

The
Mediator



A Journal of Holiness Theology for Asia-Pacific Contexts

**ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Bridging Cultures for Christ
1 Timothy 2:5

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Preface

Renowned author Eugene Peterson contrasts the “involving ear” with the “distancing eye.” He says, “The Christian’s interest in Scripture has always been in hearing God speak, not in analyzing moral memos. The common practice is to nurture a listening disposition—the involving ear rather than the distancing eye—hoping to become passionate hearers of the word rather than cool readers of the page” (*Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 87–88.). His point depends on the interpretive principle that one’s attitude when approaching literature should align with the purpose for which it was composed.

The essays in the present issue began their existence as speeches to be heard, not as words on a page to be seen. They are the induction speeches of five APNTS faculty members on the occasions of their installation as professors (for Modine, Petallar, Tabuena, and myself) and as president (Im).

Modine “talks” about the theology of Scripture, I “share” about innovation in the New Testament, Petallar “discusses” the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as pertains to Holistic Child Development, Tabuena “converses” about intersubjectivity in life and education, and Im “tells” his vision for the future of APNTS.

Because these essays are first of all speeches, they are best read slowly but steadily, the way that spoken words impinge upon the ear. I invite you to imagine yourself in the old Wooten Chapel (for the professors) or the new Cobb Worship Center (for President Im). Place yourself in the audience as you hear the collected wisdom of these APNTS scholars.

Darin H. Land, Ph.D.

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Where Does the Bible Belong in Christian Faith?

March 17, 2009

Mitchel Modine

The following was delivered on March 17, 2009, as my address upon my installation as Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. Two developments in the intervening six years, one internal and the other external, have taken place which affect the content. First and internally, my experience teaching over these years has caused me to rethink some of the ideas expressed in this document. While the substance has not changed, I would express things a little differently. Thus, I have exercised some of my prerogative in editing or deleting some of the statements included in the original which I would either not espouse or would express quite differently. Thus the text below is not precisely what was delivered on the occasion of my installation.

Second and externally, the 27th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, held in Orlando, Florida, USA, in 2009, included the first challenge to the Church's Article of Faith on the Holy Scriptures since the Article was first agreed to in the early 20th century.¹ The proposal, sent in by a very conservative district in the USA, would have altered the Article of Faith from its present text (see below) to one espousing a strict inerrancy view. The General Assembly voted to refer this matter to the Board of General Superintendents, which commissioned a Scripture Study Committee to evaluate this proposal, along with some others, and report back to the 28th General Assembly, in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, in 2013. The committee returned a comprehensive, though not universally accepted, rejection of the proposals.²

¹ I thank the Church of the Nazarene's denominational archivist, Dr. Stan Ingersol, for the information noted here (personal email dated 31 January 2015).

² "Report of the Scripture Study Committee to the 28th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene," *Didache* 13:1 (Summer 2013). <http://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-13-1/892-didache-v13n1-01-scripturestudycommitteereport-king1/file> (Accessed 10 March 2015).

The daily journal of the General Assembly reported, "The Scripture Study Committee

I do not believe in God because I believe in the Bible;
 I believe in the Bible because I believe in God.

The Bible, I think, represents one of the greatest paradoxes of the Christian faith. This is so because, on the one hand, the Bible is a document assembled by countless hands over thousands of years. On the other hand, it is the unswerving testimony of historic Christianity that the Bible is the clearest written record there is of the Word of God. Both of these statements, as anything we might say in theology, require careful precision of language.

The lack of such precision—that is, the unwillingness or inability to maintain the tension—has led to at least two generally fallacious resolutions of the paradox. According to the first, the fact that the Bible does not mention for example, dinosaurs or China—both of which had existed or were still existing when the Bible was written—renders the Bible false for all time. Related to this is the assumption that since the Bible condones slavery, which has been at least officially condemned throughout the modern world, then it must be set aside as an irrelevant or, indeed, evil relic of a bygone age. Both of these assumptions commit the anachronistic fallacy, refusing to engage the Bible on even terms. In other words, we must not judge the veracity of the Bible on the basis of modern knowledge or sensibilities. The second incorrect attempt to deal with the paradox of the Bible commits the all-or-nothing fallacy, suggesting that everything in the Bible must be literally true or else none of it can be true—literally or otherwise. It is this last that will occupy our attention in this essay.

In what follows, I intend to sketch out something of a way of believing the Bible that does not concern itself with the jots and the tittles, with the *hireqs* and the *yodhs*. A sustainable Biblical faith in the 21st century must be able to assimilate information that the Biblical writers could not possibly have anticipated, without thinking that Biblical faith is therefore de-

itself included two biblical scholars, a systematic theologian, pastors, district superintendents, and regional directors, with representatives from five of the church's six world regions." It appears that the region without representation on the committee was Asia-Pacific, where the author serves. "28th General Assembly legislative actions, Thursday, June 27, 2013, Indianapolis, Indiana," <http://www.ncnnews.com/nphweb/html/ncn/article.jsp?id=10012713> (accessed 10 March 2015).

stroyed. Rather than firing burning arrows from the slits in the walls of a fearful orthodoxy that isn't worth defending in the first place, the call I issue today is rather to stand down the archers, lower the drawbridge across the moat, and invite the erstwhile attackers into the fortress. Indeed, what we must do in this time, with cultures at once being drawn together by the global village and being ripped apart by deep ideological struggle, is continually expand our fortress of orthodoxy, our fortress of knowledge. It simply will not do to retreat into our walls under the cover of "The Bible says this," or "The Bible doesn't say that."

For the fact of the matter is, when the Bible disagrees with modern, postmodern, rational, secular, scientific, political, cultural, physical, ideological, sociological, anthropological, psychological, astronomical, geological, and archaeological ideals, statements, beliefs, mores, understandings, suggestions, theories, hypotheses, investigations, conclusions, distinctions, contradictions, arguments, debates, and predictions, perhaps we need not attempt to resolve the dilemma, calling one right and the other wrong. The Bible is not—is not!—a compendium source book of all knowledge for all time. This brings us to the inescapable conclusions at which we should already have arrived if we were paying attention—that, first, there are many things for which and to which the Bible cannot say anything at all; and, consequently, the Bible should not in any way be the only book one reads if one wants to be anything resembling a well-rounded, responsible individual and an effective minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.³ The Bible is a prisoner of its age just as I am a prisoner of my age. All of the cultural and sub-cultural and sub-sub-cultural identifiers which I attach to myself—male, white, American, Generation X, intellectual, religious, Christian, Protestant, Wesleyan, Evangelical, Nazarene, Biblical scholar, professor, missionary—alone and in connection with others, necessarily, inescapably, affect how I read the Bible and how I interact with my world, and how I connect what I read in the Bible with what I

³ John Wesley himself indicated something along these lines when, in the *Minutes* for the year 1766 (Q. 30), he responded to the statement "I need nothing but the Bible," with the caustic words, "This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul." See Randy Maddox, "How John Wesley Read the Bible: Biblical Studies, Wesley, and the Methodists," <http://www.catalystresources.org/how-john-wesley-read-the-bible/> (accessed 10 March 2015).

read in the world. And when they do not go together, as they more often than not do not, even the adjudication I make between the differing and competing and contradictory claims is necessarily, inescapably affected by all of the things that make me me.

