against the man for having "heeded the voice" of the woman. Moreover, the pronouncement upon the man is immediately predicated upon this yielding of his leadership to the woman's authority (v. 17a).[24] He who was given the divine command and placed in charge of the garden was expected to have exercised restraint (2:15; 3:17).[25] But, despite this surrender of his responsibility during the Fall, God's plan was for man's leadership to continue. If the woman had, through the serpent's invitation, taken leadership over the man, then 3:16b serves to re-establish the leadership role of the man in the family.[26] As the New Testament would show, man's leadership was to be one of love and responsibility, not lordship and disrespect (Eph. 5).

4. Theological Application

Whatever position one takes on the meaning of *tᵉšûqâ* in Gen 3:16, both positive and negative implications can be drawn. For example, the "sexual desire" interpretation puts women in a negative light, as if to suggest that women have a stronger sexual drive, which may not necessarily be the case as a universal rule for women. Again, the "desire to control" interpretation has given rise to the subjugation of women, thereby serving the interests of

[23]Frank B. Holbrook, "A Brief Analysis and Interpretation of the Biblical Data Regarding the Role of Women," *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (Washington, DC: The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 89.

[24]In other words, the causal (*kî*) clause that precedes the judgment (v. 17) serves to highlight the man's yielding to the woman as the immediate basis for the judgment.

[25]The man was to "tend" the garden and "keep" it. The Hebrew *šāmar* "keep" often means "guard," hence "take charge." As God personally gave the man the instructions on the forbidden fruit (2:15), so would He hold him primarily responsible for the disobedience of the command (3:9-11).

[26]As Matthews, 220, points out, "This usurpation of the creation ideal is, however, properly rearranged in the judgment oracles: now the serpent is to subject to the 'seed' of the woman, the woman to subject to the man, and all subject once again under the Lord."

men. Gen 3:16 can justify neither a man's lordship over a woman nor the "harsh exploitive subjugation, which so often characterizes women's lot in all sorts of societies."[27]

Generally, the pronouncements in Gen 3:15-19 convey a new set of conditions for human life—the introduction of pain, hardship, struggle, and death—that did not prevail before the Fall.[28] The pronouncement relating to the woman touches on the two major areas of her activity as presented in Gen 2-3: childbearing (3:15-16) and companionship (2:18, 21-24).[29] First, the woman shall fulfill the divine mandate of procreation but this will come with "labour-pain."[30] Yet there is hope for humanity, for through the "seed" of the woman the head of the "serpent" shall be bruised (3:15). Second, the companionship between the man and the woman which started in a sin-free environment—with the man cherishing the woman as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"—will now be fraught with struggle and frustration (3:16).

There is a theme of conflict in Gen 3:15-16. This conflict is seen, first, between humans and the serpent. The instruction to the man to guard (*šāmar*) the garden (2:15) may be understood to mean that there was already a possible intruder.[31] This intruder, represented in the serpent, could encourage disobedience on the part of the man and the woman. And it happened. Consequently, there would be a conflict between the serpent and humans till the "seed" of the woman bruises the head of the serpent and thus defeat it (3:15). This conflict may represent the spiritual struggle of humans against sin and the forces of evil (Eph 6:10-20). But the conflict would not be manifested only in the struggle with evil forces. It would

[27]Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 81.

[28] Wenham observes that "the sentences on man and woman take the form of disruption of their earlier appointed roles." Ibid.

[29]As John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1990), 56, has noted, "In those moments of life's greatest blessing—marriage and children—the woman would serve most clearly the painful consequences of her rebellion from God."

[30]The term *ʿeṣeb/ʿiṣṣāḇôn* may mean "labour" or "toil" in the context of 3:16-19 (cf. 5:29). The woman will experience *ʿeṣeb/ʿiṣṣāḇôn* in conception/childbirth (v. 16) and the man will also experience *ʿiṣṣāḇôn* in the field (v. 17). Yet in the context of childbirth, *ʿeṣeb* would denote "labor-pain" as the force of *harbāh ʾarbbeh* "I will greatly multiply" seems to imply (cf. 1 Chr 4:9-10).

[31]In the context of Gen 1-5, the verb *ʿāḇad* "tend" is used of cultivating the soil (Gen 2:15; 3:23; 4:2) while *šāmar* is used of watching or guarding in the sense of protection (Gen 3:34). The man's task may have included not only ensuring obedience to the Lord's command, but also protecting the garden from intrusion (cf. Gen 3:24).

manifest itself also within the human family—a struggle between man and woman. The man-woman conflict could, in fact, be part of the cosmic conflict between humans and evil forces.

God had intended the man-woman relationship as one of perfect harmony (Gen 2:18, 21-25). However, the intrusion of sin tainted the relationship with unsavory consequences including struggle (3:16). This struggle is seen in families, work relationships, and even churches. The desire to be in charge is seen among some women in their marriages and families. Some show this in their work environment and in the church as well. In the divine pronouncements, we see this sad reality of life.

Though the picture presented in the Genesis story places the man as the head and leader of the family unit, many women have literally taken over the leadership roles in their homes. Some women want to live their lives independent of their husbands. In fact, there are women who want men in their lives only to get pregnant. This trend has increased the rate of divorce as some go into marriages without any motive of commitment. They just go for a man who can fertilize their ovum and then seek for divorce. Some feminists go to the extremes of frowning upon the marriage institution and looking at it as a tool in the hands of men to exploit women.

Today's woman has generally displayed the desire to be at par with her male counterpart in marriage and in the society. In the work environment, this struggle is observed. Women bosses attempt to show that they are in charge. The struggle for promotion and the need for equal recognition is displayed in the work attitude. This struggle doesn't seem to be ending anytime soon. In churches, the gender issues arise in many forms. The struggle to take certain positions that were hitherto reserved only for men has increased in many churches. Even churches that have hitherto ordained only males have considered the option of ordaining women.[32] Women today desire to be given the same opportunities as men in the church, though some denominations still think a woman should have limitations.

It is also important to note that some men are taking advantage of women because they feel they are supposed to be in charge. Today, there are so many marriages in which the males literally "rule" over their wives. In as much as the woman, according to the divine pronouncement, is

[32]The 2015 General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist church in San Antonio will be remembered as a session in which the question of women ordination played a significant role. There was an interest hype in the session which was mainly because of the issue of women ordination on the agenda (J. B. Andor, "2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio: A Study of the Interest Hype among Adventists in Southern Ghana," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 13 (2016): 29-44).

supposed to be under the leadership of her husband, it is important to mention that women should be treated with respect. Relationships in marriage should be a co-operative partnership that will enhance both partners. There should be a healthy inter-dependence between the partners. This same principle should apply in the society, in the work environment, and in church.

Generally, women are protected by law from domestic violence and other acts of aggression they may face. Also, there should be the same social, economic, and political opportunities for both men and women at all times. The female child should be given the same opportunity to be as educated as her male counterpart. None should be discriminated against because of their gender.

Although the pronouncements against the woman and the man in Gen 3:15-19 describe a sad reality of life following the disobedience, there is hope for the human family. The reader is informed that the conflict between the serpent and humans will end on a positive note: victory will be won for humans (v. 15). The sacrificial system that is soon introduced (Gen 4) and later institutionalized in Israel (Lev 1-7) would point to the ultimate sacrifice of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8; cf. John 1:29) who will have victory over "that serpent of old" (Rev. 12:7; cf. 17:14). This victory over evil also provides the antidote to the struggle between man and woman. Ephesians 5 directs that the leadership of the man in the family must be exercised with Christ in view. Paul states that "the husband is head of the wife," but that the husband's headship must reflect Christ's headship over the church (vv. 23-24). Even though sin marred the relationship between man and woman and that this would be evident in a relational struggle, the command to love as Christ loves or as one loves his own body would serve to mitigate the tendency for strife in the family (vv. 1-2, 22-33).

5. Conclusion

This brief study reexamined the meaning of *tᵉšûqâ* in the context of Gen 3:14-19. There have been two major differing interpretations of the term: (1) a woman's longing for intimacy and (2) a woman's desire to contend with man for leadership. It is argued here that while the context better supports the second interpretation, advocates of this view, just like those holding the first view, have based their conclusions only on atomistic word studies of *tᵉšûqâ* which occurs only twice elsewhere. This study has affirmed the second interpretation by arguing from structure and clause functions

within the pericope and has applied the text to the theme of conflict, tasks which hitherto have not been undertaken.

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"DELIGHTING IN THE LORD" VERSUS "DOING YOUR PLEASURE": AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF ISAIAH 58:13-14

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Abstract

Isaiah 58:13-14 seems to give a paradoxical guideline pertaining the manner of observing the Sabbath. While the passage prohibits a person from doing his or her pleasure, it also prescribes calling the day a delight. Hence, the following question arises. What exactly is prohibited and prescribed on the Sabbath according to this passage? This paper seeks to answer this question by clarifying some ambiguous words and expressions found in the text as well as analyzing its literary structure. Also, some theological and practical implications are drawn based on the findings of the research.

Keywords: חֵפֶץ, עֹנֶג, Isa 58:13, 14, Sabbath, holiness

1. Introduction

One of the hotly debated issues about the Sabbath is the manner of its observance. Different rules and regulations have been stipulated in an attempt to answer the question of what is lawful and what is unlawful to do on Sabbath. In this regard, Isa 58:13-14 seems to give a paradoxical guideline. While the passage prohibits a person from doing his or her pleasure, it also prescribes calling the day a delight. Hence, the following questions arise. What exactly is prohibited on the Sabbath according to Isa 58:13-14? What does the passage prescribe as well? What does it mean not to do one's pleasure but delight in the Lord?

This article aims to exegetically examine Isa 58:13-14 and understand the light it sheds on what scripture teaches about the observance of the Sabbath. Hence, a correct understanding of this passage is very helpful to experience the blessings promised to those who observe the day as is prescribed here. Also, this study seeks to clarify some of the ambiguous words and expressions found in the text. To achieve this, the text, in its

original form, is presented with a literal translation. Some keywords and expressions are analyzed. Then a structural analysis of the passage is presented. Lastly, some theological and practical implications are drawn based on the findings of the research.

2. Linguistic Study

The text is cited below with a literal translation. Some textual, grammatical, and syntactical remarks are given in the footnotes. A study of keywords and expressions is also presented under this section.

2.1 Translation

Working Translation	The Hebrew Text
If you[33] turn your foot from the Sabbath	אִם־תָּשִׁיב מִשַּׁבָּת רַגְלֶךָ
from[34] doing your pleasure on my holy day	עֲשׂוֹת חֲפָצֶיךָ בְּיוֹם קָדְשִׁי
And if you call the Sabbath an exquisite delight	וְקָרָ֣אתָ לַשַּׁבָּת עֹנֶג
To YHWH's holy to be honored (honorable)	לִקְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה֮ מְכֻבָּד
And if you honor it by not making[35] your way	וְכִבַּדְתּוֹ֒ מֵעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ
By not finding your pleasure	מִמְּצֹא חֶפְצְךָ
And speaking a word	וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר:
Then you may delight in YHWH	[14]אָ֣ז תִּתְעַנַּג֮ עַל־יְהוָה֒
I will cause you to ride on the heights of earth	וְהִרְכַּבְתִּיךָ֙ עַל־(בָּמֳתֵי) [בָּמֳתֵי] אֶ֔רֶץ
I will make you eat from the heritage of Jacob, your father	וְהַאֲכַלְתִּיךָ֙ נַחֲלַ֣ת יַעֲקֹ֔ב אָבִ֖יךָ

[33]It is noteworthy that the second person singular pronoun "you" is used in this passage consistently. Thus, though the message is for the public at large, it is tailored in such a way that it addresses everyone individually.

[34]The word "from" is inserted here as the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah and the LXX add that.

[35]The word עָשָׂה can also mean "do". But "make" is preferred here as it makes more sense with the next word, i.e., way.

Indeed the mouth of YHWH has spoken.	כִּֽי פִּי יְהוָה דִּבֵּר׃ ס

2.2 Lexical Study

Five words occur twice in Isa 58:13, 14 and among these four are taken as keywords to understand the meaning of this passage.[36]

חֵפֶץ

This word has the following range of meanings: "(1) happiness, joy, delight, pleasure; (2) wish, desire, aspiration; (3) precious, priceless, valuable, "jewel"; (4) affair, concern, business, matter."[37] Commentators vary in translating this word. Joseph Blenkisopp translated the first occurrence of this word in verse 13 as "business" and the second as "affairs."[38] In the same vein, Ed Christian wrote an article to show the appropriateness of translating the word חֵפֶץ as "business" in Isa 58: 13, 14.[39] On the other hand, Brevard S. Childs translates the first occurrence of the word in verse 13 as "delight" and the second as "affairs or business"[40]. However, John N. Oswalt rightly opts for the word "pleasure," as the right translation of חֵפֶץ. He argues that the context is about one's motive in carrying out religious ceremonies, which should not be pleasing oneself but to find pleasure in God. Thus, Oswalt writes: "the frequent suggestion (e.g., Whybray) that חֵפֶץ should be translated as 'business' here misses the point."[41] A contextual study of the passage favors the translation of the

[36]The fifth one is שַׁבָּת and that is left because the whole paper discusses it.

[37]David Talley, "חָפַץ," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids.: Zondervan, 1997), 2: 231.

[38]Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, The Anchor Bible, 19b (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 174, 175.

[39]"God is not speaking against pleasure here, but against working, doing business on Sabbath." Ed Christian, "'Sabbath is a Happy Day!' What Does Isaiah 58: 13-14 Mean?" *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*13/1 (2002): 87.

[40]Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, The Old Testament Library (London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 474.

[41]John N. Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, The New International Commentary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 508.

word as "pleasure." Besides, the word pleasure is a broader term that may even include business and all other pursuits that humans undertake to realize happiness. The following citation from *The Isaiah Targum* will further support this point. "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and celebrate the Sabbath with delight, honor the holy day of the Lord; if you give honor before it, not going your own way, or supplying your own pleasure, or talking sayings of oppression." [42]

עֹנֶג

The word can be translated as "enjoyment, pleasure, delight."[43] But it is not simply a delight but an "exquisite delight."[44] Kronholm defines the word as "sensual pleasure" and as perfect delight (both mental and physical).[45] Isho'dad of Merv elaborates on the meaning of the word: " 'If you call the Sabbath a delight,' in other words, you honor it for the banquets and the drinks, finding your joy on that day as if (it) were a party."[46] The root of this word is found seven times in the book of Isaiah (13:22; 47:1; 55:2; 57:4; 58:13, 14; Isa 66:11). Besides, the parallel usage of עֹנֶג and חֵפֶץ in verse 13 could imply that what is prescribed is a more intensive delight (עֹנֶג) in the Lord than the prohibited pleasure of man (חֵפֶץ).

קֹדֶשׁ

[42]Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, The Aramaic Bible: the Targums (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 10: 113.

[43]William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, based on the First, Second, and Third Editions of the Koehler-Baumgartner Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (1988), s.v. "עֹנֶג."

[44]Francis Brown, with S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramai*, based on Gcsenius (1952), s.v. "עֹנֶג."

[45]Madla T. Kronholm, "'ōneg," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. J. Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), XI: 213,214.

[46]Isho'dad of Merv, "Commentary of Isaiah 58.13," *Isaiah 40-66*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, ed. Mark W. Elliott (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), XI: 216.

This word means "apartness, holiness, sacredness".[47] This is the word used to depict how God instituted the Sabbath originally in Gen. 2:3. In this text, God made it holy, or set the seventh day apart. And this divine act of sanctifying the day is the rational for keeping it holy. McComiskey comments:

> A basic element of Israelite religion was the maintenance of an inviolable distinction between the spheres of the sacred and the common or profane (Num 18:32). That which was inherently holy or designated so by divine decree or cultic rite was not to be treated as common. The sabbath was holy, and the restrictions connected with that day served to maintain its distinctive nature and to guard against its being treated as common (Exod 16:23-26; Isa 58:13, 14).[48]

In the Book of Isaiah, God Himself is repeatedly called holy (Isa 6:3) and in this verse, God identified the Sabbath as "my holy day," יוֹם קָדְשִׁי.