The Bible is Literature in Translation

Why should—indeed, why *must*—the Bible not be the only book that you read? Well, certainly you are familiar with the little tune, “The B-I-B-L-E, / yes, that’s the book for me! / I stand alone on the Word of God, / the B-I-B-L-E.” For children this may suffice, but not for adults. For I agree with the Apostle when he said, “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me” (1 Cor 13:11 NIV). As Wesleyans, as Christians, as religious people, as thoughtful people, we do not stand alone on the Bible, though the Bible does stand in the most prominent position.

However, we might not even want to stand on the Bible at all, if by “standing on the Bible” we mean “believing everything the Bible says.” It is simply untrue that disbelief in this or that small or large point that the Bible affirms means that one does not believe in the Bible. There are many things in the Bible which I cannot affirm today: slavery, subjugation of women, genocide, killing children for talking back to parents, to name only four. Maybe those things represented the best wisdom of their day, but they are simply wrong today. No one is really a literal follower of the Bible.⁴ In practice, one literally follows the things with which one agrees (keep the Sabbath Day holy) and ignores the things which one finds distasteful (cut off your hand if it causes you to sin).

I do not believe in God because I believe in the Bible. I believe in the Bible because I believe in God. This means that, should the Bible be proven inaccurate in this or that respect, my faith need not be set aside. It does not present any sort of problem for me that the walls of Jericho did not come down as Joshua 6 reports they did, for archaeology has conclusively demonstrated that Jericho had lain in ruins for nearly two hundred years

⁴ An American journalist named A. J. Jacobs attempted to follow the Bible completely literally for one full year and chronicled the results in *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man’s Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007).

before Joshua is supposed to have gotten there. It does not present any sort of problem for me that, in reality, Kings Omri and Ahab of Israel were far more powerful, far more effective, far more influential than the book of 1 Kings gives them credit for being. It does not present any sort of problem for me that Adam and Eve may not have existed, that the Garden of Eden was not a real place, that Methuselah couldn't possibly have lived to be 969 years old. I do not own slaves; I do not believe people should be killed for adultery; I do not believe it is an abomination to wear a shirt made out of two different kinds of fabric. Many things in the Bible were necessary to say for their own time, but they simply are not relevant for today.

And yet, I believe the Bible. As everyone who has taken any of my Bible classes has already heard me say, there is a distinction that must be drawn in the question of how the wisdom and thought of the Bible relates to the wisdom and thought of the postmodern, post-Enlightenment world. It was one of the characteristics of the Enlightenment to go back to the original sources, to desire to prove the things that could be said, to propose hypotheses and design tests for verification or falsification. Those things which could not be verified—which, for the scientific mind, meant achieving the exact results under the same conditions in a different laboratory—were discarded as human knowledge grew by leaps and bounds. Thus in the post-Enlightenment situation, there is a direct equation between truth and factual accuracy. But such an equation is foreign, even illogical, to the thought-world of antiquity in which the Bible came to be. The Biblical writers were simply unconcerned with factual accuracy in the way we understand it. Thus, when the book of Joshua reports that all persons in a given place were killed by the invading Israelites, one realizes that ancient writers were not concerned with counting bodies in the way that modern historians are. In fact, even today, tribal societies such as those found in parts of Papua New Guinea operate in much the same way as the Biblical histories, hyperbolically suggesting that a victory meant the death of every enemy combatant.

Severing the connection between factual accuracy and truth has implications for the other side of Biblical interpretation as well, namely, not just what the Bible says but what we can say on the basis of, and on behalf of, the Bible. It has long been recognized that the Bible is literature in

translation. It comes down to us in a language different from those in which it was composed, and our society and worldview, as has already been shown, are markedly different from those in which it was composed. Thus it requires significant work of interpretation to discover what it means. In the present scholarly situation, there are two overarching approaches to Biblical interpretation and, as one might expect, the peace between them is not an easy one. On the one side is the older historical-critical scholarship, which contributed in no small measure to the disproving of many of the Bible's historical claims. This in turn led to a reaction in the churches which was at times rather vigorous, with the most extreme form perhaps coming in 20th century fundamentalism. On the other side are the postmodern, reader-centered approaches, arising over the last five decades or so to rock Biblical scholarship at its very foundation, even claiming that such a foundation does not exist. No longer, so this side claims, is objective meaning to be located in the text, but rather ever new meanings can and must be constructed in the interaction between text and reader. I myself locate somewhere in the middle of these two extremes, though perhaps a bit closer to the literary, reader-centered approaches than to the historical, text-centered approaches.

To sum up, the Bible is true, but it is not factually accurate. It is not necessary to believe everything the Bible says in order to believe the Bible. It is perfectly fine to ask someone if she believes the Bible. But one must never ask that person, "Do you believe everything in the Bible?" For this is a question loaded with intellectual dynamite. If it is answered in the affirmative, the questioner may then detonate the bomb by bringing up the question of slavery, or the subjugation of women, or any number of other things. For it is certainly true that a number of dastardly—and, indeed, even bastardly—things have been done with the full support of a "literal" reading of the Bible. What the Bible says may indeed represent some of the best thinking of its time, but that is simply not the case today with a good deal of what the Bible affirms. This is in no way a deficiency of the modern situation, but merely a recognition that the modern situation and the ancient situation are different. There is a Hebrew proverb that runs, "Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in

a different time.”⁵ Truer words perhaps have not been spoken, and indeed we should not confine ourselves to the literal word of the Bible—that is, the words of our ancestors—for we and they were born in a different time.

People of the Book

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have often been described as religions of the book, whether the book be the *Tanak* (the Jewish Scriptures, our Old Testament), the Bible, (Old Testament + New Testament), or the Holy Quran. Our theological ancestor, John Wesley, proclaimed himself to be *homo unius libri*, a man of one book. By this he did not mean that he worshipped the Bible—far from it! Rather, he meant that it was here, and in no other written document, that the God of all the world, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, had left the instructions on how to get to heaven and enjoy eternal fellowship with God. Whatever we can say about the method and the extent of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration of the Bible, and whatever we can say about the somewhat sophistic distinction between the statements, “The Bible is the Word of God,” and “The Bible contains the word of God,” the relationship between what we believe about God and what we believe about the Bible is a close and important one. Again, as was pointed out, religious and theological statements require a great deal of precision, for what we say in one area affects not only what we will say in all other areas, but indeed what we *can* say in those other areas. For example, if one’s understanding of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit on the writings of the Bible tends toward the absolute end of the spectrum, then one is forced to claim that there cannot possibly be any error in the production, copying, transmission, or reception of the Biblical text. Such a position has to contend with all manner of discrepancies and contradictions in the text in its final form, and those who have adopted this position have dealt with these problems in more or less creative, more or less satisfying, ways.

Most unfortunate is when such a complete theory of inspiration hardens into the statement that if there could be shown to be one error in the Bible, then nothing is true in the Bible, including what it says about God

⁵ Quoted in Leonard I. Sweet, *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic* (Dayton, OH: Whaleprints, 1991), 5.

and salvation. In the simplest terms possible, this hardened statement can be described as “I believe in the Bible, therefore I believe in God.” But this is not the faith-statement of historic Christianity with regard to the Bible. In fact, you will be hard-pressed to find, in any of the ecumenical creeds, any statement of the belief in the inspiration of Scripture, pervasive or otherwise, verbal or otherwise. If the earliest Christians had a doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, they did not feel the need to articulate it, which more than likely means it was never a point of contention. This is in contrast to much more important, much more central doctrines like the co-eternality of God the Son with God the Father, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and so on. In other words, our statement of faith is not, and should not be, “I believe in the Bible, therefore I believe in God.” Much more accurate, much more Christian, is the statement, “I believe in God, therefore I believe in the Bible.”

Where Does the Bible Belong?

The second floor of the building, as it were, is the main point at which I am driving in this speech. Where does the Bible belong in the Christian faith? Aside from being the written record of the Word of God, aside from being the more-or-less faithful historical account of the traditions of faith once delivered to the saints and handed on down to us, what is the importance of the Bible for Christian belief, faith, practice, and theology in the 21st century? Article IV of the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene defines the parameters of acceptable statements of belief in Scripture made by Nazarenes in the following manner:

We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

The first thing to be said in explicating this statement is that it is properly placed within the Articles of Faith. As I endeavored to show previously, belief in Scripture must be grounded in belief in God. This means that all statements of faith that place the Bible and its supposed inerrancy in first position should be reevaluated, for they have the order precisely

backwards. Yet there is something more to the value of placing the doctrine of Scripture in fourth place, behind the doctrines of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This makes clear, above all else, that the Bible is not to be worshipped as the fourth member of the “Tetranity,” nor is it to be put in a higher place than God.

But perhaps the most important point of this Article of Faith on Scripture is that it expresses confidence that God has so inspired the Bible to lead us faithfully and without error into fellowship with God. You will notice that, just as the Article itself is properly placed after those on the Trinity, so also it does not suggest that the reliability of our knowledge of God is founded on the reliability of Scripture, but instead that the reliability of Scripture is founded on the reliability of God and God’s promise of salvation. This is a most important point, and that which John Wesley was driving at when he sang his praise to God for revealing in a book—this Book—the way “to land safe on that happy shore,” the shore of Heaven.

There is perhaps no better way to conclude this essay than to quote the passage from Wesley to which I have made allusion a couple of times. It is from his preface to *Sermons on Several Occasions*, in which John Wesley sets out in succinct form his view of the sufficiency of Scripture:

I am a spirit come from God and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen, I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing: the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of [people]. I sit down alone—only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book for this end, to find the way to heaven.⁶

So then, where does the Bible belong in the Christian faith? At the very heart! In spite of all of its confusion, its disagreements, and its culturally-specific problems, it is the Book of God. While it may not point to

⁶ Quoted in Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 88.

the reality of God by itself, God points us the way to God through it. I want that book too. I believe in the Bible, because I believe in God.

Amen.

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**What's New in the New Testament?
Scriptural Resources for Orthoprax Innovation in the Church**

March 16, 2010

Darin H. Land

“There is nothing new under the sun,” so said the teacher of Jerusalem (Ecc 1:9). In some times and places, such a statement could be viewed as positive. It expresses a stability and predictability to life. In other contexts, however, the statement could be seen as a kind of curse: you may think you are doing something new, but in actuality it’s all been tried before.

The polyvalence of such a simple statement regarding newness highlights a problem of Old versus New. This problem can be brought into focus by noting that not everyone is comfortable with change, an observation that seems to pertain across time. There was a saying in the ancient world that the old is better.¹ Yet the modern world often exhibits the same tendency, especially when it comes to religion. As New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce said, “New teaching is disturbing; it forces people to think, to revise their ideas and attitudes. Religious people tend to be conservative, to suspect innovations.”² Yet Christians embrace the new when we call a significant portion of our sacred writings, the *New Testament*. Still, some people are uncomfortable with the contrast implied in the word, new, as applied to the Testaments. Thus, the terms Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament are sometimes used in place of the more common terms, Old and New Testaments.

Nevertheless, there is a need for the new! In the world, new solutions are needed because the old ones have left us with old problems, not fixed problems. Modern inventions create opportunities unknown before, but with new opportunities come new problems. The shrinking of the world causes us to encounter people who are different from us, thus confronting

¹ The saying is reflected in Luke 5:39. See Walter C. Kaiser et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Accordance electronic ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 457.

² *Ibid.*

us with challenges previously un-encountered. Exploitive systems exacerbate inequitable distribution of wealth, compounding human suffering and leading to violence of many kinds.

Even the church is not immune to these kinds of problems, or at least from the results of these kinds of problems. The church experiences resistance to its message because of entrenched beliefs that Christianity is a Western religion. We find ingrown, self-serving congregations, unwilling to embrace the inevitable change accompanying the welcome of strangers. We see denominational protectionism rather than unity-seeking interaction. Leadership is associated with power, wealth and position rather than with spiritual giftedness. Too often we encounter stagnation and a settling for the status quo. Our leaders prefer to be known as effective managers rather than agents of innovation.

Innovative Leadership in the Early Church³

When we look to the early church, we find strong exemplars of innovative leadership. There is problem-solving leadership, honor-sharing leadership, Gospel-spreading leadership, and counter-cultural leadership. In Acts 21, we find an example of leaders solving a self-identified problem, when James and the elders identified a potential problem for Paul. In a certain sense, this problem solving ended badly, since Paul was thrown into prison. But one thing to take away from that very fact is that there is room for mistakes in innovation. We shouldn't be paralyzed by fear that our innovations are going to fail, because God is able to turn our failures to His purposes. Another take-away here is the pro-activity of the leaders. A useful image is the leader as a fellow traveller with the followers, but one who is thinking ahead, anticipating the next move, and preventing problems.