כָּבֵד

The word has the following range of meanings: "be heavy, grievous, hard, rich, honorable, glorious."[49] "This root, with its derivatives, occurs 376 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is especially prominent in Psalms (occurs sixty-four times) and Isa (occurs sixty-three times), as well as Exodus (thirty-three times), Ezekiel (twenty-five times) and Prov (twenty-four times). Of the total number of occurrences, 114 are verbal."[50] In Isa 58:13 the verbal form of this word appears first in pual then in piel and their meanings are "honorable," and "to honor" respectively. These two forms of the verb are necessary to communicate thoroughness, for it is not enough to call the Sabbath honorable, but honoring it makes the recognition complete.

[47]Thomas E. Mccomiskey, "qādash" *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1: 18.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew*, s.v. "כָּבֵד."

[50]John Oswalt, "kābēd," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1: 426.

2.3 Idiomatic Expressions

There are four expressions that need further clarification as they communicate a non-literal meaning. The first is תָּשִׁיב רַגְלֶךָ, translated as "turning your foot" from the Sabbath. In an attempt to interpret this expression, several suggestions are proposed. To mention a few: (1) "refrain from travel,"[51] (2) "keep from desecrating" the Sabbath,[52] (3) "cease to tread the Sabbath underfoot,"[53] (4) failing to turn one's feet from the Sabbath as "an act like trampling on a pretty flower-bed"[54], and (5) "trampling on holy ground with filthy feet"[55].

The second phrase that does not make sense with a literal reading is וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר, which means "and speaking a word". Thus, the phrase is interpreted differently, such as: "speaking of business matters"[56], "talking sayings of oppression"[57], and "engaging in idle talk"[58].

The third and the fourth expressions are found in verse 14: "ride on the heights of the earth" and "eat Jacob's inheritance". The first is "a metaphorical expression for a glorious elevation of life (Deut. 32: 13; cf. also 33:29)."[59] Austin gives the following range of meanings for this expression: "(1) that he will reestablish them in their land, or (2) that he will place them out of reach of those who would harm them, or (3) that he

[51]Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-66*, 174. John D.W. Watts also gives similar interpretation in parenthesis. John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, Word Bible Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 25: 269.

[52]Childs, *Isaiah*, 474.

[53]A. S. Herbert, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah Chapters 40-66 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 143.

[54]H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah, Volume II. Chapters 40-66* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 292.

[55]John Oswalt, *The New International Commentary of the Old Testament*, 508.

[56]Avraham Gileadi, *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (New York: Hebraeus, 1994), 14.

[57]Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, The Aramaic Bible: the Targums (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 10: 113.

[58]Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-66*, 175.

[59]J. Ridderbos, *Isaiah*, Bible Student's Commentary, translated by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 529.

will help them rise above the limitations of earthly perspectives."[60] In fact, the imagery of riding on the heights signifies invincibility and superiority. To "eat the inheritance of your father Jacob", as a reward to an obedient life, reminds the reader of what is found in Isa 1:20—the presentation of "obeying and feeding" in juxtaposition. Besides, the fact that chapter 58 starts by addressing the descendants of Jacob and ends by reminding the same group of people of their inheritance gives more meaning. This inheritance "is all that the Lord promised ancestrally."[61]

3. Literary Structure

Having studied keywords and some expressions in the text, we now look into the structure of the prophetic discourse.

The chiastic structures noted by David A. Dorsey are insightful to see the larger as well as the immediate context of Isa 58: 13-14. While structuring the whole book in a chiastic form, Dorsey places Isaiah 55-66 as a concluding message of condemnation, pleading, and future restoration and points out how it is positioned in parallel with chapter 1-12.[62] Furthermore, Dorsey entitled Isaiah 55-66 as a "final invitation to return to YHWH" and noted that Isaiah 58 and 59, in parallel with Isa 61:1-62:9, have the theme of a "call for restoration and true righteousness."[63] Thus, Isaiah 58:13-14 could be better understood when taken as part of this call. God is calling for a restoration of an intimate relationship with His people, which will bear the fruit of true righteousness. Hence, the Sabbath is presented here as a means to this end.

At a microstructure level, another literary structures can be observed in Isa 58:13-14. The first one is a protasis-apodosis presentation. Three conditions are placed in the protasis. These are: (1) If you turn your feet from the Sabbath…, (2) if you call the Sabbath a delight…, and (3) if you honor it…. Likewise, three promises are also given in the apodosis, viz., (1)

[60]John T. Willis, *Isaiah*, The Living Word Commentary on the Old Testament (Austin, TX: Sweet, 1980), 448-449.

[61]J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 483.

[62]David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 1999), 234.

[63]Ibid., 228. Gary Smith also notes the themes of restoration and true righteousness in this section of the book of Isaiah. Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman &Holman, 2009), 516-517.

"you may delight in YHWH," (2) "I will make you ride on the heights of the earth," and (3) "I shall make you eat the inheritance of Jacob". The promises can also be seen as parallels –one building on the other. Delighting in the Lord leads to the other two –riding on the heights and eating the inheritance. Also, while riding on the heights refers to the spiritual blessings, eating of the possession of Jacob depicts material blessings.

I noted the following chiastic structure in verse 13, which could be of help to better comprehend the message of the passage:

A turn your foot from the Sabbath
B not doing your pleasure (חֶפְצְךָ) on my holy day
C call Sabbath an exquisite delight and holy to YHWH
CENTER: Sabbath is honorable and you shall honor it
C^{I} not making your way
B^{I} not finding your pleasure (חֶפְצְךָ)
A^{I} not speaking a word

Sabbath is honorable. It must be esteemed. This thought is the center of verse 13, as is shown in the above chiastic structure. However, the question is how should it be honored? What should and should not be done? *A* and *A^{I}* answer these questions by pointing to two actions: turning the foot and not censoring the speech. Notably, a similar command is found in Eccl 5:1 and 2, where it says one has to "guard his foot" and "not to rush with the mouth" in order to give due honor to the house of God. Similarly, here, Isaiah is admonishing his readers to honor Sabbath, which is God's sanctuary in time. Hence, these expressions entail reverence.
B and *B^{I}* has the word "pleasure" in common and in both cases, the word is with a second person singular possessive suffix (your). This shows that it is not pleasure in general that is banned, but specifically "your" pleasure. Also, while *B* refers to doing one's pleasure *B^{I}* depicts a perusal of it. Both attempts are prohibited as a means of promoting self-denial. Putting *A* and *B* together, it is plausible to note how a true reverential attitude bears the fruit of self-denial.

C and *C^{I}* bring honoring the Sabbath to its climax by combining a positive, as well as a negative command. *C* commands the reader to call the Sabbath an exquisite delight and holy to YHWH. However, this cannot be attained without a total surrender of one's will to His. Hence, *C^{I}* admonishes the reader not to make his or her own way or will. Ultimately,

genuine self-denial does not lead to self-pity but to a greater delight in the Lord.

To summarize, v. 13 calls readers to honor the honorable and the holy of the Lord, i.e., the Sabbath. Reverence, self-denial, and delight are the three important elements of the honor due the Sabbath. While reverence leads to self-denial, delighting in the Lord flourishes from the latter.

4. Intertextuality

Isaiah 58: 13-14 is not quoted elsewhere in the Bible. However, it is connected with two other passages that deal with the Sabbath in Isa 55-66. The first one is Isa 56:1-8. The parallel between Isa 58:13-14 and 56:1-8 can be seen in the employment of similar words. While Isa 56:4 talks about keeping the Sabbath honorable (here the antonym of honorable is used as in v. 2 "keep from profaning it") by choosing what pleases God, Isa 58:13 states that the worshiper should not do or find his pleasure.[64] Another segment of parallelism between the two texts lies on the promises of reward to the faithful ones in observing the Sabbath according to God's way. One of the promises given in chapter 56 has to do with elevating the people to a mountain and giving them joy (v. 7). A similar promise is found in Isa 58:14, where God promised to cause the faithful to ride on the heights of the earth and delight in him.

The second text that can be studied in connection with Isa 58:13, 14 is found in Isa 66:23. Here, the word Sabbath is mentioned, but unlike the other two in Isa 55-66, it does not mention how it should be observed. It simply depicts the scene of the climax of God's restorative act. It is stated that when God creates "new heavens and new earth" all mankind will come to worship God from Sabbath to Sabbath. Again, though not explicitly mentioned, the concept of delighting in God as the essence of Sabbath observance can be seen here. For it is by coming to the Lord in worship that all mankind will experience the ultimate joy in the new heavens and earth.

A brief comment is also needful at this juncture regarding the existence of the concept of Isa 58: 13, 14 in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The four Gospels narrate how Jesus, both by his example and teaching, purposed to restore the right observance of the Sabbath. And if there is one thing that stands out among many regarding what Jesus

[64]The Hebrew root word for pleasure is the same in both passages.

taught about the Sabbath, it is His depiction of the day as a day of delight. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2: 27, NJKV). His healing episodes on Sabbath translated these words into reality and brought great joy to the victims. Indeed, for Jesus, the Sabbath is a day on which God's creation can find delight in its Creator and Redeemer.

Thus far, the question "what exactly does 'not doing or finding one's pleasure' on the Sabbath day mean?" has not been addressed yet. The next section that deals with the theological implications of the text will address that question, based on the exegetical study carried out so far.

5. Theological and Practical Implications

One of the issues the Book of Isaiah address is the tension between true religiosity and hypocritical piety.[65] Isaiah 58 picks two religious practices, which seem opposite in nature: fasting and feasting on the Sabbath. Thus he shows how the day should be observed before the Lord. There exists also one common problem undergirding the people's wrong observance of the day, which is pursuing one's own pleasure (vv. 3, and 13). But what does doing or finding one's pleasure mean?

John N. Oswalt interprets the "doing one's pleasure" in the context of Isa 58 as engaging "in religious ceremony to further one's own purposes as opposed to God's."[66]In so doing, Oswalt connects pleasure to the motive of the person in carrying out the religious activity. Not only does God looks at the sacrifice but also the heart that presents it, for He desires to receive a genuine worship from a holy worshiper. Therefore, practicing rituals with ulterior selfish motives or the desire to gain the favor of God is unacceptable in His sight.

It is also possible to understand the idea of doing one's pleasure in a broader sense, as pursuing one's own way to get happiness. It is important to note here that what is prohibited is not "pleasure" but "your pleasure" and not making the way but "your way." Notably, the command does not stop there, but while abandoning one's own pleasure and way, the person is admonished to call the day of the Lord delight (v. 13) by delighting in the

[65]In the opening chapter of the Book of Isaiah one finds God saying "Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing *them.* (Isa 1:14 NKJ)"

[66]Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 508.

Lord of the day (v. 14). In fact, forgoing one's pleasure and choosing what pleases God (Isa 56: 4) does not lead to misery. On the contrary, the person will find greater and exquisite delight in the Lord (as the meaning of the word עִנֶּג implies). Edward Young aptly makes the following comment:

> *Thy pleasure* is that which pleases man instead of God. It is a gross misunderstanding to interpret as though the words meant "that which is pleasant" and to conclude from this that the prophet's only concern is that the sabbath be a day not of pleasure but of gloom. Rather, it is the pleasure of man in contrast to that of God that is brought to the fore.[67]

Richard Davidson also writes, emphasizing the command to call Sabbath an exquisite delight in Isa 58: 13. In his article he depicts the traditional Jewish family's Sabbath customs as practiced in Israel today and calls Christians to adopt them "to make our Sabbaths more of an 'exquisite delight.'"[68] What seems so captivating to Davidson are: the "festive family candle-lighting ceremony," "a festively decorated table," "Sabbath unfermented 'wine,'" and "Sabbath bread," which he also recommended to be adopted. While calling the Sabbath day a delight is prescribed in Isa 58: 13, it should also be noted that the source of that exquisite delight is not material things, but God himself. What if a person does not have any of these luxurious items? Can the person still call God's holy day "an exquisite delight"? This question receives an affirmative answer, because it is possible to delight in the Lord of the day. As the prophet declares, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior" (Hab 3: 17, 18, NIV).

Thus, the Sabbath serves to experience true self-denial by allowing the person to rest and know God deeply (Ps 46:10). This intimate knowledge leads to a life of trust and delight in God (Ps 33:21). Ultimately, delighting in the Lord will make the person receive what his or her heart desires. "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." (Ps 37:4, NKJ) Hence, self-denial is the divine-appointed path

[67]Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 427.

[68]Richard Davidson, "The Delight of an Exquisite Day," *Adventist Review*, 2 January 1986, 18

to true self-actualization. Jesus proclaimed this paradox in the following words: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Matt 16:25, NKJ). Oswalt expounds this thought:

> Of all the ceremonies, the Sabbath is the one perhaps best suited to the purpose just outlined. Here we cease our work and remind ourselves that it is God who supplies our needs, not us. Here we reorient the compasses of our spirits to the true north of God's gracious character, remembering as we give one-seventh of our time to him and his concerns that all our time is his. For those who approach the Sabbath in this way, the day is a precious gift (the sense of *'ōneg*, delight, v. 13). It is a special day, a holy one, to be guarded jealously, not because God will destroy us if we lift a pencil or throw a ball, but because here we have another chance to remind ourselves about what matters and what does not, about what passes away and what survives, about the fact that all we are and have is his, a gift freely given and freely to be returned to the Giver.[69]

Finally, denying oneself in order to delight in the Lord may not be simple. Yet, it is encouraging to remember that this command and its accompanying promises proceed from the mouth of the Lord. He never errs and is worthy of our trust.

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5. Conclusion

In conclusion, three things must be noted in Isa 58:13 and 14. First, in honoring the honorable day of the Lord, one has to present an attitude of reverence, for this attitude is the foundation for the next two. Secondly, self-denial must be exercised. The "turning of the foot" and the "silence of the mouth" should halt any attempt of finding and doing one's own pleasure. Accordingly, a reverential approach to YHWH on "the day of YHWH" will give forth this fruit. Thirdly, honoring the honorable day requires calling it an exquisite delight. Indeed, genuine self-denial, which is attained as a result of obeying the command "be still and know that I am the Lord," will lead to a unique experience of having an exquisite delight in the Lord.

Thus, in this passage, what is prohibited and what is prescribed should be seen as a unit. Hence, obeying one must lead to the other. Consequently,

[69]Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-46*, 508, 509.

erroneous understandings and practices, such as turning the day into a dirge or into a mere festive day, or even using the religious practice to manipulate God, can be avoided. Rather, in honoring the honorable day of God through reverence, self-denial and experiencing an exquisite delight in the Lord, one will be honored to "walk on the heights" and "eat the inheritance of Jacob." This promise proceeds from the mouth of YHWH.

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THE ROLE OF BIBLICAL LANGUAGES TO PRESERVE AND PERPETUATE THE REFORMATION

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Abstract

Biblical languages are essential to interpret Scripture. A working knowledge of biblical languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic) helps the student of Scripture understand the biblical text. This paper examines the role of Biblical languages during the Reformation period, notably how the Renaissance's discovery of ancient sources led to the concept of *ad fontes* which in a religious context led to a return to studying biblical languages. Martin Luther and other magisterial Reformers consistently emphasized the importance of learning biblical languages. This paper examines how each of these Reformers, namely Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin became active students of Scripture through the use of, and emphasis on the importance of understanding biblical languages as a vital part of Biblical studies. This study shows that the Sola Scriptura that reformers upheld strongly could not be possible without going back to the original languages of the Bible. When the church today disregards this, as shown in the weakening of emphasis in seminaries and negative attitude of the ministerial students toward biblical languages, they ignore the significant role of biblical languages in the reformation. It seems that there could have been no reformation without the reformers taking hold of the Word of God in its original languages.

Keywords: Reformation, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, biblical languages, Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, *ad fontes*, Erasmus, Reuchlin, Wittenberg, 95 Theses

1. Introduction

As an introduction, a statement attributed to Bernd Moeller, a Church historian from Gottingen, has gained some prominence among students of the Reformation: "Without humanism, no Reformation."[70] On the other

[70]Stefan Rhein, *The Beginning of the Reformation: Wittenberg in 1517*, trans. Janet H. Mayer (Sproda, Leipzig: Druckhaus Köthen, 2017), 103.

hand, there is support for Thomas Kaufman, a former student of Moeller, who states that there is no Reformation without Wittenberg. Kaufman made this catchy phrase in recognition of the role of Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Karlstadt and many others, who were professors of the University of Wittenberg, during the Reformation.[71] Nonetheless, others claim that there is no Reformation without Scholasticism.[72] Further, still, some hold that there is no Reformation without the printing press. The truth is that all of the above statements were instrumental in the reformation. Foundational to the Reformation is not humanism, neither the printing press nor the university. Without the Scriptures, it would have been impossible to have the Reformation. The Humanists helped their contemporaries to understand the Word of God better by returning to the original language. The printing press assisted in spreading the 95 Theses and other writings of the Reformers like wildfire, and Wittenberg equipped others including Luther to handle and rightly divide the Word of God. The three institutions were instrumental, but the Scriptures served as the foundation of the Reformation. Thus, without the Scriptures, there is no Reformation. Robert Kolb recognizes this by indicating that, "the Bible played a key role in the unfolding of the Protestant Reformation…"[73] In their use of the Scriptures, the Reformers echoed the humanists' battle cry "back to the sources."[74] The history of the Reformation will not be complete without discussing the revitalization of biblical languages. Neglecting Greek and Hebrew in dealing with the Reformation will create a massive vacuum in history. In fact, the reformation would not have been possible without a return to the original languages of the Bible. McGrath recognizes this by declaring that, "the rise of humanist textual and philological techniques would expose the distressing discrepancies between the Vulgate and the texts it purported to translate—and thus open the way to doctrinal reformation as a consequence."[75] This paper argues that the revitalization of biblical languages during this period is one of the primary

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Robert Kolb, "The Bible in the Reformation and Protestant Orthodoxy" in *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 89.

[74]"Richard Rex, "Humanism and Reformation in England and Scotland" in *The Hebrew Bible Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, *II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Magne Saebo (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 520.

[75]Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 94.

keys to the Reformation. This argument is adduced based upon four critical facts of history: (1) The revitalization of biblical languages among the reformers, (2) The reformers use of biblical languages, (3) The reformation of the curriculum of educational institutions, and (4) The Reformers' translation of the Bible.

2. Historical Fact 1: The Revitalization of Biblical Languages among the Reformers

History has a huge cloud of witnesses in the lives of the Reformers on the necessity of biblical languages in studying the Scriptures prior, during, and after the Reformation period. For the Reformers, the study of these languages was a "hallmark of the Reformation."[76] If one considers each reformer and the role biblical languages played in his life and work, it will be a massive academic exploit. Thus, in this section, only selected Reformers will be reviewed, namely: (1) Martin Luther, (2) Philipp Melanchthon, (3) John Calvin, and (4) Huldrych Zwingli. However, before directly discussing each of them, there is a need to consider the connection between the reformation and the Humanism[77] during this period.

2.1 Humanism Connection

Siegfried H. Horn notes, "there was a great danger that knowledge of Hebrew would become extinct during the Middle Ages, even among the

[76]John D. Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Bell & Bain, Glasgow, 2006), 66.

[77]Humanism during the period of the Reformation should not be confused with the humanism of the 21st century. There is the need to see this in context or else it will have a negative impression on the minds of many. Alister E. McGrath explains, "When the word 'humanism' is used by a twentieth-century writer, it generally refers to an anti-religious philosophy which affirms the dignity of humanity without any reference to God. 'Humanism' has acquired very strongly secularist—perhaps even atheist—overtones. But in the sixteenth century, the word 'humanist' had a quite different meaning, as we shall see shortly. Humanist of the fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth centuries was remarkably religious if anything concerned with the *renewal* rather than the *abolition* of the Christian church. Readers should set aside the modern sense of the word 'humanism' in preparation to meet this phenomenon in its late Renaissance setting. Renaissance humanism was not an ideological program, still less an anti-religious movement. It was rather a body of literary knowledge and linguistic skill based on the 'revival of good letters.'" See McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 35.

Jews."[78] It was the Humanists and later the Reformers who revived the knowledge of Hebrew. John D. Currid records that majority did not know the ancient Greek language in the early part of the 16th century.[79] He further recounts that the training of Catholic priests during the 16th century were in Latin to equip them to handle the Vulgate. "Few of them, however," Currid continues, "studied Greek and even fewer were trained and knowledgeable in Hebrew."[80] During that time the basis of doctrinal tenets and teaching of the Catholic Church was Jerome's Vulgate. Also, during this period, monks avoided the study of the biblical languages and warned the believers not to study for two main reasons: those who learned Greek became heretics and those who learned Hebrew became Jews. However, some humanist like Reuchlin and Erasmus championed the biblical languages though they were ardent Catholics until death.

This section discusses humanism and its relationship to the reformation. Humanism played a crucial role in laying the foundation for the study of the Scriptures. Although the humanist's concern was not solely on the Scriptures, but on other disciplines as well, it contributed a great deal to biblical studies. Alister E. McGrath relates that during the Renaissance, when humanism flourished, "human beings first began to think of themselves as individuals."[81] Humanism from the 14th-16th centuries is "remarkably religious."[82] Renaissance humanism "was a body of literary knowledge and linguistic skill based on the 'revival of good letters.'"[83] The term humanism as interpreted in the 19th century was not the same as how it was applied during the Renaissance period. During the Renaissance period, the term used was an Italian word *umanista,* which referred to a teacher of either human studies or liberal arts, which includes poetry, grammar, and rhetoric. A humanist in 1589 was a scholar who was well-versed in Latin studies. *Ad fontes,* which means "back to the fountainhead," is the summary of the literary and cultural program of humanism. McGrath further explains,

[78]Siegfried H. Horn, class notes for the Course Introduction to the Old Testament, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, n.d., 32.

[79]Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages*, 39.

[80]Ibid., 65.

[81]McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 36.

[82] Ibid., 35.

[83]Ibid.

> The slogan *ad fontes* demanded that the 'filter' of medieval commentaries on classical texts—whether literary, legal, religious, or philosophical—should be abandoned, in favor of a direct engagement with these original texts themselves. Applied to the Christian church, the slogan *ad fontes* meant a direct return to the title deeds of Christianity: the patristic writers and, supremely, the New Testament.[84]

For instance, McGrath elaborates, "the New Testament described the encounters of believers with the risen Christ—and late Renaissance readers approached the text of Scripture with the expectation that they too could meet the risen Christ, a meeting which seemed to be denied to them by the church of their day."[85] This paves the way for the humanists to ever seek for ancient texts. In this context, this period shot to prominence scholars such as Giovanni Boccaccio, Johannes Reuchlin, John Colet, Desiderius Erasmus, and many others. William R. Estep notes the efforts of Giovanni Boccaccio to know Greek for himself and to establish a chair of Greek at the University of Florence.[86]

This love for learning Greek also attracted young European scholars such as Johannes Reuchlin, John Colet, and Desiderius Erasmus. They left Europe for Italy to study Greek.[87] Reuchlin (1455-1522) is associated with the revival of the study of both Hebrew and Greek in Germany.[88] Siegfried Raeder cites Reuchlin's familiarity with the OT, Hebrew language, and Jewish scriptures. *De rudimentis hebraicis* (The Rudiments of Hebrew, 1506) was a proof of this. Reuchlin claims that through his extraordinary works, he had "erected a monument, more durable than bronze").[89]

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), the prince of humanists and

[84]Ibid., 40.

[85]Ibid., 41.

[86]William R. Estep, *Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 26.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2011), 63.

[89]Siegfried Raeder, "The Exegetical and Hermeneutical Work of Martin Luther" in *The Hebrew Bible Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation, II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Magne Saebo (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 368.

illegitimate son of a Dutch priest, had the passion for manuscripts. He went from one university in Europe to another riding on a horse in search of ancient manuscripts. He studied both Greek and Latin to "understand better the meaning of the Bible itself."[90] Erasmus loved Greek more than Hebrew. When asked to teach Pentateuch and Isaiah in Oxford, he declined the offer due to his lack of knowledge of the Hebrew language. He considered Hebrew as "too strange and difficult for him to learn."[91] However, his love for Greek consummated with the publication of his Greek New Testament.[92] Frozen published his *Novum Instrumentum* in 1516.[93]

Martin Luther had benefited from the "biblical humanism" environment before 1512 in Erfurt and Wittenberg. They emphasized returning to the "sources." He "came to believe that reading the Scripture in Latin translation rather than the original Greek and Hebrew created a gap between reader and text."[94] The same is true for Zwingli, Bucer, and other reformers. In the next section, this connection will be considered further.

2.2 Martin Luther

Martin Luther had a copy of Reuchlin's grammar book *De rudimentis hebraicis* (1506)[95] and Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum* (1516).[96] He used both of these books in translating the Bible into German. At Erfurt, Luther, including those who "participated in the humanist circle" (Justus Jonas, Johann Spangenberg, Justus Menius, and George Spalatin) appreciated the return "to original languages and texts" that is important "for the task of

[90]Timothy George, *Reading the Scripture with the Reformers* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 84.

[91]George, *Reading the Scripture with the Reformers*, 85.

[92]Stephen J. Nichols, "A Gracious God and a Neurotic Monk" in *The Legacy of Luther*, ed. R. C. Spiral and Stephen J. Nichols (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2016), 24.

[93]Timothy George, *Reading the Scripture with the Reformers* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 88.

[94]Robert Kolb, Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 137.

[95]Raeder, "The Exegetical and Hermeneutical Work of Martin Luther," 397.

[96]George, *Reading the Scripture*, 97.

theology."[97] He indeed cuddled the humanist back to the sources emphasis.[98] In fact, his name Martin Luther from Martin Luder is a way of adopting the humanistic custom of "using the Latin or Greek form of the name to signify membership of the academic network."[99] Later Luther emphasizes that it is not enough for preachers to depend on translations, especially on interpreting Scriptures and disputing incorrect teaching. They need to know the original languages to do so. [100]

A copy of Erasmus' Greek New Testament found its way into Wittenberg. Luther and his students thoroughly studied it in the university. Their notes have survived them.[101] According to Horn, "Martin Luther became acquainted with some humanists during his second stay at Erfurt (fall 1509-August 1511), who taught him Greek and Hebrew."[102] He debunks the opinion that "Luther did not have much knowledge of Hebrew."[103] He further notes that Luther's principle was, "Every Bible translation has to be based on the originals."[104] McGrath further unravels that Luther, although found difficulties initially in studying Hebrew, managed to give lectures on the Psalm in Hebrew text.[105]

In here one can see the revival of biblical languages in the life of Luther as influenced by the humanists ahead of him. Although both Erasmus and Reuchlin had influenced Luther in some way, these two later "gloriously put down the agenda for the North-European humanist movement *ad fontes."*[106] Even though the influence of the humanist to the Reformation is crucial, it is seen as *an essential catalyst*, not its *cause.* Later Luther distanced

[97]Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring*, 30.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Rhein, *The Beginning of the Reformation*, 97.

[100]Martin Luther, "The Importance of the Biblical Languages," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 11, no. 1 (2000): 3.

[101]Rhein, *The Beginning of the Reformation*, 74.

[102]Horn, class notes, 32.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid.

[105]McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 64-65.

[106]Arjo Vanderjagt, "*Ad fontes!* The Early Humanist Concern for the *Hebraica veritas*" in *The Hebrew Bible Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation, II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment,* ed. Magne Saebo (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 161.

himself from the humanist movement when he criticized Erasmus "in the 1525 treaties *de servo arbitrio."*[107] There was this saying that Erasmus's detractors coined; "Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched." When asked about it, Erasmus explained that "Luther's chicks were a different kind of bird."[108] Another phrase that connects humanism and the reformation states, "Erasmus mills the flour that Luther bakes."[109]

2.3 Philipp Melanchthon

Like Luther, Philipp Melanchthon benefitted from both Erasmus and Reuchlin. However, the influence on Melanchthon was in a more significant degree than that of Luther. Erasmus "very heavily" influenced Melanchthon. Melanchthon was born during the period when the church needed reform. This is due to the condition of the church. Both the pope and his bishops "cared more about power and living benefice than the spiritual salvation of believers; there is much to be desired when it comes to education and moral fiber of the priesthood."[110] Melanchthon learned Latin from Johannes Unger, his house teacher. During that time the learning method is by memorization and "with whippings for mistakes."[111] When his father and grandfather died, Philipp and his brother Georg lived with Elizabeth Reuchlin, the sister of the "famous Humanist Johannes Reuchlin."[112] Reuchlin who witnessed that Philipp excel in both Latin and Greek gave him a gift of a Greek grammar, which can be found at the library of the University of Uppsala. In that book he wrote a dedication, "Johannes Reuchlin from Pforzheim, doctor of law, has given this Greek grammar as a gift to Philipp Melanchthon of Britten in the year of our Lord 1509, on the Ides of March."[113] In this dedication, for the first time, the name "Melanchthon appeared. Like the name Luther from Luder, Melanchthon

[107]McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 70-71.

[108]George, *Reading the Scripture*, 94.

[109]Ibid., 96.

[110]Stefan Rhein, *Philipp Melanchthon* (Dörffurtstaβe 8, Germany: Drei Kastanien Verlag, 2008), 9.

[111]Ibid., 11.

[112]Ibid., 12.

[113]Ibid., 16.

was a humanist name Reuchlin gave Philipp. Melanchthon means "black earth," which came from the Greek words "melas chthon."[114] Rhein underscores, "Such a Latin or Greek name was allowed to be granted only by a famous scholar, and attested to the talent of the student at the same time that it served as an entrance ticket into the Humanist scholarly circles."[115]

When the University of Wittenberg established a professional chair for Greek, Frederick the Wise tried to hire Reuchlin. However, due to his age, declined and instead recommended Melanchthon for the position. [116] Melanchthon is the nephew of the famous Johannes Reuchlin. His uncle "referred to him as the greatest scholar in Europe, second only to Erasmus."[117] During that time, Melanchthon was only twenty-one years old. Although he was "short in stature, thin and frail looking, rather like then the schoolboy swot who shines in class but looks weedy on the sports field" and "had a slight speech impediment and stammered when he spoke" his inaugural speech "silenced the naysayers and won the heart of Martin Luther."[118] Since then he taught in the University of Wittenberg for forty-two years.

Melanchthon's presence at the University, since August 25, 1518, proved to be a blessing for Luther, students, and the university at large. Due to the tandem of both Luther and Phillip "Wittenberg University rose to become the university with the most students in all of Germany."[119] Melanchthon like his uncle was linguistically competent in both Hebrew and Greek.[120] He was the one who urged Luther to translate the New Testament from Greek to German.

[114]Ibid.

[115]Ibid.

[116]Ibid., 18.

[117]George, *Reading the Scripture*, 176.

[118]Ibid.

[119]Rhein, *Melanchthon*, 21.

[120]Ibid., 28.

2.3 John Calvin

One of John Calvin's exegetical principles and the primary one is, "fidelity to the meaning of the original."[121] Unlike the Middle Ages scholars who espoused a fourfold sense to the Scripture (literal, allegoric, moral, and mystical), the Reformation's "principle of grammatical-historical exegesis was the conviction that at the heart of interpretation are the biblical languages. The exegetical task can be accomplished only through a solid knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages."[122] John D. Currid disproves that Calvin was ignorant of Biblical Hebrew. He claims that Calvin had a thorough knowledge of the biblical languages, and was fully competent in their use to perform exegesis of the biblical text."[123] He was proficient in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. However, he excels more in Greek than in Hebrew. Calvin even said, "we cannot understand the teaching of God unless we know his styles and languages."[124] According to Theodore Beza, Calvin "devoted himself to the study of Hebrew" in Basel in 1534 under Simon Grynaeus and Wolfgang Capito.[125] Here, one can see the relation between Calvin and the humanistic scholars.[126] Calvin also had exposure in biblical languages when he was a student in Paris and at the College de France. In the latter, Francois Vatable (d. 1547) was his Hebraist teacher. Currid concludes that Calvin has an in-depth working knowledge of the languages both Hebrew and Greek. [127]

Luther, Melanchthon, and Calvin demonstrated their passion for biblical languages to exegete the Bible and came up with the sure Word of

[121]Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages*, 9.

[122]Ibid., 12.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Ibid., 13.

[125]Ibid., 14.