But what happens when unforeseen problems arise? That seems to be what occurred in Acts 6, where the congregation, rather than the leaders, identified the problem. In this well-known episode, the Hellenistic widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food (v. 1). As a result,

³ For further elaboration of many of the points mentioned in this section, see my work, *The Diffusion of Ecclesiastical Authority: Sociological Dimensions of Leadership in the Book of Acts* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2008).

the Hellenistic believers began complaining against the Hebrews—and ultimately, I would argue, against the apostles, who were the ones responsible for the distribution (vv. 1–2). The apostles recognized the grumbling—even though it seems to have been done behind their back (v. 1–2). Rather than respond in kind, the leaders solved the problem by addressing it directly (v. 2). Even more than that, they demonstrated great innovation by raising up additional leaders (v. 5–6). Rather than squelching protest and ruling with an iron fist, they worked with the offended party to arrive at a real solution. Moreover, the new leaders selected to address the problem were themselves from the offended party, as their Greek names indicate. Interestingly, the book of Acts never tells us that they actually “waited tables,” the task for which they had been selected. Instead, we are told of their miracle working and powerful preaching—the very tasks that the apostles were doing!

This brings us to a second feature of innovative leadership in the early church, namely, honor-sharing leadership. In the Hellenistic widow’s episode just mentioned, the apostles seem to have recognized that honor is increased incrementally through hoarding of leadership, but exponentially through shared leadership. They could have resolved the distribution problem themselves, and their honor would have increased among the group. But by sharing leadership, the honor of the whole group greatly increased among whole Jerusalem community (v. 7). Thus, the apostles demonstrated that giving away authority does not diminish the power of the giver, but augments it. Failure to understand this point cripples the church, as leaders place stumbling blocks in the paths of those with the greatest capacity for innovative leadership. When this happens, the potential for church growth is limited to the abilities of the current leadership. Vast though those abilities may be, they are less than the multiplied abilities of multiplied leaders.

A third characteristic of innovative leadership in the early church is Gospel-spreading leadership. The repeated refrain in Acts is, “The Lord added to their number... those who were being saved” (2:47 TNIV; cf. 2:41, 5:14, 11:24). Sometimes the growth was the direct result of narrated leadership actions, as we have just seen in Acts 6. Other times the growth was the result of quiet leadership. After the disciples were scattered due to the persecution that broke out after the martyrdom of Stephen (8:1), the

people took the gospel with them (8:4). This is innovative leadership because they did not become discouraged; rather, they took a bad situation and orchestrated a good result.

This characteristic should become a criterion for effective leadership. Ask yourself: does this proposed innovation lead to people being saved? If the innovation does not have this outcome, then perhaps it should be abandoned. The same could be said, of course, for old forms. If the old leadership patterns and churchly functions are not resulting in people being saved, then it is time to reconsider those activities.

Counter-culture leadership is yet another aspect of leadership visible in the accounts of the early church. Leaders in both the Greco-Roman religions and in Second Temple Judaism—those functionaries who would have comprised the most likely models for leaders in the early church—were not interested in innovative leadership, but in preserving the status quo. Despite these precedents, however, the early church leaders looked for ways to change their present situation. For this reason, it is accurate to describe them as counter-cultural leaders, leading in new ways that differed from the cultural scripts laid down by their counterparts in the established religions of their context.

The early church leaders were also counter-cultural with respect to honor and power. Leaders in the first century were generally concerned for increasing their own personal honor. There was even a special word for this practice, *philotimeomai*, which was used to honor benefactors who paid for the construction of civic facilities such as amphitheaters and temples. Herod the Great was one of the leaders who aggressively pursued *philotimeomai*, building temples, not only to the true God in Jerusalem, but also to Greco-Roman gods in other cities. But the early church leaders demonstrated that increasing honor for subordinates, rather than for self, also increased the honor for all group members. This is clearly seen in Acts 6, when the apostles were instrumental in the selection the Seven. As noted earlier, the result of their action was that “the word of God spread [and] the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly” (v. 7 TNIV). In other words, the whole church was honored in the eyes of the wider community.

Counter-cultural leadership was also displayed in the early church in reference to the availability of leadership. In the wider cultural context,

only certain people could hold religious office. In some instances, only people with the right ancestry could be priests, as was the case in second temple Judaism. In Greek religion, since priesthoods were often attained by purchase, only people with the right wealth could become religious leaders. Elsewhere, only people with the right social standing could aspire to religious leadership. Such seems to have been the case, for example, in the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, comprised, as it was, of the elders. But in the early church, leadership was shared widely, not reserved for the elite alone. This sharing was already noted earlier with respect to the Seven in Acts 6. It is also evident in Acts 12, where Peter empowered the leadership of James upon his departure from Jerusalem. Indeed, an examination of Acts as a whole suggests that the early church leaders, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, actively looked for ways to empower others for leadership. In addition to the instances just mentioned, consider also the empowerment of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13, of Judas and Silas in Acts 15, and of the Ephesian elders in Acts 20.

These instances of innovative leadership inspire and challenge leaders of the church today to do both more and less—more with respect to creatively providing solutions in our increasingly complex and challenging world, and less with respect to placing hurdles and barriers in the way of Spirit-filled prospective leaders. Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (APNTS) is in a privileged position to assist with the development of these emerging leaders.

The Role of the Seminary in Innovation

Many of our students come to APNTS seeking answers to questions arising out of prior ministry experiences. They have encountered issues that need innovative solutions, and they are looking to the Seminary for help in finding those solutions. The bad news is, the Seminary cannot give you innovative solutions. As soon as you copy the innovation, it ceases to be innovative! The better way is to provide you with resources in order that you create the innovation, not try to copy it. Thus, I see the role of the Seminary as offering three benefits to its students.

Students coming to APNTS benefit from exposure. They are exposed to the solutions used in the past and present, giving them perspective on the pitfalls and successes of those solutions. They are exposed also to deep

thinkers in theology, education, and missions—both in the persons of their professors, as well as in the books they read. Exposure also comes in the form of informal discussions with fellow students from across the region and beyond, whereby students encounter the practices attempted in areas beyond their local or national contexts.

Ideally, students also benefit from the modeling of innovation by the Seminary. If the Seminary expects its graduates to be innovative, it must be innovative itself. Seminaries must grow and adapt, not in a reactive way, but in proactive ways. APNTS's partnerships undergirding the StepUP program are an example of such innovation within a seminary. Our Ph.D. program in Holistic Child Development is another example of how APNTS is leading the way with groundbreaking approaches to the needs of people in the world today. But the modeling of innovation is not a checklist, as if we as a Seminary can check "Finished" on innovation. The Seminary must consistently reevaluate its programs for ways of better encountering our world.

An education at APNTS also benefits students by allowing space for reflection and experimentation. As a Seminary student, you have the opportunity to reflect, not just on the courses requirements, but also on your ministry experiences. Consider what you did right and what you could have done better. You also have space for experimenting with innovations. Try different things, and see what works and what does not. Do not expect the Seminary to give you all the answers, but use your time here to learn how to be innovative.