[126] "Wolfgang Capito, a reformer in both Basel and Strasbourg, was an outstanding scholar of Hebrew who published a Hebrew grammar (1525) and wrote commentaries on Habakkuk, Hosea, and Genesis. As part of the humanist brain trust in Basel, he assisted Erasmus on textual matters related to Hebrew when the critical edition of the Greek New Testament was being prepared for the press in 1516." See George, *Reading the Scripture*, 86.

[127]Currid, Calvin and the Biblical Languages, 29.

God. Indeed, they experienced the revival of biblical languages that had played a very important role in the Reformation. Let us consider the last reformer in this section. How did Ulrich Zwingli espouse the biblical languages?

2.3 Ulrich Zwingli

Currid has noted that "ignorance of Hebrew forms of expression is responsible for many erroneous interpretations of Scriptural passages not only by ignorant and reckless men…but also by genuinely pious and learned persons."[128] This remark which is attributed to Ulrich Zwingli demonstrates how vital biblical languages is to the study of the Scriptures. He promoted by word and by practice the biblical languages. He could preach in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew "with as much as ease as in the vernacular, a skill that earned Luther's jealousy!"[129]

Having paraded these few key reformers who were passionately in love with the biblical languages, one will heartily agree with McGrath that a working knowledge of the biblical languages was instrumental to igniting, preserving, and perpetuating the Reformation.[130]

3. Historical Fact 2: The Reformers Use of Biblical Languages

In the historical fact number one, the revival of biblical languages among the Reformers is clear. Through their love for God and His word they passionately invested time on learning the original languages of the Bible. In here, the Reformers' use of these languages will be disclosed. It will begin with Luther.

Luther's knowledge of biblical languages, mainly Greek, helped him to write with confidence the first of His 95 Theses, which says, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."[131] The word repentance here is mistranslated as "penitence." This had been "at the center of Luther's

[128]Ibid., 68-69.

[129]Ibid.

[130]Alister E. Luther's Theology of the Cross, 69-70.

[131]George, *Reading the Scripture*, 98.

tortured conscience in the monastery. He knew that without true *penitentia* there could be no reconciliation with God, and yet his struggles in the confessional left him mired in desperation for he realized that he could never adequately fulfill the requirements of the sacrament of penance."[132] George details,

> Luther's evangelical breakthrough was followed by an exegetical one when he realized that the traditional Vulgate rendering of Matthew 3:2 as *penitential agile,* "do penance," was a mistranslation of the Greek. Luther learned from Erasmus that the Greek word *metanoia* was derived from *meta* and *noein,* meaning "afterward" and "mind," 'so that *penitentia* or *metanoia* means a coming to one's senses…the emphasis on works of penance had come from misleading [Vulgate] translation, which indicates an action rather than a change of heart and in no way corresponds to the Greek *metanoia.*[133]

Because of this linguistic observation, which Martin Luther made use actively; Erasmus earned the ire of the fellow Catholics. Thus, "in his 1522 edition of the New Testament, under pressure from his Catholic critics, Erasmus reverted to the traditional Latin translation of *metanoeite, poenitentiam agite.* However, by then the damage had been done."[134] Since then Erasmus chose to be "a spectator rather than an actor."[135] However, his 1519 Greek New Testament outlasted Erasmus. It has been instrumental in the hands of both Luther and Tyndale as they translated the Bible from Greek into German and English respectively. Here we can see that the key to the 95 Theses of Luther and also to his justification by faith alone doctrine was as a result of his knowledge of biblical languages, in this case, the knowledge of Greek.

In the case of John Calvin, he employed his knowledge of the languages in preaching, teaching, and in his commentary.[136] In his preaching, whether in Hebrew or Greek, Calvin would translate the passage directly from the original language. When he mounts the pulpit, he had only in his hand the

[132]Ibid.

[133]Ibid., 98-99.

[134]Ibid., 99.

[135]Ibid.

[136]Currid, Calvin and the Biblical Languages, 17.

Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. Calvin, like Luther, had also found "improper translations" in Jerome's Vulgate. One of which was Genesis 2:8. He disputed Jerome's translation of "paradise of pleasure" for the simple translation "in Eden."[137] He also made an active interaction with the LXX. Sometimes, however, as Currid discloses, Calvin's lexical work was "a bit sloppy," nevertheless, "for the most part his work is solid."[138] This section shows how crucial the knowledge and use of biblical languages among these Reformers. History would have been different if Luther, Calvin, Melanchton, and other Reformers had not employed biblical languages in their study and exposition of the Scriptures.

4. Historical Fact 3: The Reformation of Educational Institutions' Curriculum

To preserve and perpetuate the Reformation, the Reformers changed their curricula. In the case of the Genevan Academy, where future ministers were trained to expose and preach the Word of God through their sermons, Calvin made it sure that biblical languages were strongly integrated in the curriculum. He also would like Geneva to become the theological seminary of the Reformed Protestantism. Moreover, Currid adds, "To Calvin, the Academy was to be an institution of great learning. He believed that *erudition* required mastery of three languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin."[139] Again Currid testifies, "Calvin wanted for the Academy a deep integration of the Reformed faith with a strong classical curriculum that heavily emphasized the study of the original languages."[140] Currid further clarifies the high ideal or purpose of Calvin beyond his generation:

> His aim in the *schola publica* was to raise up and train pastor-scholars. These were men who could work well with the original languages of Hebrew and Greek, who could perform proper exegesis of a text, and who understood theology and philosophy; yet they could take all that intellectual work and translate it to the masses. These were pastor-scholars who did not stay in the ivory tower, but they sought to find

[137]Ibid., 35.

[138]Ibid., 39.

[139]Ibid., 58.

[140]Currid, Calvin and the Biblical Languages, 59.

> the truth and then apply it to the people. The purpose of the academic work was to affect the church and the world with the truth and power of the Word of God. Calvin himself was such a pastor-scholar.[141]

The situation in Geneva was not far from Wittenberg. The arrival of Melanchthon in Wittenberg contributed actively in the ministerial education of the university. Justo L. Gonzales reveals that Melanchthon persisted to include Hebrew and Greek "at the very heart of the curriculum."[142]

Melanchthon further proposed that, "this new education should be institutionalized both in the educational curriculum and in the organization of the schools themselves."[143] Melanchthon's influence during the Reformation went beyond the portals of Wittenberg. He also assisted other universities in their curricula. Among them were: Koln, Tubingen, Leipzig, and Heidelberg. He also helped in the formation of Greifswald, Koenigsberg, Jena, and Marburg Universities. Even Bullinger, Zwingli's successor took the same path in Zurich. [144]

It is crystal clear that biblical languages had a very crucial role not only in igniting the Reformation but also in preserving and perpetuating it. These languages have not only found a secure place in the hearts of the Reformers but also in the hearts of the curricula of universities. The Reformation did not only happen among the Reformers but even in the curricula of the universities.

5. Historical Fact 4: The Reformers' Translations of the Bible

On March 22, 1485, Archbishop Berthed of Mainz issued an edict forbidding the translation of the Bible and other books from Greek or Latin. This edict was reissued on January 4, 1486. Those who violated the edict would be excommunicated or be fined.[145] As mentioned above, the based

[141]Ibid., 60.

[142]Justo L. Gonzales, *The History of Theological Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2015), 70.

[143]Ibid.

[144]Ibid., 75.

[145]Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring*, 18.

text of the Roman Catholic in the formulation of doctrine was the Latin Vulgate. However, the Latin Vulgate demonstrated minor and significant inconsistencies. Even before Erasmus and Luther, Lorenzo Valla made an interesting observation. He compared the Latin Vulgate with the Greek manuscripts he had acquired. As a result, he made emendations on minor points and also significant points. For instance, Valla considered 1 Corinthians 15:51. Latin Vulgate translates it as, "We shall all rise, but we shall not all be changed." Nevertheless, the original Greek puts it, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."[146] This is something that was not normal during his time because "he criticized and amended a sacred text regarded as inviolable for nearly a millennium."[147] This serves as a backdrop for Luther's translation of the Bible directly from the original languages.

Before Luther, there was already a translation of the Bible into the German language. It was in the 14th century when the complete translation of the Bible to German was accomplished. However, the difference is, it was based on the Vulgate, Luther's was based upon the original languages. Thus, "they differ with regard to their linguistic quality."[148] Raeder further discloses, "All the Bibles, printed before Luther's translation, are based on the Vulgate. Unlike his predecessors, Luther went back to the Hebrew and Greek texts; unlike Luther, the adherents of the papacy preferred the traditional Latin text."[149] Luther's translation of the Bible was not a work of a single reformer. It was a collaboration of reformers and university scholars who loved God and passionately studied the Scriptures in the original languages. If they became lax during their generation on biblical languages, the Reformation would not have reached this 21st century generation.

5. Conclusion

The Reformation and the revitalization of biblical languages are closely linked. They are inseparable. Biblical languages, indeed, had been a key to the Reformation as revealed in the four critical facts of history: (1) The revitalization of biblical languages among the reformers, (2) The reformers

[146]George, *Reading the Scripture*, 58.

[147]Ibid., 60.

[148]Raeder, "The Exegetical and Hermeneutical," 395.

[149]Ibid., 396.

use of biblical languages, (3) The reformation of educational institutions' curricula, and (4) The Reformers' Translation of the Bible.

The Reformers passion for God was revealed in their love to hear the actual Words of God consumed not only their time but also their lives. Their love for biblical languages did not rest in the library of their heads and hearts but in the libraries of the universities, equipping generations of reformers rightly dividing the Word of God. Surely these Reformers had flaws, but their role cannot be disregarded. They had been the keepers of the flame in their generation.

The legacy of these Reformers is indeed exemplary. They were pastor-scholars who devoted themselves to God and His Words. They went back to the sources, to the biblical languages. The pastors, teachers, and scholars of today can do the same. It is indeed a daunting task, but the journey promises to be a productive labor. The colleges and seminaries must be as committed as these Reformers were in establishing a curriculum, which deeply integrated the original languages by choice. This is the heritage of the Reformers that they need to keep, celebrate, and pass on to the next generation. As the UNESCO puts it, "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations."

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PIONEERING LEADERSHIP: A PROPOSED LEADERSHIP STYLE FOR UN-ENTERED TERRITORIES

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Abstract

Church leadership plays an important role in the growth and expansion of the church. It has been observed that different leadership styles are used to lead and manage the church in territories where the church is well established, however, there are still many places where the Gospel has not penetrated. Perhaps one of the reasons that these territories have not been entered is the fact that the right leadership style is not being implemented. These hard to reach territories generally come with challenges that the established leadership styles often neglect or fear to address. Therefore new leadership strategies should be considered in regard to reaching unentered territories and Pioneering Leadership is a proposed leadership style for the matter at hand.

Keywords: Pioneer, leadership, unentered territories, vision, uncertainty, faith

1. Introduction

When one enters the realm of church leadership, it can be observed that there are a variety of leadership styles that have been studied and analyzed, each seeking to promote methods and strategies for developing better leaders. Van Gelder and Zscheile (2011) have asserted, "The missional church is to be led by missional leadership that focuses on equipping all of God's people for mission" (p. 51). However, when one considers the challenges that leaders have to face in unentered areas such as violent resistance, tribalism, corruption, and syncretism it would be advisable that the established styles of leadership be re-evaluated. By doing so through reflection, discussion, and dialogue it is possible that a more relevant and meaningful style of leadership can be developed for hard to reach areas. A notable example of this was the unorthodox style of leadership used by Hudson Taylor to advance the Gospel in China. Many of the strategies and methods that he used were frowned upon by the established church

leadership, nevertheless, his leadership led to the opening of China to the Gospel.

In the discussion of leadership, it can be observed that having a "clear vision" is often elevated to being one of the most essential components of effective leadership. However, in regards to this well-established notion about vision, Fox (2017, para. 1) notes, "Almost every leadership, strategy and motivation book on the planet advocates the importance of having a crystal clear goal or vision for the future. However, this is an incredibly flawed position to take." The reason for his argument is the fact that quite often a clear vision of the future is not the reality that many leaders face. This phenomenon has been observed in the world of business and if one looks carefully, the same can also be observed in the hard to reach mission fields. Many a time, leaders do not have a clear vision of how to move forward, but they are still expected to bring results. Without minimizing the importance of vision, as Fox apparently seems to do, it is necessary that we reconsider the best leadership strategies for moving forward in times of uncertainty and inactivity, such as is seen in many unentered and difficult mission fields. In regards to the notion of "vision" in SDA church leadership; the general vision of numerical and spiritual growth may be perfectly clear in the eyes of any given church leader; however, the specific "vision" of the methods and strategies needed to bring about its accomplishment may not be so clear.

In any given organization, there will always be perplexing challenges that call for more than wishful thinking and the expectation that everything will align itself with the ideals of a "visionary" leader without any turbulence. White (1915) states:

> The cause of God demands men who can see quickly and act instantaneously at the right time and with power. If you wait to measure every difficulty and balance every perplexity you meet, you will do but little. You will have obstacles and difficulties to encounter at every turn, and you must with firm purpose decide to conquer them, or they will conquer you. (p. 97)

The unexpected challenges and opportunities that are ever present in unentered areas, not to mention the momentous urgency in which the Gospel message is to be proclaimed, calls for a leadership style that is more dynamic than the routine leadership styles that generally characterize the established mission fields. To emphasize the notion that the imitation and replication of routine leadership styles are not highly recommended, Barna (1997) stated, "Today's climate, from the national down to the neighborhood level, works against the cookie-cutter, predictable, imitative

leaders" (p. 210). In other words, if the church is to penetrate unentered areas there is a need for authentic and innovative leadership.

In regards to the challenge of spreading the Gospel to unentered areas, especially when the task seems to be impossible, Fox (2015, para. 4) notes, "We cannot afford to simply wait for clarity. But at the same time, we cannot set forth a single, clear vision for the future while knowing that the future is infinitely complex and uncertain." Therefore, to advance the mission it is essential for the church to have leaders that are characterized by an unwavering faith, who are not afraid to take risks, and who have the desire to seek to do more while at the same time inspiring others to also go the extra mile. Such type of leaders are to be distinguished by their trust and reliance on the promises from the Word of God, despite the many uncertainties they face.

Not only are there uncertainties that leaders face when they enter new mission fields, but there is also another major hurdle to overcome namely the cross-cultural tensions that arise when different people groups interact with each other. The fact that the SDA church has a global mission, naturally means that we need to avoid the pitfalls that quite often come with globalization. To support this notion Plueddemann (2009) notes, "But the globalization of the church also presents dangerous possibilities for cross-cultural tensions, especially regarding leadership values. Church leaders must learn to cooperate with people who have radically different assumptions about leadership" (p. 11).

In response to the great need of dynamic leaders to establish the work in unentered places, a unique style of leadership is being proposed which has been coined "Pioneering Leadership." Pioneering leadership according to Fox (2017, para. 5), "Means leaning into the challenge of progressing through new and unchartered territory." This is a concept that is being explored, in the world of business, and is proving to be substantial, in that it provides a more realistic view of leadership in places where uncertainty and cross-cultural tensions seem to be prone; and though the church is not a business entity per se, it is in the business of salvation and therefore certain principles from pioneering leadership should not be ignored. Not only that, but there are many biblical principles that can be found in this leadership style.

2. Biblical Foundation of Pioneering Leadership

In regards to leaders in the Bible, Barna (1997) interestingly notes, "The Bible places a great deal more confidence in leaders than it does in the democratic processes of humankind. Some would say that it is a cultural reality of the biblical era, a time when dictators–either destructive or benevolent in nature –ruled the world" (p. 199). It is evident that ancient and modern leadership styles will vary to a certain degree, but when one looks at the concept of pioneering leadership, which has been defined as "leaning into the challenge of progressing through new and unchartered territory," it can be observed that many narratives of the Bible, such as the narratives of Abraham, Moses, Nehemiah, Jesus, and the early church strongly support the notion that pioneering leadership is a practical leadership style that has the potential to rapidly advance the mission of the church.

Perhaps one of the greatest examples to demonstrate this concept is the Abrahamic narrative. The Scriptures state, "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going." (Hebrews 11:8). Within this passage, it is clearly seen that Abraham, who is also referred to as the father of faith, was called to take on a leadership role in which he was to lead the covenant family with the chief objective of becoming a blessing and causing "all families of the earth" to be blessed, in Christ. He accepts the call and takes on this responsibility by faith not having the slightest "vision" as to how this is to be accomplished but yet still he pushes forward and ventures into the unknown realms of Canaan finding unexpected trials, challenges, and cultural tensions.

In regards to the reason why Abraham was chosen to fill such a position and become a pioneer-leader is based on one peculiar characteristic. The Scriptures state, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19). From this passage, it appears that Abraham's passion for training and equipping others is given more recognition than his clearly established vision of what he was to do in the land of Canaan. In volume two of the SDA Bible Commentary White (1953) states, "The ministers of Christ are to be examples to the flock. He who fails to direct his own household, is not

qualified to guide the church of God" (p. 1009). Therefore, it appears that God is more concerned with us leading our families, sharing the light that we have with others, and training them to be responsible with that light, than having a systematic leadership strategy based on a leader's clear vision. To support this notion, Esmond (2013) notes, "But if you are a Christian, you are a leader. Part of our leadership responsibility is to use our influence to lead others to follow and trust Jesus," (p. 11) and the scripture notes "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Heb 11:8). This suggests that obedience and faith are the most important characteristics for a pioneer leader to have and they were the main reasons behind Abraham being chosen as the pioneer leader of the people of God.

Another example of pioneering leadership can be found in the life of Moses. Hebrew 11:24-26 states, "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." In the Mosaic narrative, it can also be observed that Moses did not have a clear "vision," in that he learned as he went along as opposed to having a systematic plan of action. In other words he was not fully aware of what his leadership role and responsibilities would entail, both prior to his flight into the Midian desert and after his call from God at the burning bush, but Scripture notes that he (Moses) had a passionate desire to be with God's people and he esteemed reproach for Christ's sake better than worldly treasure (Heb 11:26). This also coincides with the concept of pioneering leadership in that it does not base itself on specified plans and strategies, but is fuelled by a radical faith that looks beyond all odds and moves forward into uncertainty with faith and the command of God to go as the only anchor.

Another notable illustration of pioneering leadership is found in the life and ministry of Nehemiah. When Nehemiah learned that those who remained in Judah were riled with hardships and that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins, he using the influence that he had as the king's cupbearer took the risk of asking permission to go and rebuild the city. In doing so Nehemiah takes on the role of being a pioneer leader for the repatriation of the Hebrew exiles. His pioneering leadership was characterized by the fact that he was willing to take the risk and ask the king for permission to return to his homeland, which according to the reports were almost uninhabitable (Neh 1:3). He takes the risk of losing his job and enters into what seems to be an insurmountable task simply

because of the faith that he had in the promise of God. While many other Jews had been content in dwelling in the land of their captivity, Nehemiah decided to take a step into the unknown and with the help of God and those who were inspired by his influence, Nehemiah was able to fill the role of being a true pioneer leader. To reiterate some of the pioneering characteristics, White states (1925), "The holy energy and high hope of Nehemiah were communicated to the people. As they caught the spirit, they rose for a time to the moral level of their leader. Each, in his own sphere, was a sort of Nehemiah; and each strengthened and upheld his brother in the work" (p. 175).

Perhaps the most important Biblical character to consider in regards to the concept of pioneering leadership is Jesus Christ. Although He is all knowing, the fact that He also became human should be taken into serious consideration. It is evident from the Scriptures that He is the one that pioneered the plan of saving mankind and He took the risk of losing all heaven for humanity's sake. This is clearly demonstrated in Matt 26:39 where Jesus stated, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will." To support the notion that it was unwavering faith and trust in God as opposed to a clear vision of victory that led Jesus to yield His life for our sins is reflected in the words of Ellen White (1898) where she stated,

> The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that their separation was to be eternal. (p. 753)

Not only was He the Pioneer of all true Christian pioneer leaders but he trained and influenced His disciples to also become pioneer leaders. Perhaps the most valid example of this concept is the fact is that after training them, He sent them, two by two, into towns of which they knew very little of, with the task of visiting, healing, and preaching the Gospel to the town's inhabitants. The fact that they were to go by themselves and establish relationships in unentered areas testifies to the fact that they were indeed pioneers of unentered areas.

Lastly, the early church demonstrated pioneer leadership in almost everything that they did, Peter boldly preaching in Jerusalem (Acts 2), Philip going to Samaria and then later baptizing the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8), and Paul establishing churches wherever he went. The early church was not only called to build up the kingdom of God amongst their own Jewish brethren, but they were called to be pioneer church leaders of the unentered mission fields of the world. Concerning the Apostle Peter's

leadership, Ellen White (1903) referred to him as, "Peter, the pioneer in breaking through the barriers of ages, and teaching the heathen world" (p. 86). In regards to Timothy, Ellen White (1911) states, "Among those who had been converted at Lystra, and who were eyewitnesses of the sufferings of Paul, was one who was afterward to become a prominent worker for Christ and who was to share with the apostle the trials and the joys of pioneer service in difficult fields" (p. 184).

3. Pioneering Leadership and the Spirit of Prophecy

Not only is Pioneering Leadership hinted and supported by the Holy Scriptures, but the writings of Ellen G. White (i.e. the Spirit of Prophecy), also reinforces the concept of Pioneering leadership. When one studies the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church, it can be readily observed that it was established by a pioneering leadership style. In other words, the early pioneers of the SDA Church did not know the extent of where God was leading the movement but simply obeyed with the faith that God was in charge. Ellen White herself being among the pioneers, also greatly saw the need of pioneer leaders in new fields of labor and she (1905) stated that, "Over and over again the Lord has presented before me the pioneer work that must be done in new territory. When a difficult field is presented before me as one that must receive special attention. I understand that it is my duty to make this field my special burden, until, before the earnest, continuous efforts put forth, the difficulties disappear, and the work is established" (RH Sept. 28, 1905). A statement such as this not only not only argues in favor of the concept of pioneering leadership but also places a divine mandate upon it. It is evident that for the work to spread into new areas, pioneers are needed and the role that they play is intricately connected with the leadership and management function. It is also interesting to note the burden that she had for this method of advancing the work of God, not to mention the fact that she asserted that this was a part of God's great plan. White (1915) declares, "Has he not shown that it is to be a pioneer to go forth to the people, laden with the precious treasures of truth?" (p. 353).

Concerning how pioneers are to prepare themselves for the responsibility of pioneering leadership, White (1909, para. 3) writes "They must have such a training as will fit them for acceptable service if they are called to do pioneer work in mission fields either in America or in foreign countries." She notes that those who aspire to become, or have been called

to serve as pioneering leaders should not be ignorant or unskilled. Contrariwise, they were to be fit to serve, or in other words were to undergo training and preparation. White (1946) also encouraged pioneer leaders to, "Follow the example of those who have done pioneer work in new fields. Wisely work in places where you can best labor" (p. 50). Here we can find a principle that should not be overlooked when entering the discussion of pioneering leadership, namely that pioneers should be trained, and quite often that training comes from following the example of previous pioneers. Such a principle is supported both by the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

When one looks deeper into the concept of pioneering leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it can be observed that there are three major avenues that the church uses to advance its objective of fulfilling the great commission of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Those three major avenues are education, health, and the establishment of churches. Relief and community service could also be said to be a fourth avenue that is used to communicate the Gospel message but in most instances, relief and community service are in one way or another connected to the three main avenues. In regards to these three avenues Ellen White (1990) states, "He (God) desires every pioneer worker to stand in his lot and place, that he may do his part in saving the people from being swept downward to destruction by the mighty current of evil—of physical, mental, and spiritual declension" (p. 226). Here she mentions physical, mental, and spiritual declension which ideally are counteracted by the establishment of centers of health, learning, and worship. It is evident that such establishments do not come by chance, but result from the dedication of faithful pioneer leaders that are willing to take the risks involved with establishing such endeavors.

White (1912) while discussing about a certain pioneer worker states, "Let him encourage others to unite with him in pioneer work, planning with them to open new fields successfully and to erect humble church and school buildings. In teaching others to do what he has done, he will be engaged in an educational work of the highest value" (p. 70). The connection of pioneer work and the establishment of schools and churches have an intricate relationship, which should not be neglected by those who aspire to advance the work of spreading the Gospel. One could only imagine the faith and works necessary for establishing educational institutions and churches in those days, but nevertheless, brave and diligent pioneer leaders advanced the cause and marvelous things were wrought within the developing stages of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Concerning the issue of Battle Creek College, White (1903) stated, "In this pioneer effort our brethren advanced, not inch by inch, but in

sweeping strides, in the right direction. Some advised delay in the work; some criticized and condemned; many gave a hearty support, and God blessed the efforts of the united band of workers" (1903, par. 5).

Equally important as pioneer leaders establishing schools and churches, is the need for the establishment of centers that promote physical health and wellness. In regards to pioneering medical missions, White (1933) asserts, "Medical missionary work brings to humanity the gospel of release from suffering. It is the pioneerwork of the gospel. It is the gospel practiced, the compassion of Christ revealed" (p. 239). White does not separate this work from the educational aspect of the pioneer work, but she urges, "Students should be prepared for pioneer missionary work. The medical missionaries who are sent to foreign countries should first receive a most careful education. They are Christ's ambassadors, and they are to work for Him with all the skill they have, praying fervently that the great Physician will pity and save by His miraculous power" (p. 518). Lastly, in regards to pioneering work in the medical missionary lines, she (1915) notes, "Medical missionary evangelists will be able to do excellent pioneer work. The work of the minister should blend fully with that of the medical missionary evangelist" (p. 360).

Not only did Ellen White emphasize the need of pioneer workers and leaders, and the great success that comes from their diligent effort, but she also clearly makes it known that pioneering leadership is not an easy task and that many challenges come along with it. It is with this understanding pioneer leaders are to enter their spheres of service. To elaborate more on this, White (1902) notes, "Those who have not broken the ground in new and difficult fields do not realize the difficulties of pioneer work" (p. 242). Perhaps one of the most notable of those difficulties is that of finance and monetary issues. The pioneer leader should not be taken by surprise when they come to find out that money and finances are a challenge. White notes that even secular business enterprises also face similar struggles and therefore the pioneer leaders should not be taken off guard. To re-emphasize this statement, Ellen White (1905) states, "When, in ordinary business, pioneer work is done, and preparation is made for future development, there is frequently a financial loss" (p. 1).

Despite the many challenges that pioneering leadership may have, the benefits are to be counted as of eternal worth. The advancement of the Gospel in unreached areas is dependent upon pioneering leaders who are filled with the Holy Spirit and the love and grace of Jesus Christ. The writings of Ellen White, though never using the terminology of "Pioneering Leadership," gives undisputable evidence for the importance of such a

leadership style to aid the church in accomplishing its mission of spreading the Gospel to the world. Lastly, in regards to the importance of pioneering leadership Ellen White (1908) stated, "Thus the missionary pioneer will open many a door for service; and the presence with him of the great Missionary, and the power which He bestows, will be constantly enlarging the worker's sphere of usefulness," and (White, 1946) "We rejoice that the efforts put forth by the pioneer workers among foreign nationalities in the United States and Canada have borne a rich harvest of souls" (p. 571).

4. The Theoretical Foundation of Pioneering Leadership

Pioneering leadership is a leadership style that according to Fox (2017, para. 5), "enables the exploration, development, learning, and progress through the complexity and paradox of an uncertain future." Its primary characteristic is the pioneering spirit which braves the challenge of entering new and unfamiliar areas. Not only that, but it establishes itself on the notion that good leaders should always be exploring possibilities that can lead to future growth and development. It does not wait for the uncertain future to determine its success or failure, but moves forward with a courageous faith accompanied with diligent effort and enters into the unchartered seas of uncertainty with the determination to come forth with more productive and relevant methods of achieving their objectives.

Fox (2017, para. 9) also notes that "Embracing this type of pioneering leadership means embracing several paradoxical notions." The paradoxical notions that he refers to are three, the first of which is, "To gain certainty, we must embrace uncertainty," the second being, "To build conviction, we must embrace doubt," and lastly, "To make progress, we must avoid success." It should be noted that Fox discusses pioneering leadership within the realms of business enterprise, but correlations and principles can be drawn that can positively contribute to leadership within the church, given that biblical principles are not neglected. In regards to the paradox, Plueddemann (2009) notes, "Most of us aren't comfortable with paradox, because paradox threatens both positions. Yet scripture supports the argument for both trusting and planning, for resting and striving, for strategizing while trusting that God is in charge of the outcome" (p 135). Concerning Fox's first paradoxical notion, it is evident that with very few exceptions, that the future is uncertain. Due to this uncontrollable phenomena, conventional leaders tend to stay in their comfort zone and for the most part, avoid all risks, and try to ensure that their lives, ministry,

businesses, etc. are as secure as possible, thus ascertaining their future prosperity. However, with the pioneer leader, it is not so. The pioneer leader is not afraid to take calculated risks and is comfortable outside of his or her comfort zone. Concerning embracing uncertainty, Fox (2017, para. 10) notes, "You don't wait for clarity or perfect plans before acting. Rather, you progress into uncertainty with adaptability and risk mastery, learning along the way." It is such a leadership spirit that is necessary for the Gospel to advance to the unreached people groups of the world.

The concept of embracing of doubt to build conviction, at first glance, may seem to be inconsistent with scripture. However, while doubt is definitely not an attribute that the Bible endorses, the main principle behind Fox's paradoxical statement about "doubt" is that pioneering leaders should not trust themselves that they know enough to navigate their way through a new territory, and should, therefore, seek to learn as much as possible so that they will be certain about what they are doing. In other words, they should doubt themselves. To elaborate more, Fox (2017, para. 11) notes, "Whereas some might claim to have all of the right answers, pioneering leaders instead value asking the right questions."

Lastly, concerning the avoidance of success to make progress, the pioneering leader is never satisfied with a victory, because they know that the battle still continues and that there will always be more opportunities for growth, learning, and development, not to mention that there will always be a need to stay relevant.

Christine Caine, unlike Fox who focuses primarily on the business aspect of pioneering leadership, brings new insights into the discussion that are more beneficial to the subject of pioneering leadership in the church. She states, "A pioneer leader is the opposite of a settler—someone who is "sedentary, stationary, maintaining." I learned early on in our ministry, that we weren't called to a "maintenance ministry," but to a pioneering organization, and we have seen that develop in every initiative over the years," (2017, para. 7). Taking into consideration that pioneers, in essence, are the first ones to open or prepare the way for others, it is only logical that pioneer leadership is of key significance to the growth and development of the church. To elaborate more on the role of pioneering leaders in the church, Caine (2017, para. 8) states, "I realize that maintaining systems and procedures is necessary—and always will be—but I know the Spirit of God wants us simultaneously looking for how we can pioneer development and growth for the future personally and corporately. He wants the pioneering spirit of leadership alive in every one of us. As you influence others—at home, at work and in your community, intentionally

develop pioneering leadership qualities."

Caine (2017) has also identified that there are six major characteristics of pioneer leaders. The first, and perhaps most evident characteristic is the fact that they are self-starters. This means that they do not wait for others to motivate or persuade them into action but they take the burden of moving forward upon themselves and enter into new spheres of service or enterprise. Self-starting pioneers recognize that they are workers for God and that they should work with all their heart for His name and His cause. The second characteristic of pioneer leaders is that they are intrinsically motivated, meaning that their motivation comes from within as opposed to being motivated by external rewards or remuneration. The pioneer church leader sees their reward as more than just the benefits that they receive from being a denominational worker, but ultimately looks for the inheritance that the Lord will give them when He comes in glory with all of His angels.

Thirdly, the pioneering leader is characterized by the ability to gather people for a worthy cause and inspire and motivate them into action. Though pioneering leaders are self-starters, they are also capable of making people aware of what they have started and of gaining the needed support to bring to completion their pioneering efforts. Another notable feature that pioneer leaders have is their persistence and commitment. Pioneer leaders do not give up easily and are devoted to their cause, which in the case of pioneering church leaders, is building up the kingdom of God. Pioneering leaders do not allow difficulties or obstacles to side-track them from achieving their objective.

Pioneering leaders are also innovative and imaginative. They are critical thinkers and consider a vast variety of methods and approaches to achieve their goals and objectives. They are characterized by "thinking out of the box," for their originality, and for the advanced ways in which they address the challenges that they face. Lastly, pioneer leaders are bridge builders. Not only are they bridge builders but they break down barriers of enmity and separation. They are individuals who bring people together with the purpose of seeing them thrive and survive and work together for the common good of all.