The Role of New Testament Studies in Innovation

Within the Seminary—and in the church more broadly—disciplined study of the New Testament offers resources for innovative leadership. New Testament Studies points the way to the empowerment of leaders, it offers a prophetic critique of the world and the church, and it provides a framework for constraining and evaluating innovation.

Turning again to Acts, we see that empowerment for leadership comes from spending time with Jesus. In Acts 4:13, the opponents marveled that Peter and John had such courage. They rightly attributed their boldness to time spent with Jesus—but they failed to recognize that the two had an ongoing relationship with Jesus, for Jesus was no longer in the grave! We,

too, must spend time daily with Jesus, in prayer and in the Word, if we are to exhibit empowered leadership. Like the early church leaders, we also must receive empowerment through dependence on the Holy Spirit. The power of the Christian leader is ultimately the result of the activity of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. As expressed in Acts 13:3–4, although the leaders of the Antioch church released Paul and Barnabas for missionary service, it was the Holy Spirit who sent them. The Holy Spirit is the leader of the church. For this reason, human church leaders really have no right to hoard their power; instead they must follow the example of the leaders throughout Acts of sharing their power. As a leader, you may be tempted to suppress the leadership opportunities of those under your charge, thinking that your position may diminish if you are surpassed. But the example of the New Testament, as I have shown, proves that that is simply untrue. On the contrary, empowering new leaders enhances the honor of all group members.

However, despite your efforts to empower new leaders, some followers will resist taking on leadership roles. You yourself might be one of those followers, thinking that you will not be an innovative leader but merely a manager of the existing forms passed on to you. As far as I can see, there is no example of how to deal with such a situation in the book of Acts. Those whom God and the community called into leadership responded. However, perhaps that is already resource enough. It challenges us to continually remind people that others before have changed from followers to leaders. If others have done it, they can, too.

The study of the New Testament provides empowerment for innovative leadership in the church, and it also provides prophetic critique. It does so, first, by consciousness raising. Many people, both inside and outside the church, feel that their world is fixed: the way it is now is the way it has always been and always will be. One role of New Testament Studies is articulating for our contemporaries the vision of life that God intended. This is consciousness-raising in that it exposes people to the way that life could and should be. But New Testament Studies must also expose those areas where the church is not functioning as God intended, thereby charging the church to live up to its high calling in God.

The study of the New Testament provides constraints on the direction and extent of innovative leadership, and it also provides resources for

evaluating innovations. The New Testament is a recognizable extension of the Old Testament; if it were not, there would be no meaning to the words “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” Thus, the very existence of the New Testament cautions us to temper our innovations. Our innovations are not to be radical breaks with the past, points of discontinuity. Rather, our innovations should be recognizably connected to the past, even as they are creative, reforming, and new. To achieve this kind of constrained innovation, there are two more resources from Acts to which I want to refer. First, waiting for God’s timing. In Acts 1:4–8, Jesus commands the disciples to wait until they had received power. Prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus’ words as narrated in Acts 2, the disciples’ actions were forgettable, at best. God’s timing is perfect, and when we follow His plan, we operate in His strength. Secondly, operating from the right motives. I need only to mention the cases of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 or of Simon in Acts 8 to make this point abundantly clear. The question for us becomes, are we innovating to draw attention to ourselves, or to bring glory to God?

Orthoprax Innovation

The title of my reflections today refers to orthoprax innovation. There is irony in this juxtaposition, for someone might argue that orthopraxy involves static forms—doing, as one of my mentors used to say regarding a particular kind of religion, “the right things in the right way at the right time by the right people.” But as I have hoped to demonstrate, there is room for innovation within the orthopraxy that I believe the New Testament envisions. Therefore, I charge you: Be innovative!

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The Quadrilateral of Holistic Child Development

August 31, 2010

Nativity A. Petallar

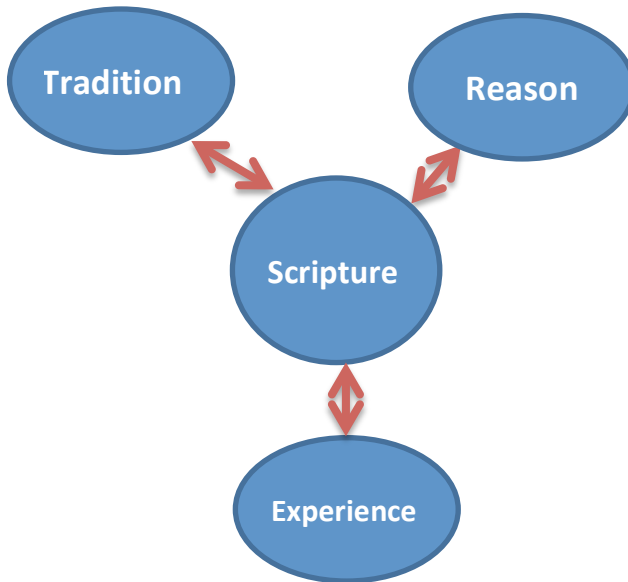
The word “quadrilateral” is not mine. And, no, holistic child development is not mine either. I borrowed the word “quadrilateral” from Albert Outler in his introduction to the 1964 collection *John Wesley*.¹ The term “Holistic Child Development,” I guess has been on earth since Adam and Eve had their first baby, although we know “Adam’s Family” was not really 100% successful in their practice of so-called holistic child development. Among other things, I will share with you how holistic child development fits into the life and ministry of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (APNTS). I believe that the seminary is an ideal setting for holistic child development training. The renowned child advocate, Dan Brewster, observed, “Seminaries are the ‘production line’ for developing leaders for the next generation.”² Why? For the main reason that the “best and the brightest” are sent here. Seminarians can influence church leaders and church leaders can influence the church on the necessity of raising godly children. We need the whole community of believers to engage in holistic child development.

Noted author and faculty member, Catherine Stonehouse, proposes in her book *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey* that as a community we need to look at four things so we can help children grow in spiritual ma-

¹ The “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” is a methodology for theological reflection that is credited to John Wesley, leader of the Methodist movement in the late 18th Century. The term itself was coined by 20th century American Methodist Albert C. Outler in his introduction to the 1964 collection *John Wesley*; see Albert C. Outler, ed. *John Wesley*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, Inc., 1964; see also Albert C. Outler, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in John Wesley,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 7-18.