In regards to the positive attributes of pioneer leadership, Sugerman, Scullard, and Wilhelm (2011) have pointed out some of the major strengths that pioneer leaders have. First of all, they are successful at bringing about change, meaning that they have the ability to enter an environment or situation, which does not seem promising and make changes that others deemed impossible. They also have the tendency of trusting their intuition

or "gut-feeling," which in the realm of Christian Pioneer leaders, would better be expressed in the terms of trusting firmly in that "still small voice" that impresses them to move forward in faith. As mentioned before, they are also inspiring, influential, and able to unite or bring people together to achieve their goals.

Another noteworthy strength of pioneering leaders is the fact that they are not afraid to try new things. This is perhaps one of the greatest differences between the pioneer and conventional leader. The pioneer church leader recognizes that what worked in the past does not necessarily work in the present and yet they refuse to compromise or syncretize timeless and absolute principles. Pioneering leaders are also comfortable with taking the lead, or in other words, they are internally motivated and are able to be at peace with themselves despite the opposition that they may face. They also are good at setting personal and group goals and are able to motivate themselves and others to fulfill those goals. Lastly, pioneering leaders are not afraid to take risks.

5. Management and Cultural Considerations for Pioneering Leadership

Pioneering leadership is not only going ahead of others and taking the risk of venturing into uncharted regions, but it also entails the management of the work established in those regions. In regards to the management function, Yamamori (1996) has noted that "one of management's task is to confront chaos and confusion wherever it is found through effective organization. Restorating order to our national, institutional, community, family and personal affairs is a number one priority" (p. 156). Therefore pioneering leaders have to face the twofold task of leading and managing their pioneering efforts, and as chance would have it, this task always takes place in the midst of the prevailing culture and worldview of the local people. Elliston (1992) has also noted that, "Leadership is nearly always closely tied to a local cultural model. Without this close association the Christian distinctives are often compromised" (p. 11).

When one observes the numerous cultures that exist in unentered regions (especially those in the 10/40 window of North Africa and Asia), it can be clearly seen that leadership in most, if not all, people groups follow a leadership culture that is different from that of Western countries. This presents a great challenge for those who are not familiar with the culture and worldview of the people. In regards to equipping those that do have an understanding of the culture, with knowledge to help them manage

their leadership responsibilities, Yamamori (1996) notes, "Most of the management knowledge available to Christian leaders and workers today comes from business-oriented, western theoretical formulations as well as institutional traditions; culture; the experience of great managers and so on" (p. 149). This knowledge is often irrelevant and does not help the church to advance in its mission. Not only that, but much time and resources are spent on gaining such knowledge and the majority of it is buried and lost sight of not long after those who received it return to their posts and positions of duty. To elaborate more on this phenomenon, Yamamori (1996) has stated, "There is always a danger in development ministries of importing overseas methods and technologies that are alien and create highly artificial and nonsustainable "development" which must perpetually depend on outside facilitators and resources to avoid crumbling" (p. 205). There are many challenges that unentered areas face such as marital practices, superstitions, harmful traditional practices, health issues, spiritual warfare, communal worldviews, religious persecution and stigmatization that are often times unaddressed in "ministerial" training. To go a step further, Elliston (2000) states, "Without significant change, traditional seminaries will not be able to meet the leadership development needs of churches in the next century…The traditional western worldview dominance is being powerfully challenged" (p.143).

It is for these reasons that pioneering leadership should be given serious consideration because pioneering leadership in the church seeks to establish new and relevant methods of leadership and management in the unentered mission fields of the world. In regards to seeking those who can best fill the role of being pioneer leaders, Luecke (1990) gives some helpful advice, "To begin a new building emphasis in church leadership look first for plants. These are members who are ready for themselves and the church to grow into something different. They will most likely catch and shape a vision for mission easily and model the momentum that can bring others along" (p. 149). From this statement, an important principle can be formulated, namely that those who take on the role of pioneering leadership in the church need to have an intense desire for both personal and church growth.

This desire, however, may be met by opposition from the prevailing church culture of inactivity and negativity that characterizes many church members. This phenomenon can be observed in all church denominations, not excluding the SDA church and of this problem, Elliston (1992) reports, "Passivity among church members too often is both encouraged and taught by the existing leaders. Pastors, elders, deacons, worship leaders, ushers,

and others are too often jealous of their position and status" (p. 171). Therefore pioneering leaders need to be aware of this challenge so as to avoid discouragement. They should also remember that when they enter into new territories and take on pioneering roles of leadership, they will have a new environment and fresh minds to work with, that have not developed the negative passivity that characterizes many in the existing congregations that have lost their zeal for outreach and mission. In the same line of thought, Van Gelder and Zscheile (2011) stated that "It has often been observed that starting a new congregation with a missional imagination and posture is easier than reorienting existing ones. This is so in part because the process of planting a new church is inherently missiological and open ended" (p. 161).

When one observes the cultures of the people groups of unentered areas, a common characteristic is the fact that most of them are community centered and revolve around the idea of belonging to a certain tribe, community, or family. Therefore, for one to be a pioneer leader, they should first be accepted and respected by those living in the community. To strengthen this notion, Elliston (2000) wrote, "For a person to emerge as a leader in a community, he/she must be seen by that community to be trustworthy and competent. The task of the person who is facilitating the development of another person as a leader will focus the skill, knowledge, and character development in ways which will relationally empower him/her in that setting" (p. 248). Luecke (1990) also gives another useful piece of advice to pioneering leaders, especially in the context of unreached areas, when he asserts, "Be sure that individual leaders and groups reach out to find and recognize what is perhaps more noble, admirable and excellent than what a church fellowship is currently doing. That is how the joy of new worthwhile endeavors begins and expands" (p. 167).

5. Conclusion

As it has been discussed, church leadership plays a crucial role in the advancement of the Gospel and in regards to the mission of reaching un-entered territories it is essential that we as a church seek to promote and equip leaders that will be most effective in this great and seemingly insurmountable task. Therefore, this study has concluded that pioneering leadership, is a leadership style that dives boldly into the challenge of advancing into new un-entered territories despite the many challenges and uncertainties that may be faced. It is a leadership style that is characterized by an Abrahamic like faith in going where God sends and Christ-like compassion for souls that are perishing. Its principles are not only founded

in the Scriptures and supported by the Spirit of Prophecy but are also proving to be beneficial in the realms of business and other growth-oriented organizations. In order to accomplish the mission of preaching the Everlasting Gospel in the context of the Three Angels Message to every kindred, tongue, and tribe on the earth, the church needs leaders who aim is not merely to settle but to be pioneers who continue moving until the mission is accomplished. In other words, the church needs pioneer leaders because "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" (Luke 10:2). May God be exalted!

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THESIS ABSTRACT

TITLE: EXPLORING THE SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN A SELECTED PHILIPPINE ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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Research advisor: Dioi Cruz, DMin
Date completed: January 2018

Today, spirituality is a concept that covers not only religious groups but also the world at large. However, small differences exist and for religious groups, spirituality is linked with faith in God; thus, shaping the beliefs of the members and becoming one of the reasons for membership growth. Spiritual commitment is the basis of spiritual growth among Christian denominations at large and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular. When church members move to foreign countries as students, they face many challenges which impact their spiritual commitment.

This research study explored the lived experiences of 9 international students from a selected Seventh-day Adventist higher education institution. This higher education institution was located in a highly urbanized setting in the Philippines. The purpose of this case study was to explore how international students maintain their spiritual commitment while studying at the selected higher education institution. The instruments for data collection included participant observation, semi-structured interview, and documentation. The major findings led to the conclusion that international students at the selected institution perceived spiritual commitment as being consistent with the relationship with God.

The findings also showed that culture shock and complacent attitudes were the main barriers to the spiritual growth of the selected participants. The institution in general helped students grow spiritually and remain spiritually committed. However, the participants mentioned that the integration of faith and learning was not so much visible in some of the classes they had attended. According to the participants, the fact that the integration of faith and learning was not so much visible in some of the classes discouraged them spiritually. This research study helped students and church leaders understand the experiences of the international students and help them nurture their faith.

CRITICAL BOOK REVIEWS

The Bible, Cultural Identity, and Missions, edited by Daniel Berchie, Daniel Kwame Bediako, and Dziedzorm Reuben Asafo. Colorado Springs, CO: Cambridge Scholars, 2016. 470 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1-4438-8586-7. Hardcover US$57.99.

Daniel Berchie, Daniel Kwame Bediako, and Dziedzorm Reuben Asafo's book *The Bible, Cultural Identity, and Missions* provides a helpful resource in understanding the scripture, culture and its related emphasis in missions. Berchie, a Senior Lecturer, Bediako, an Associate Professor of Old Testament Studies, and Asafo, an Associate Professor of Theology, all of Valley View University, Oyibi, Accra, Ghana, blend their knowledge with their experience of the teaching of the Bible to space out the difference and connections that exist between the Scripture and its implementation in doing missions. The editors bring together a group of well-written articles that set out practical methods to three of theology's most captivating subjects, namely The Bible, Cultural Identity, and Mission. Each of these foci is essential to both the astute Christian theologian and the believer since they form the primary tenets of what Christians believe. The editors observe that "African biblical scholars are asking for intercultural dialogue between our African cultures and the cultures in the biblical texts that we read. In that interaction, we envisage a give and take process. In this process, we learn things from the Bible and we contribute our quota to the interpretation of the Bible. This is the way of the moment when subject interpretation of the Bible is not seen as anathema. It is my hope that more people will be receptive to this way of looking at reality of reading the Bible today" (p. xx).

The twenty-six articles are considerable resources taking its advantage from a common geographical context or point of view. The first four articles address issues in relation to mission and how the concept of mission should be understood in the African context. It starts from diagnosing the problem which is contained in the first article "The Bible, Culture Identity and Mission: A Biblical Appraisal" by setting out that "the Bible as a 'word of God', it did not fall down to us all at the same time unmediated. The contents of the Bible are captured for us through the medium of the Jewish

people. Thus the assumptions and motives of the Jews, who preserved the Bible for us, can be gleaned in the word they have preserved for us" (p. x). The study then offers a prescription or treatment to the issue in the concluding statement that "God is not a Jew or is God tied to the Jewish culture to the neglect of other cultures. God found it necessary to put us here and revealed himself to us" (p. xix).

Whereas the next four articles are on studies in relation solely to the Ghanaian context, the following next four articles focus on Pentecostalism, spirituality, and religious tolerance. In a like manner, the following eight articles give insightful exegetical studies of issues of some selected text and passages, and their implicational relation to the African context, while the next three articles deal with contextualization of some traditional concepts and practices as a means to reaching out and doing missions in Africa. The last four articles explore some contemporary issues of discourse that centers on gender, dancing in worship, and trending mission strategies in Africa. All these are aligned in a way to providing a comprehensive reference for readers and practitioners in the biblical enclave or ministry.

The main thesis or idea that runs through the book is how readers of the Bible should view and understand its content given in a cultural background, and how the principles could be used in doing missions. Missiologists and readers alike will be effectively equipped in their service to God and the people they serve by maximizing their mission approaches to meet the current challenges presented in the church's ministry in Africa. Since God have unique things to accomplish through the missions to people groupings across the continent, there is the need to exercise contemporary strategies in transforming bright potential into enduring reality. This embraces all areas of a missions and ministry in Africa. From service to both God and humanity, and to finishing God's work assigned to His church and the individual. All of these start from a special call to mission and its subsequent development along the ministry. God thus places responsibility to all in His service concerning their understanding of Him from the personal level and its relation in doing mission across the globe.

The integration of Biblical understanding with cultural valves in missions is also explored by Berchie, Bediako, and Asafo. They highlight the preparation and its associated importance of how and when to approach the Scripture and mission. These are very important due to diverse issues associated with culture and missions. The integration of concepts from modern mission theories into the methodological approaches and directly applying them to practical setting in missions seems to be good and interesting. Though there are considerable differences between modern and ancient mission strategies when it comes

to doing missions in Africa and its responsibilities. The authors of the articles provide convincing and real cultural context examples ranging from biblical era to modern times in demonstrating different mission approaches and styles. By highlighting the trending mission strategies, the authors brings to bear the best approach to do in mission and ministry where God's people are to be cared for.

Culture and missions somehow goes hand-in-hand. One cannot undertake a good mission outreach if he or she is do not properly understand the culture of the people within which missions are carried out. Missions is a reflection of culture. The authors' approach in both areas show the need to effectively addressing each in our appreciation of the Bible. The church in Africa's Missiological experience coupled with the knowledge of the authors makes the book a good material for the Bible students, pastors and those interested in missions.

The book is an interesting piece to read. People in their quest for personal understanding of the cultural context in Africa and their possible integration with the Bible should embrace this book. The topics are well arranged together and not scattered throughout the book. A major contributing strength of the book is the array of Biblical support to most of the issued discussed in the book. Also the way they are intertwined and presented in an academic and scholarly style makes the book good to both people in missions and those in the academia. Berchie, Bediako, and Asafo's group of enthusiastic authors who are also experts does an outstanding work of offering a superfluity of notes and additional references within each article which present a priceless understandings on a wide range of areas and approaches. Due to the topical arrangement of the articles, it is also easier finding materials or reference on a particular subject of interest. The introduction which is a relevant article is provided to give practical understanding of the Bible, culture and missions as a way to following the subjects under discussion later in the book. The articles also covers specific aspects of the subject under review to give better presentation of the topic. This makes the book particularly beneficial and handy for swift referencing. The editors' unique selection of contributors in the compilation of this handbook makes the book worth reading. The authors are some of the most esteemed, educated, keen pastors in the religious world, authors, and teachers in their own rights across Africa. Their combined scholarship and insights offers an implication for biblical theology in the area of Bible and missions. This intellectual and scholarly teamwork enhances assurance in the strength of the entire book. One surprising thing in the book is the authors' use of certain practices in their

experiences to give support for certain practical elements and assumes that these must be applicable to all situations and contexts/settings. In a way these are good, however, special consideration to be given to different situations and context as even within the African setting there are disparaging understanding of some cultures. Also Missiologist and the church settings must be aware of the place of culture in missions and ministry, and the great possibility for clashes of worldviews due to the multiplicity of cultural backgrounds.

Though Berchie, Bediako, and Asafo establishes a biblical basis for achieving and advancing missional orientation and impact from a well view point of the cultural identity from the African perspective, they fell short to ascribe tangible Christian cultural practice that will help and strengthen the individual in adhering to Christ teaching and methods that bring perfect solutions to achieving the goals of doing mission. Also most of the cultural issues discussed in the book seems to concentrate mostly in Ghana and Nigeria with the neglect of the several cultural settings and identities across the African continent. This could be seen as the editors and most of contributing authors residing in these two countries—Ghana and Nigeria. The authors' practical ways of attending to the issues to create awareness are good and insightful in providing motivation and strength for the individual to find and develop true identity for doing mission in Africa. However, the question that rings in the ear is "are these the best way to approach the issue?" Also "can the church's quest to deeply penetrate the African continent to their attainment of the goals be long lasting when Christ is still presented as the Christ of Palestine to the Africa?"

I am overwhelmingly impressed by the content of the book. It is worth reading as it gives an in-depth explanation on biblical strategies for undertaking a successful mission in the African continent, as well as understanding the scripture, culture and its related emphasis in missions. A fact is that readers of the Bible read it—and the world—through Western eyes. Undeniably, people approach the Bible with cultural behaviors which is deeply ingrained in the forms of interpreting the world as well as our interpretation and understanding of Scripture. This has somehow called for a conventional in the discourse on the interpretation of the Bible in cultural context. The church together with its members may be directed by God to enter a foreign culture that may not share their world view, as in the case of the numerous cultural identities on the African continent. Or, they may be directed to enter the culture that surrounds them, which can be devoid of the overt influence of a Christian world view. If so, then there is the need to carry out such a duty with an understanding that the Lord respect cultural values that is why the Scripture in written with a particular cultural

context. The Lord will demonstrate His power through them as the surrounding culture responds, if they could undertake mission with a clear acknowledgment of the cultural world view of the people. Indeed the believer's heart for the advancement of God's mission should lead him or her to acquire the need strategies in entering certain unknown cultures. Mission in Africa need people with action oriented mind. People who attempts new things, takes initiative, and works toward something in the diversity of manners.