² Daniel Brewster, “It’s Time to Open the 4/14 Window,” in *Emerging Missions Movement: Voices of Asia*, ed Bambang Budijanto (Colorado Springs, CO: Compassion International, 2010), 34.

turity: tradition, reason, scripture, and experience.³ Stonehouse uses the model of Melvin Dieter, professor emeritus of Asbury Theological Seminary.⁴ This model is called “Building a Dynamic Molecule of Truth.” In the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, Outler theorized that Wesley used four different sources in coming to theological conclusions. The four sources are: Scripture—the Holy Bible (Old and New Testaments), Tradition—the two millennia history of the Christian Church, Reason—rational thinking and sensible interpretation, and Experience—a Christian's personal and communal journey in Christ. Stonehouse uses tradition, reason, scripture, and experience as essential for the spiritual formation of children, and I believe we can use all four as a method or approach in doing holistic child development. The following is Dieter’s “Dynamic Molecule of Truth.”



Melvin Dieter’s diagram: “Building a Dynamic Molecule of Truth”⁵

This model is a method for doing the theological reflection needed to

³ Catherine Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 21.

⁴ Stonehouse, 16.

⁵ Cited in Stonehouse, 16.

guide our ministry with children. If we look at this model, Scripture is at the center. It is where the rest of the items are connected. Tradition, Reason, and Experience find their root in Scripture. Stonehouse explicates:

As Christian educators, our search for truth must engage us in an ongoing conversation with Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Scripture evaluates the other sources and integrates them with biblical insights into a harmonious understanding. Tradition, reason, and experience help interpret and point toward the application of scriptural perspectives.⁶

In this light, I would like to ask you to take a look at **Scripture** as we think about holistic child development. For John Wesley, Scriptures come first. He says, “I allow no other rule, whether faith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures.”⁷ The Bible, according to Stonehouse, “provides us with our most complete revelation of God.”⁸ God’s Word is filled with references on children: how we need to raise them and whether “to spank or not to spank.” (By the way, on August 23, 2010, my three-year-old daughter prayed, “Lord, can you spank the lightning and the thunder?”). The Bible also tells us *not* to exasperate our children and how can we formulate an understanding of the child’s spiritual development, among others (Deut 6:1-9).

I was so encouraged to know that George Muller read the Bible 100 times in his entire life.⁹ So let us turn to 1 Thess 2:7. Paul says, “But were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children” (NKJV). In here, Paul does not exhort nursing mothers to cherish their own children; he simply assumes that they do so. Morita Dialing in her report for an APNTS class, “Early Childhood Christian Education,” quotes James Dobson (who is a Nazarene!) in the following:

It has been known for several decades that an infant who is not loved, touched, and caressed will often die. Evidence of this fact was observed as early as the thirteenth century, when Frederick II conducted an experiment with fifty infants. He wanted to see what

⁶ Stonehouse, 20.

⁷ John Wesley, cited in Outler, *John Wesley*, 72.

⁸ Stonehouse, 17.

⁹ Jay Carty, *Counter Attack: Taking Back Ground Lost to Sin* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1988), 155.

language the children would speak if they never had the opportunity to hear the spoken word. To accomplish this dubious research project, he assigned foster mothers to bathe and suckle the children, but forbade them to fondle, pet, or talk to their charges. The experiment failed because all fifty infants died. Hundreds of more recent studies indicate that the mother-child relationship during the first year of life is apparently vital to the infant's survival. An unloved child is truly the saddest phenomenon in all of nature.¹⁰

And of course, with that, I should add that the father's love is as important as the mother's love. I bought a book for my husband on Father's Day entitled, *Fatherneed*. The book urges fathers to take part in the growth of their children. Paul wrote in 1 Thess 2:11–12, "As you know we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (NKJV). In this verse, Paul similarly simply assumes that fathers exhort, comfort, and charges.

John Chrysostom spoke of children as statues to be fashioned for God by parents.¹¹ I do not know how he came up with this philosophy, but according to tradition, Chrysostom lived with extreme asceticism and became a hermit in about 375; he spent the next two years continually standing, scarcely sleeping, and committing the Bible to memory. As a consequence of these practices, his stomach and kidneys were permanently damaged and poor health forced him to return to Antioch.¹² Perhaps this lifestyle influenced how Chrysostom viewed children.

However, any parent can tell you that children are not totally statues, especially a child beyond two years of age! Well, maybe they are statues that can be molded. But they are also statues that talk, reason, and defy you in many ways—trust me! Lawrence Richards explains that the Bible seems to assume that each person has a wide-ranging freedom, which

¹⁰ James Dobson, *Dare to Discipline* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1970), 33.

¹¹ Cited in Lawrence Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 74.

¹² "John Chrysostom," Wikipedia; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Chrysostom; accessed 23 August 2010.

brings with it personal responsibility for every act.¹³ And children do have their own different attitudes as they relate to parents and other people who surround them.

A scene from “The Passion of the Christ” offers an interesting perspective on how Mary nurtured Jesus. In the scene, Mary was strong and courageous—especially during the time when Jesus was hanging on the cross. I think as a young woman, she was not strong and courageous at the beginning. But when the angel appeared to her telling her not to be afraid, I think something has changed inside her. Ralph Wilson observes that Mary took the angel’s “Fear not” at face value.¹⁴ She was able to be the handmaid that God had planned her to be. According to Jane Schaberg, Mary the Mother of Jesus is often considered Luke’s model of obedient, contemplative discipleship (1:38; 2:19, 51).¹⁵ As leaders in the local churches, preschools, or other ministries with children, youth, and adults, we need to learn from Mary: her strength and courage in not only nurturing the only-begotten Son of God in her womb, but also raising him in her own home and letting the Heavenly Father accomplish his purpose.

The next item in our quadrilateral of holistic child development is *tradition*. As Christians in the 21st century, I believe what the Christians have done in the past in nurturing their children is worth noting. Stonehouse writes that within the Christian faith, tradition refers to the story of what God has done in the past among and through the people of God, both in biblical times and through church history.¹⁶ There are areas in the Christian tradition that have not edified the work of the Lord. As wise ministers of the Gospel, whatever our contexts might be, we need to distinguish which part of tradition we can employ in our ministries with children, youth, or adults.

For Albert Outler, writing on the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, tradition would refer to the two-millennia history of the Christian Church. Deuter-

¹³ Richards, 74.

¹⁴ Ralph F. Wilson, “Mary’s First Lesson in Discipleship (Luke 1:26-38),” available from http://www.jesuswalk.com/lessons/1_26-38.htm; accessed 24 August 2010.

¹⁵ Jane Schaberg, “Luke,” in *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharaon H. Ringe (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1992), 279.

¹⁶ Stonehouse, 18.

onomy 6:1–2 says, “These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life” (NIV).