I recommend that every pastor, leader, teacher, particularly those interested in doing mission in Africa, should have a copy of *The Bible, Cultural Identity, and Missions* in his or her library. Also churches and institutional libraries should have copies to assist students and members to have access to this volume. Readers will find the rich insights and principles for reflection and review on cultural issues and mission strategies in Africa amidst the diversity that abounds from both within and outside. The volume will be beneficial to readers in the area of advancing the course of God and the church in Africa and those who seeks to develop their mission skills from a biblical and spiritual perspective in the African context. It is a major contribution to discourse in the Bible, culture, and missions as an area of study. I commend the editors and the contributing authors for such a work.

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Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction, by Ellis R. Brotzman and Eric J. Tully. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2016. 255 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0801097539. Softcover US$24.99.

Over the years of scholarship, textual criticism has gradually become a major point of discourse and plays relatively a maximal role in the OT debate. Moreover, there has been a significant change in the implications for interpretation and discussion in the OT. In this volume—which is a second edition of Ellis R. Brotzmans' book in 1994—Ellis R. Brotzman and Eric J. Tully, a senior professor of Old Testament at Tyndale Theological Seminary in the Netherlands and an assistant professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School respectively expands and update the introductory issues in Old Testament

criticism. They believe that an up-to-date appreciation and description of the OT textual issues should be known by the reader before he/she begins to exegete OT passages.

As serious studies in the OT Scripture requires a considerable knowledge of the practice and theory of textual criticism, this book introduces the reader to "the discipline of OT textual criticism in a practical, accessible way without oversimplifying matters" (p. 1) in this second edition. They simplify the complex and complicated theories of textual antiquity of the Old Testament to enhance easy read and understanding in this edition. This is because an appreciation of the vast array of variants, early ANE writings, and the principle of establishing the best OT text would make possible the study of the relation between the critical text problems and the Hebrew Bible's intent to the reader. The authors assert that one cannot become a great exegete of the text if he/she refuse to practice textual criticism in biblical exegesis and interpretation, as the enterprise of "textual criticism gives us tools to correct manuscripts and establish the original text" (p. 4). They also affirm the traditional position on the transmission of the OT text that "the OT Scriptures were produced from the time of Moses to the time of Malachi, that is, from about 1400 BCE to around 400BC" (p. 21).

Aside the introduction and the conclusion sections which set the pace and summarizes the results of the study respectively, the book is outlined in eight chapters. Chapter one entails the writing in the ancient Near East—the Mesopotamian region. The writings explored includes: Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Alphabetic, and writing in the OT (in this case Hebrew and Aramaic). The history of each is survey from their first system of pictorial nature to their final forms. The authors justify their method and purpose by establishing the need for a better discourse and understanding between the OT text and the critical issues that comes with it. This is attained through a thorough analysis of some topics from the fields of text development and transmission.

While chapter two sums up the history of transmission of the text of the OT from the writing of the individual biblical books to the current period, chapter three presents the discourse of the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Masoretic Text—the most important Hebrew manuscript presently known. On the other hand, chapter four brings to bear some of the important ancient versions like the Greek Septuagint/LXX, the Aramaic Targums, the Syria Peshitta, and the Latin Vulgate. The contribution of these ancient versions are also emphasized in their relation to the study of the OT text.

In dealing with the how most original readings are determine, chapter five introduces on the critical apparatus and the layout of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) and the Biblia Hebraica Quinta (BHQ). The notes from both the BHS and BHQ has become the base for textual work of

Biblical Studies students. Chapter six also assess the inadvertent and intentional scribal changes introduced to the OT text from the previous generations and along the centuries. The Scribal errors are made up of those produced as a result of physical defects in ancient scrolls, the inadvertent errors are introduce into the text by scribes unknowingly, and intentional changes in the text result from scribes trying to supply text to suit their understanding of the passages. All these are thoroughly discussed with illustrated examples.

Chapter seven also looks at the internal and external evidences verified in establishing the principles of best text. And chapter eight gives a practical example of textual criticism using the book of Ruth as a paradigm. The authors' example of Ruth 4:2 show that the critical apparatus of the BHS noted as a postulates that the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint include *Boaz* as the subject of וַיִּקַּח. A look at the MT version of the verse shows that although the subject of the וַיִּקַּח may be to some extent ambiguous, the context points toward Boaz as the subject. This shows that both the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint provides explicit subject of וַיִּקַּח with "their tendency to make things more obvious" (p. 173), but "the MT is original and coherent" (p. 174).

Though the authors establish that "a whole series of unintentional variations *are* introduced into ancient OT manuscripts by the human frailties of the scribes" (p. 117, italic emphasis mine and supplied), they do not render the authority and inspiration of the Hebrew Bible void. Rather, they present interest in doing textual criticism to unearth the original wording of the OT—the correct use of Scripture.

In addressing textual differences OT textual criticism, the matters of OT tenet and the Hebrew text are convolutedly related with a good dichotomy between a text's achievement of its final literary form and the commencement of the text's process of transmission. Unlike the first edition, the second incorporate some of the critical issues proposed by Emmanuel Tov in his book *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012)*, and Ernst Würthwein in his volume *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014)*. Brotzman and Tully's discussion of these available works on the subject help our understanding of the development of the OT.

Currently, textual criticism and lexicography are somewhat interrelated that when a discourse of the former ignores the latter leaves the reader inadequately informed. This is lacking on this edition. Also whereas the inductive approach to using BHS, as introduced by Brotzman and Tully, is of great value the reader, it may as well be intimidating due to the redundant materials that appears in its borders.

The textual criticism and analyses of the issues are apt for many Biblical scholars. If one wants to introduce students to the textual criticism of the OT and its logical exegetical conclusions, Brotzman and Tully's work is probably the best. Seminary students and scholars alike will immensely benefit from this volume. Of special importance is the authors' provision in the appendix of an English key to BHS which is a modification of Hans Peter Ruger's "An English Key to the Latin Words and Abbreviations and the Symbols of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart, Germany: German Bible Society, 1985)." Above all, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction* offers a good and useful introductory resource to textual criticism for students of the OT with the basic knowledge of OT languages.

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The End of the Timeless God, by Ryan. T. Mullins. First edition. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016. 248 pp. ISBN-978-0-19-875518-0. Hardcover US$110.00.

Ryan T, Mullins has distinguished himself, at a tender age of 39, as a scholar in systematic theology and philosophy of religion. He earned his doctoral degree from the University of St Andrews in Philosophy of Religion. A prolific writer and a Fellow of Analytic Theology at the University of Notre Dame Center for Philosophy of Religion. Besides, he visits many campuses to teach or make presentations.

The book, *The End of a Timeless God*, is a must read for anyone who wants a cutting age scholarly discussion on the controverted subject of divine timelessness. The book is an academic product that has been produced alongside a series of scholarly books that utilize an analytical theological approach in their discussion. In *The End of a Timeless God*, Mullins is non-apologetic in his ferocious attack on divine timelessness. He argues for divine temporality by use of several perspectives in his book.

Mullins puts his focus on the concept of time as a thematic thread to argue for the option why timelessness should not be preferred against the temporality of God. Presentism and Creation are discussed in connection to the timeless God. Timelessness and its interplay with four dimensions of eternity are at the center of the discussion, while incarnation takes the terminative part of the corpus of Mullins' book.

To drive his argument home, Mullins explains the distinctives of what constitutes time through existing theories of time (p. 14), inclusive of

physical and metaphysical dimensions. Sensing the need to be clear with terms in any scholarly discussion to eliminate an escalation of academic disputes on a subject matter, he observes this rule most appropriately in the discussion of timelessness. In so doing Mullins is so careful to attempt to reduce, at most, objections to his premise of argument, while at the same time he sets delimitations to hold his dialogue on timelessness.

Challenging a view that is widely held is no easy task for any scholar. Mullins defies all these odds in his treatise of time conceptualization in relation to the ontology, temporality or timelessness. Metaphysical (p. 35) or physical (p. 32) view of time are carefully considered against the background of timelessness. He concludes his discussion on time by observing that time's sequence is a result of divine creation.

Related to the element of time and timelessness, Mullins proceeds to make an analysis of the interplay between timelessness and eternity. He does so after a discussion on what constitutes eternity. In the third chapter he looks at divine immutability, simplicity, impassibility and the duration of time. He argues, repeatedly, against scholars who have used time and eternity to advocate for timeless (p. 44). The flaws of such scholars and a historical overview of classical philosophy (p. 52) are reviewed with an intuition that goes beyond the obvious analysis. Mullins' book is made unique on this element by his boldness to challenge the traditional view, (p. 72) even though he does proffer another preferred option in this section.

A traditional approach is to conceive of divine timelessness in the context of Presentism and omniscience. Mullins tackles this view, first by observing how "anachronistic," (p. 75) it is for scholars to view eternalism in relation to omniscience. He addresses the element of how classical Christianity was rooted on presentism. For anyone who has an appreciation of the influence of classical philosophy on classical theology, would appreciate the genius of Mullins' strength of analysis from this perspective as a methodology to comprehend the nuances of divine omniscience and Presentism. He mentions and discusses Augustine (p. 77) foremost, as a church father not to be missed once classical theological discussion is undertaken.

Interestingly, Mullins discusses the doctrine of creation ex nihilo, whether it should be based on timelessness (p. 101), before he addresses the shortfalls of timelessness's position that God sustains an already existing universe. What is of paramount import is that such an argument is self contradictory in Mullins' view because he observes that a timeless God would lack temporality and location (p. 109). Accordingly, he concludes this discussion by noting the limitations of denying the Creatorship of God before he posits the dangers of blending timelessness to divine simplicity and immutability.

In chapter six Mullins handles the incompatibility of a four-pronged dimension of eternalism and timelessness. In this section Mullins, by considering the scholarship of selected scholars, such as Katherin Rogers (p. 128), shows how the four-pronged dimension is not tenable with timelessness. The deficiencies of ex nihilo based on timelessness are reinforced in the same chapter with the works of Proclus used as an example (p. 134). Mullins' argument makes for a self convincing conclusive discussion that vindicates divine temporality as a reality that is connected to divine ontology.

In his last chapter, Mullins serves his analytical theological handling of the subject by a look at incarnation and its connection to the world of timelessness. Incarnation is a subject of intense interest to the doctrine of God and salvation, and for an analytical theologian in the realm of philosophy to use this aspect seems a herculean task. However, for Mullins it is a preferred avenue to dispute timelessness in favor of temporality.

First, he brings to notice the major tenet of time in the context of time, to be change, an aspect he has argued for strongly in the book. Temporality, he argues, is based on "change" (p. 157). When change takes place, temporality is present. The reality of divine assumption of human nature evidences temporality of God, for Mullins. Further, he identifies and discusses the Christological elements that are models to the discussion of incarnation and temporality. The chapter considers the diverse views, however it is an attempt to establish a composite, Christological view for two different sides of the worldview; presentists and those of the "four-dimensional eternalism" (p. 163). In the process of doing so Mullins is careful to navigate through the identifiable corners to the discussion.

Second, Mullins discusses the ontological relationship between the divine and humanity of Christ. He does this by explaining the nature of the shortfalls and allays of nestorianism and the implications it causes on the Person of Christ. He highlights the relationship of the divine nature to the human, for which he uses the expression Son. A closer consideration of the contradictory nature of the human and the divine to exist in one Person is a problem Mullins attempts to resolve. Subordination of the Persons of the Godhead is a debate that has raged for the centuries among scholars and laity of all persuasions. Timelessness affirms eternal subordination at the same time assuming equality of the Godhead, a paradox that is untenable with Mullins in his analysis (p. 188). If the Son were to be eternally subordinate, timelessness' deficiency of a plausible argument in this line of thought becomes visibly weak. An analytical theology of this element makes this angle of argument to be interesting.

On the doctrine God, Mullins' argument races to a conclusion by declaring that the timeless God cannot assume a body, through incarnation. Further, Mullins notes the connection of impassibility possibilities

concerning the death of Jesus on the cross. That which is temporal cannot affect what is timeless, he posits. If God is not temporal and He was not affected in a temporal way by what happened on the cross, then this creates and suffers a huge defeat to the doctrine of salvation. Mullins explores this aspect in detail when he considers the embodiment of God in the incarnation (p. 189). As a quick analogy to drive his point, Mullins uses the "de se" (p. 192) concerning knowledge to express and explain away the arguments of the Christ of a timeless worldview. Mullins concludes this section by stating that atemporality or timelessness affects the very center of the gospel.

The book ends with the author acknowledging that there are many issues to be considered. These include science and time, biblical perspective on time, the "truth- maker theory" (p. 204) that posit future lines of discussion. His final conclusion to the book is a strong appeal not to be missed, for it evidences strong conviction or passion that temporality is the only tenable option for the Christian.

The book, *The End of the Timeless God*, deserves prioritization to anyone who places doctrines and Christian tradition discussions on a high pedestal. It has been written with a high degree of appreciation of the impact of classical philosophy on classical Christianity down to the 21st century. It is a book that manages the diverse arguments for timelessness with one who has proved himself to be conversant with philosophy of religion. Many books are on the market, whether one thinks of great philosophers or church fathers, Mullins' book is an excellent though not easy to read book. It is ideal for all those with a keen mind to go beyond the obvious in their search for a deeper understanding and appreciation of the divine temporality a preferred evangelical Christian option against the God of timelessness.

Mullins has done a highly commendable work on this book, though he fails to include what would have been essential elements to the discussion, such as timelessness and eschatology, for example. These elements needed to be part of this book, to establish the coherence of his arguments with such fundamental doctrines of the Christian church. This element and its implications on salvation, for example would have added to the solid stand for divine temporality the books takes. The book must be used with full knowledge that it is lacking of biblical references, because it has been written from a scholarly analytical philosophical perspective.

I found Mullins' book a natural attraction. I believe it should be insightful to others with an appreciation for the doctrine of God. Divine temporality is more tenable with biblical theology, than timelessness that is pillared on classical philosophy. For evangelical scholars who want to have more reasons and value for their stand on divine temporality, The End of

the Timeless God is the right book to have on the shelf as part of cutting age material.

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A Biblical History of Israel, by Ian Provan, Philips V. Long and Tremper Longman III. Second edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2015. 486 pp. ISBN-978-0-664-23913-8. Softcover US$29.00.

There are many books that have been authored on the history of biblical Israel, and many of them are introductory to the origin and development of the nation of Israel in general. In *A Biblical History of Israel*, the three authors somewhat take a rather unique approach to this general tradition. My goal in this critical book review is to make a quick overview and analysis of the arguments proffered by the authors for a biblical based history of Israel.

The three authors, all of them professors; Ian Provan, Philips V. Long and Tremper Longman III, are acclaimed biblical professors of the Old Testament. Ian Provan, a PhD graduate of Cambridge University, whose main academic work focused on one of the historical books; Kings. He studied biblical archaeology and medieval history. A scholar with a track record of publishing books and articles. A minister of religion in the Church of Scotland. At a mature age of 60, his teaching carrier has seen him through the academic corridors of the universities of Edinburgh, Wales, and College of Kings among others. He currently leaves in Canada and teaches Biblical Studies at the Regent College.

Philip V. Long, born in 1951, got his PhD from Cambridge University. His dissertation was on the reign and rejection of king Saul. Besides, he has earned degrees from Wheaton College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He also studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A published scholar and a Presbyterian minister of religion. Also, he has contributed in the translation of the NIV Bible among other outstanding academic endeavors. He currently teaches at the Regent College.

Tremper Longman III, holds an MPhil and a PhD from Yale University, in addition to degrees earned from Ohio Wesleyan University and Westminster Theological Seminary. Born in 1952, an outstanding theologian whose major contributions include the New International Commentary on the Old Testament Dictionary, with special focus on the

books of Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes. His teaching experience has taken him to Fuller Theological Seminary and Canadian Theological Seminary, and currently serves at the Regent College.