Jerome, who was best known for his new translation of the Bible into Latin, said of children, “Thus, a soul must be educated which is to be the temple of God. It must learn to hear nothing and say nothing but what belongs to the fear of God.”¹⁷ Wow, what a tall order to follow! Comenius, considered the “last bishop of the Unity of the Brethren” in the 1700s and known as the father of modern education, said, “Soft wax can be molded and remolded, hard wax will crumble. The young tree can be planted, replanted, trimmed, and bent to any shape; not so the grown. So also the hands and limbs of [people] can be trained for an art and craft only during [their] childhood.”¹⁸ Jerome did not get married while Comenius did—but both of them shared the same passion for molding souls for the Kingdom of God. Mother Teresa, one of the major advocates for children, gave a speech at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. on February 3, 1994:

Because I talk so much of giving with a smile, once a professor from the United States asked me: “Are you married?” And I said: “Yes, and I find it sometimes very difficult to smile at my spouse, Jesus, because He can be very demanding—sometimes.” This is really something true. And this is where love comes in—when it is demanding, and yet we can give it with joy.¹⁹

Now I am beginning to be convinced that singleness is compatible with holistic child development with the work and statements of Mother Teresa and Jerome. Anyway, in the history of the early church, we find in Ephesians 6:1-4 commands to children, fathers and mothers. I can imagine when the church was reading that letter both children and parents

¹⁷ Jerome, *Letter to Laerta*, 17:164; cited in Richards, 89.

¹⁸ Cited in Richards, 90.

¹⁹ Mother Teresa, “Whatever You Did Unto One of the Least, You Did Unto Me,” available from <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/augustine/arch/teresa94.html>; accessed 30 August 2010.

were there. This gives the intergenerational setting for worship. I think we can learn from this setting as part of our Christian tradition.

Another lesson we can learn from the stories of early Christianity is found in Acts 20:7-12. This passage relates the account of Eutychus, whom some historians say was probably between 7 and 14 years old when this event happened. Paul preached and “continued his speech until midnight” (v. 7 KJV). Verse 9 says, “And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead” (KJV). Thank God Eutychus was alive (vv. 10)! Lesson to our preachers: keep it short when there are children listening to your sermon.

Now, we go to the third element of our quadrilateral, **reason**. Reason is rational thinking and sensible interpretation. Stonehouse writes, “Christian educators need to develop Bible-study skills for the task of sound interpretation.”²⁰ Deuteronomy 6:6-9 says, “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (NIV). When we do this, we need to have a good grasp of Scriptures so we can influence our children in a godly way. In reference to Dieter’s “Dynamic Molecule of Truth,” Stonehouse writes, “Reason also represents knowledge discovered in many fields of study, such as education, psychology, or medicine.”²¹ If you notice in our MA-RE and Ph.D. in Holistic Child Development curriculum, these degrees aim to be inter-disciplinary. The program committee sees to it that students touch base with other disciplines to have a comprehensive perspective on child development.

Now we go to the final part of our quadrilateral, namely, **experience**. According to John Wesley, experience is the “faithful [person’s] awareness of God’s gracious disposition toward *him* [or *her*].”²² For Stonehouse, in

²⁰ Stonehouse, 18.

²¹ Stonehouse, 18.

²² Wesley, cited in Outler, *John Wesley*, 29.

application to our ministry with children, we need to be attentive to the experiences of children and their parents. Deuteronomy 6:3 says, “Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you” (NIV). Some parents are simply lucky; their children grow up to be doctors, lawyers, nurses, pastors, etc. They “increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey.” We rejoice with them. And my prayer is that we will experience the same. May our children here at APNTS grow up and become the persons that God wants them to be.

In our ministries with children, and even with youth and adults, we need to be sensitive to their needs. Abraham Maslow, considered the father of humanistic psychology, categorized the first level of his hierarchy as physiological needs. This means that as we teach spiritual truths to children, we also cater to their physical needs. We need to check why they are misbehaving. Maybe they wanted to go to the bathroom. Maybe they are sleepy. Maybe they are too tired and too bored. Maybe the environment contributes to their sense of uneasiness. That is one of our roles: to be sensitive to these needs.

Conclusion

Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience—these are basic elements in approaching holistic child development. One of the greatest lessons I have learned in the area of holistic child development is the experience I had with Kuya Willie, a pastor who has worked with street kids in Mindanao. Interacting with him has challenged me and I hope it will challenge you, too.

Pastor Willie Abrao, one of the staunchest child advocates in Mindanao died of lung cancer in July 2010. He practically lived, and I guess, died for the street children of Butuan. He contracted the disease in some way after working in the dump for so long. I suppose there is no street child in Butuan who does not know Kuya Willie. Last summer, Stella Bokare and I taught in the Light and Life Graduate School of Theology, and I was able to talk with Kuya Willie, this “staunchest” child advocate in the whole wide world. When I think about his life and what he did, I can never compare to him. He is the real deal in holistic child development. Though he

was already skin-and-bones, blind—much like the pictures we see on the Internet on dying people—holistic child development was still perfectly flowing in what little life he had. I visited him almost every day when we were there. I wanted to learn from this guru. One of the things that I will never ever forget from those “classes” was when he said, “The children in the streets, when they say, they are hungry, THEY ARE HUNGRY.” He said, “A lot of people think that these children are not really hungry because some evil adult is using them for money.” And I think I am one of those people. But for Pastor Willy, every street child who says he is hungry is really hungry. Hungry for food, hungry for attention, hungry for love. I think in one way or another, this is the essence of holistic child development—meeting the needs of children, be they physical, spiritual, psychological, intellectual, or socio-emotional. Jesus Christ wants us to be his hands and feet to the “least of these.” He wants us to share the abundant life he has given us to his children!

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Authentic Mode of Existence

November 29, 2012

Larnie Sam A. Tabuena

Thus far in my reflective engagement with the history and traditions of religious thoughts, I realize that such comprehensive attempts to relate human life to that which is conceived as the ultimate reality, supreme being, ubiquitous knower, controlling power, greater self, or absolute thou worthy of our highest devotion fundamentally bear witness to humanity's perennial concerns of achieving an authentic mode of existence. The potential exigence to experience wholeness remains to be a healthy phenomenon of conscience as well as the essential project of *dasein*.