For scholars who are abraced with studies on the OT and specifically on the history of Israel, it has become common practice among critics to refute the reliability of the historicity of the OT. This is a trend that has been accelerated since the enlightenment period with the arrival of the historical critical method popularized in the 19th century by Julius Wellhausen. Archaeology and scientific methodologies have contended for a superior place above the biblical history. Narratives of the bible have been given a fresh look and at best relegated to the peripherals when discussing the historical background of Israel. Provan, Long and Longman, in their book seek to re-ascertain the primacy of biblical history in the discussion of a history of Israel. The three are evangelical scholars whose scholarly perspective takes the bible as authentic and preferred document to establish the history of Israel. Other branches of learning do have a place in the discussion, but not to replace Scripture.

The book is outlined in a simple and coherent and easy to follow structure. The first part deals with historical and historiographical elements and their relationship to the bible. Part two deals with the history of Israel from Abraham down to the Persian Empire. Sub sections that follow make it easy for the reader to follow the authors' discussion chronologically. For purpose of our critical analysis we will further break the parts as we discuss each of the elements they contain.

Part one is divided into 5 sections; How scholars try to kill OT history, knowledge and faith, knowing about the history of Israel, narratives of the past and a biblical history of Israel. Long, Provan and Longman analyze the reasons why there is an attack on the OT and its historicity. They do so by doing a response to the arguments that have been posited by critics. All the five sections are connected in their thematic focus in that they seek to look at the real causes that have negatively impacted OT history and historiography.

In the first section, the authors take examples of scholars who are critical of the historicity of the OT head on. These are Soggin, Miller and Hayes, to begin with. They analyze their arguments and make a response to their positions against the biblical option. It apparent to the three scholars that much of what Soggin, Miller and Hayes are positing conclusions based on claims rather than solid evidenced scholarship.

In section two, they look at knowledge and faith and focus at Thomas Thompson a critic of the OT, whose assertions they argue against in the light of the biblical record. However, they bring something new to their observation, i.e., Thompson is making arbitrary claims that are

epistemological in nature (p. 38). In other words they attempt to take a unique look at the scholars' work, for all the scholars they analyze, by looking at the macro picture and driving factors of the reasoning behind it.

The third and the fourth section are closely related in that Provan, Long and Longman are addressing issues related to ideology, archaeological, textual and historiography. They make a response to Baruch Halpern (p. 59), who describes a view of accepting the OT text as "puzzling." In addition they tackle Perez who asserts by implication that the OT's narratives are "non-absolute," (p. 102). Shearer West's arguments that reduce the OT text a mere "representation" (p. 102) of a deeper reality, are not spared either. In these two sections the authors deal with biblical narratives in the light of the questions of fiction or reality.

The last and final section deals with a biblical perspective to the history of Israel. In this section, the three are discussing the rational why a biblical perspective is to be preferred following a careful analysis of the other arguments from the critics of the historicity of the OT. This section seems most appropriate in that it gives the reader a quick connection to the main issue the authors are contending for, i.e., the bible is a reliable text to establish a history of Israel. In this regard they proffer few positions to effect this option; the bible is historical, the OT text must be uniquely studied and taken as is. Extra non-biblical texts help understand the OT text but should not be considered more seriously (p. 141). The bible scholar should be "attentive," (p. 142) to other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, without making them an authority on the history of Israel.

Part two of the book is carefully divided into seven sections that are taking the journey of Israel from the progenitor of the nation Abraham to the period of the Persians. What is common in these sections is their interrelatedness that gives a flow of the author's thematic issue a binding thread. The book's main focus is kept alive in all the sections. The Genesis account and exodus, the conquest, the three phases of the monarchical periods, exile and post exilic periods, and a conclusion.

In the first section, Long, Provan and Longman, because they are arguing for a historicity of the OT text, begin by looking at the life of Abraham in the context of the Ancient Near East (ANE). The patriarchs setting, their progression from being pastoralists, through the period of Egyptian bondage, right to the exodus and wilderness wondering for 40 years. By looking at the life of the patriarchs, the authors are playing on the ground of critics, and from there seek to show both historically and through historiography how the narratives evidence the fact of genuine history. The mention of Israel on the Merneptah (p. 155), is noted among other evidences to argue for a historicity of Israel. Provan, Long and Longman note the arguments of other scholars who have argued for the historicity of Israel, among them Kenneth Kitchen who first apologizes and then

observes that to refute Israel's historicity is "con-nonsense-us" (p. 155), in contrast to the usual claim that says there is "consensus" (p. 155) concerning the denial of Israel's history.

The narratives of Joseph play a key role in the argument for a historical Israel (p. 172), along with its theological implications. Theological implications are an example of what happens when the history of Israel is denied. Joseph's connection to Egypt and the chronology of figures that are attested in Egyptology, all these facts argue for a historical Israel.

Moses, the liberator of Israel is brought into the discussion. This is so because the narrative of the birth of Moses is attributed to the Akkadian king, Sargon's legend of birth in Mesopotamia. The authors then make an analysis of Hebrew Bible and the ancient texts to dispute the Sargon legends. Diminishing such legends is a case for a historical Israel for Provan, Long and Longman.

The exodus date has generated debate even among those who accept the historicity of the bible but are divided among the minimalists and maximalists. The authors take opportunity of this issue for it is also used to argue for a non-historical Israel. The authors place 1446 BCE as the date of the exodus calculating from 1 Kgs 6:1 which states the building of the temple in 966 BCE, 480 years after the exodus (p. 185). They put attention to this because archaeological data that has been interpreted has mainly been attributed to a 13th century BCE for the exodus, and this discredits the record of the bible as a historical document upon which to construct a history for Israel.

The early monarchical period make the third section the book. Its chronology is carefully dealt with in light of the ANE. A long-standing controversy has existed on the historicity of King David. The debate rages on to this day. By looking at this issue Provan, Long and Longman have plunged into the ring of a disputed biblical character to show case their argument and proffer a suggestion to accept the historicity of David (p. 266). The choice of David, is hoped, serves as a response to anyone who might pose a challenge to their argument as to why they did not select to prove their case of argument on this bible character. The Solomonic kingship and the issue of Jerusalem is also discussed here, though it is fully developed in the fourth section that follows it. Both sections are very much connected for they focus at David and Solomon. Section three deals mainly with the chronology and the works of King Solomon and how they correlate to the text (p. 318) and archaeological evidence (p. 322).

Section five of the book is a historical discussion of the division of the monarch (p.343). It makes a chronological discussion of the kings of Israel's (p.350) alongside the chronological list of Assyrian kings (p. 353), and the Pharaohs of Egypt (p. 372), to showcase historicity of Israel. Later the

authors trace the fall of Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The fall of Israel and Judah is documented in the annals of ancient documents and is attested in historical texts just as the bible records. This is the argument of the authors in their apologetic treatise.

Section six is a discussion of the exile of the Jews from Judah following a chronology of succession of kings and historical events in the OT text. The authors focus at the text more, to discuss their case against minimalist advocacies and insist, for example, that the exilic period must remain as 586 and 539 when the decree by Cyrus was done (p. 379). Jill Midlemas' argument that the period should be renamed templeless, period, is refuted. To go further than this, the authors look at the post exilic period and the fall of the Babylonian empire. The authors have placed the nation of Israel in the context of other nations, to show how historic Israel is as stated in the bible.

The post-exilic period is considered with special focus at characters such as Zerubbabel, Haggai and others, as historical figures in the Persian era. These figures and others such as Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah are discussed along with the building of the second temple in the historicity argument for Israel. In the end elements of the inter-testamental period is given attention to buttress the same case for a historical Israel (p. 408).

Provan, Long and Longman have demonstrated consented effort that takes much from their experience and training as OT biblical scholars, to present a book of outstanding quality. Scholars who are sceptical about a single authored book's biases, though this is difficult to rule out for anyone, here find less to highlight this weakness. The three have written their volume with no apology that they are evangelical scholars on a mission to defend the plausibility of a history of Israel based on the bible, in their book, A History of Israel.

The book begins with an establishment of common ground understanding, when they first discuss what history and historiography mean to the study of OT or the Hebrew Bible (HB). I find this most appropriate for a scholarly discussion of this nature to have, for the reason that a common ground of working definitions is helpful to engage in a fair discussion on any given subject. The authors do not want to assume and be naïve about the need to academically operate on the same platform when it comes to a controverted issue, such as the historicity of the HB. They did not only manage to express their position with clarity but also leave very little if no options for denial of their propositions on the subject.

The book is consistent with its early observation spelled out on the very beginning, i.e., the use of other branches of learning is not to take the place of the bible in the construction of a history of Israel. The authors have been very consistent in this stance and where they took to make references to archaeology or other ancient texts they let the biblical text speak for itself.

While we cannot dispel archaeology, it should be used to add to the understanding of the biblical text, rather than a judge and arbitrator of the biblical text, so they seem to declare.

Any discussion on chronology is bound to add value to any historiographical document or history. The fact that Provan, Long, and Longman chose this tool in their study is highly commendable. It is a method that creates an even and common ground when talking about historical disputes of this nature. In this case, Assyriology and Egyptological chronologies have been used in the chronological investigation of a historical Israel. This was not as exhaustive, as one might have desired, nevertheless it served the intended purpose, i.e to show that Israel fits in the historical chronological timelines of the world that surrounded it.

Scholarly claims must be followed through and not left to themselves, even if they are said to be a common consensus, among scholars. What is consensus is not necessary reality of obtaining facts. The authors help us appreciate and exercise critical thinking in this regard. Theological enterprise is a venture of question asking and attempting to establish solid responses as answers. The authors help us to refuse claims that are not based on untenable arguments.

This is a book that captures the entire timeline of the historical development of Israel from Abraham to the post-exilic period and the building of the second temple. In the process of discussion it makes use of the text, archaeology, anthropology, chronology among other areas of learning, to argue in favor of a biblical history of Israel. As if that is not enough it picks on current OT debated issues on historicity, such as the character of King David. Most convincing is the fact that they share the bankruptcy of attempting to prove, the biblical text using other methods outside the biblical history.

However, l would have expected to see in the book, elements of Israel about their temple cultus or religion in the discussion of the biblical history of Israel. The temple cultus takes a center stage of the economy of Israel's existence. It would have been interesting too to see a discussion on honour and shame, a typical cultural trait or practice of the ANE peoples, included in the discussion. These few elements might have added interesting value to the arguments posited by the authors. Though the book excludes these Israelite or ANE elements, the book is an excellent scholarly material for use by any evangelical who refutes the historical critical methodology and its variations, of interpreting the HB. Graduate students in biblical studies and particularly OT, and professors alike, will find this resource book highly invaluable.

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Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology, by Darrell L. Guder. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. xiv + 203 pp. ISBN: 0802872220. Softcover US$ 19.

The purpose of the book is to show that though Christianity is religion of mission, the spirit of mission had been lost for many centuries due to misunderstanding of the true meaning of mission by giving wrong meanings to mission and using incorrect methods of evangelism which led to dissention and conflict. It also emphasized on how the Christian church could understand the true meaning of mission and get back to the early Church's spirit of mission by avoiding the spirit of division and using appropriate methods in order to evangelize the world and advance the kingdom of Christ.

Darrell L. Guder notes that the study of mission focused on methods and practices, and the theory that support them. Since Mission comes before theology, it is the mother of theology not vice versa. Mission needs two important things: commitment to evangelizing the world and the strategy how to do it (p. 5). The study of mission requires series theological engagement within the different cultural context. This needs to consider the local culture and tradition in order to do theology of mission. This new fact (theology of mission) was the result of modern missionary movement (p. 6).

Guder credited Karl Barth, one of the prominent protestant theologian of the twentieth century, for igniting the theological revolution that resulted in global discussion of mission that reshaped the theology of mission (p. 7). According to Karl Barth, the concept mission was originated from God himself that the Father sending the Son, the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit to this world. This shows the interrelation of the Trinity in the process of sending (p. 8).

As far as sending the Son is concerned, there is an important question to be asked. Is it God the Father alone who send the Son to this world? How about God the Holy Spirit? Is the plan of Salvation laid only by the agreement of God the Father and God the Son? Or by the agreement of the three persons of the Godhead? The Genesis creation story tells us the Godhead involved in creation. (Gen 1: 1-4; John 1: 1-5). Who brought "the Word," one of the Godhead, and mysteriously incarnated Him in the womb of Mary? It is the Holy Ghost (Luke 1: 35). Is this not sending? This implies

that the Godhead equally involved in laying and implementing of the plan of Salvation. Who descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove to confirm that Jesus is the anointed Son of God at his baptism? Holy Spirit (Matt. 3: 13-17). Is this not sending? As God the Father and God the Son send God the Holy Spirit (John 14: 15-26), it is God the Father and God the Holy Spirit who send God the Son. Very often we tend to attribute the sending of the Son as well as the Holy Spirit to God the Father alone. So, sending the Son is not only the act of God the Father but also God the Holy Spirit. Not only Karl Barth and the author, but also many of missiologists missed out this important truth.

Guder pointed out that though the church is missionary by its very nature and now it is appropriate to talk about missional theology, the Western theological tradition for so long has completely ignored the missionary character of the church. Ignoring the missionary character of the church led them to ignoring the need for theology of mission (p. 8). He seems to agree with Karl Barth's unique view of mission: "There is important, complementary distinction between mission and theology. Mission was oriented to gospel communication to the unbelievers, both inside and outside to church…." (pp. 9-10). This seems very strange but it is an important truth. We all understand that communicating the Gospel to unbelievers is Missio Dei "the mission of God" given to His church. But who are unbelievers?

We often tend to think that believers are people who are inside the Church, but unbelievers are people who are outside the church, because they did not accept the Gospel message. But as Karl Barth and the author said, there are unbelievers in the church. When I say "unbelievers," I don't mean nominal Christians, because nominal Christians also believed in God. But there are unbelievers in the church. They not only come to the church, but may even work in the church, not because they believe but for several temporal reasons. The author is right that these people needs the gospel message. In fact, I believe, these are the first group who needs the Gospel message than unbelievers who are outside of the church.

Guder goes on and said that missional theology is not universal theology, but always and essentially local, that is, working out of and in critical interaction with a particular strand of Christian tradition in a particular cultural context. (pp. 13-14). This, I believe, is a fundamental truth that all theologians should be aware. In the modern missionary era, when the missionaries came to Africa, they applied theology without understanding the context. In those days polygyny was common in Africa. Nathaniel G. N. Inyamah has pointed out that though there were several reasons for African societies to practice polygyny, high death rate due to war and epidemics, wealth and political power were the prominent factors (Inyamah, Concordia theological Monthly, Vol. XLIII, March, No. 3, 140).

Without considering the local context, the missionaries forced the husbands to stay with only their first wives and divorce the rest. The divorced wives with their children were forced to flood the Mission Centers and became financially burden (Natasha Erlank "Gendering Commonality: African Men and the 1883 Commission on Native Law and Custom" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 29, (2003) Issue 4: 944.). It is easy to imagine what these divorced wives and their children feel about the Christianity. This hows how missional theology is crucial for the great commission. Theology needs to be contextual and local.

After losing its missionary vocation for many centuries, the church began to get back to the right track in the "nineteenth century." This century was marked as "the rise of modern missionary movements." The rise of many Missionary movements played important role in making Christianity a global movement. Tremendous work was done in Africa, Asia, Latin America and other parts of the world. Due to that, in the first half of twentieth century, Christianity became global movement (p. 178). But, the global character of Christianity had lack of organization in evangelism and inappropriate use of resources. This created an "urgent concern for the unity of Christian witness" that paved the way for the establishment of "The World Council of Churches (WCC)" in 1948 (p. 180-182).

Though one of the prime purpose of WCCA was promoting common witness in work for mission and evangelism, there are many Christian movements who are not members of WCC. We cannot deny the contribution of these Christian Missionary movements for the expansion of Christianity, but we also cannot deny the negative effects that they have. As far as the negative effect is concerned, first, the multiplicity of global Christian Missionary movements will weaken all movements financially and thwart the rapid growth of Christianity. Second, it creates conflict between missionary movements and become an obstacle for evangelism. In the case of my country, different missionary movements were seen as enemies to each other until those who saw this conflict lost their interest to accept the gospel message. Third and very important, ecumenical movements are watering down faithfulness to the biblical truth. They are not preaching and teaching about the biblical doctrines that divides them. Due to that many fundamental biblical doctrines became taboos just for the sake of unity.

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