A specific type of being, human being, referred to by Heidegger as *dasein*, literally meaning “being-there,” is by no means a mere designation of static phenomenological status in the mundane order of existence but an active pursuit of creative *telos* to gain ontological significance and eternal validity. *Dasein* is a uniquely human existence which projects itself forward in time to a point of possibility. An individual is a never finished product: human existence is, by definition, open-ended. Therefore, the finite's existential openness to being in the supreme act of faith implies both the capacity for infinite receptivity and to evolve into fullness. Another property of *dasein* is its thrownness, by which Heidegger means that “existence for every individual involves being thrown into a world whose structure had long since been established. I am thrown into a nature, and the nature appears not only as outside of me, in objects devoid of history, but it is also discernible at the center of subjectivity.”¹

At this juncture, our inherent quest for authenticity embedded in the very core of our human potential for higher evolution ought not to be construed as distinct from the universal phenomenon attributed to “religious consciousness.” The dynamic dialectic of the finite-infinite experi-

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Collin Smith (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1986), 346.

ences within the aggregate of moral agents interacting immanently while projecting their process of becoming transcendentally signifies the unique scope and complex ramifications of philosophy in dealing with the concepts of religion. The historical search for Sophia (speculative wisdom) and Phronesis (practical wisdom) reveals the indispensable necessity for transcendence and the human inability to capture the profundity and depth of key human experiences.² The main aim of philosophical inquiry is the attempt to discover the most basic truth about the human condition and its necessary connections which constitute an approach to epistemology. Religiosity is a dynamic interplay of our consciousness of the human inner constitution and the intuition of the “beyond.” Thus, philosophy of religion is not a body of knowledge to be investigated or method of inquiry to be mastered, but rather the dynamic history of a mystery which reveals itself through the power of a question: the question of the meaning of life.

The prevailing experience of despair in a macrocosm of reality lies in the fact that emptiness is the natural result of individual self-concept and public consciousness of one’s being as just an agglomeration of functions. However, the lingering agony of angst precisely is a spiritual condition of alienation from the ground of one’s being. Such adverse conditions are what Karl Jaspers called “the boundary situation,” the shattering of being in everyday life. In this process we are confronted with a reality far greater than ourselves. It points to the possibility of salvation. Through transcendence, we move beyond our own finite nature to that which is unconditional. Despite observable nuances of prescribed ways of understanding ourselves and in relating with the divine, common to all the great world faiths is a “soteriological structure,” and they each offer their own approach to obtain conciliation—through faith in response to divine grace or through total self-giving to God. Without some ground in an absolute or unconditional there cannot be any meaning.

I want to emphasize two emerging representative traditions as specific responses to philosophy’s inquiry into the domains of religious phenomena.

² Brendan Sweetman ed. *A Gabriel Marcel Reader* (Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 2011), 1.

1. Onto-theology, like the traditional metaphysics, conceives that the essent as such in general is the very foundation of the universal unity and totality on which all beings can be subsumed. The *a priori* intuitive abstraction of the supreme being becomes the basis of all unity. We have not recognized God because instead of conformity to the image of God which is an appropriate act intended by the creator, we created Him in our own image. We should have the attitude of openness to discover reality. When Dr. Hornedo visited St. Mary's Seminary for some speaking engagements, somebody had been given the task of meeting him at the bus terminal. Unfortunately, the man sent by the Seminary failed to recognize him due to the inconsistency between the prior descriptions and the present reality. The man was looking for Hornedo who was described as an individual with flat top haircut, but the actual person at that time had grown long hair.

2. Fideism can be defined as an “exclusive or basic reliance upon faith alone, accompanied by a consequent disparagement of reason and utilized especially in the pursuit of philosophical or religious truth.” Correspondingly, a *fideist* is someone who “urges reliance on faith rather than reason, in philosophical and religious” matters and who “may go on to disparage and denigrate reason.”³

These two traditions represent the endless debate between faith and reason. The issue has never been resolved and it will continue *ad infinitum* without understanding the dynamics of human faculties in developing the synthetic creativity of wisdom.

The death of God case, which is initially Hegelian, renders here an appropriate example of philosophical ambivalence in the faith-reason controversy. A rupture in the transmission of faith between generations: the act of faith itself seems no longer necessary for life and meaning.⁴ Likewise, the widespread phenomenon of the 21st century is the disappearance of the “enchanted world,” an eclipse of God in our civilization, and the

³ Alvin Plantinga, “Reason and Belief in God,” in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 87.

⁴ Regina Schwartz, ed., *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach the Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

eviction of transcendence from the public sphere.⁵ “The Death of God” was the first philosophical articulation in Hegel’s philosophy in the 1802 publication of *Faith and Knowledge*. He writes, “Formerly the infinite Grief existed in the feeling that God Himself is dead.”⁶ “The God of the Enlightenment was precisely a God who does not manifest himself in knowledge and so a God totally abstract and unrelated to life—dead.”⁷

According to Hegel, then, the unbridgeable gap between sighing subjectivity and the God for whom it longs was established in order to ward off the risk that knowledge, in the act of comprehending its object, will reduce God to the level of man—or worse, that of a mere thing. God was removed from finitude so that his transcendence might be preserved. Religion, on the other hand, was located in the finite, more precisely in a finite and limited subjectivity yearning for the infinite that transcends its grasp. “Religion, as this longing, is subjective; but what it seeks and what is not given to it in intuition, is the Absolute and the eternal.”⁸

The pursuit of authenticity, within the bounds of time, context, interiority, and relationship with the other, unfolds before us the fact that existential meaning is attributed to a spectrum of dynamic perspectives. Thus, let us consider three vital approaches when we think of the validity of religious consciousness whose various combinations serve in some cases as heuristic structures in philosophy, phenomenology, and epistemology. Through this analysis, we can perhaps gain viable insights that can assist us in formulating a sound philosophy of education.

Objective Lifeworld

The subject person is fundamentally an embodied being-in-a-situation and he/she is always located in a specific context. The concrete human situa-

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶ George F. Hegel. *Faith and Knowledge: An English Translation of G.W.F. Hegel’s *Glauben und Wissen**, ed. Walter Serf and H. S. Harris (New York: State University of New York Press, 1977), 190.

⁷ Jeffrey L. Kosky. “The Birth of the Modern Philosophy of Religion and the Death of Transcendence,” in *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach the Beyond*, ed. Regina Schwartz (New York: Routledge, 2005), 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12–13.

tion represents the immediate world of meanings. Thus, any kind of multidisciplinary investigation ought to begin with the concrete human experience. As it is always stated in educational methodology, we have to intuit the unknown by initially accessing the known.

We have here the dominant notion of *Lebenswelt*, the “lived world.” Human development should come from the *Lebenswelt*. Phenomenology, a philosophical method founded by Edmund Husserl in the first two decades of the 20th century, seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of the objective world as it appears to the subject. Rather than engaging in metaphysical questions, phenomenology describes “phenomena.” Husserl’s phenomenology favors an analysis of the constructs of everyday consciousness, the *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) of the perceiving subject. The lifeworld is the frame of subjectivity through which the individual apprehends and interprets the external world.

Perception is the acknowledgement of the object’s uniqueness in terms of the givenness of the world to consciousness as well as the ability of the consciousness to verify the object of sense. Objects do not exist for themselves, but they exist for the senses. The economic unity of the senses and the objects is possible because of intentionality. Intentionality is not a singular system; it involves the given and the receiving. It is the metaphysical sociality by beings and the interconnectivity of things in the whole structure. The result of intentionality is relationship. Our embodied presence phenomenologically constitutes the intentional arc. The gist of Merleau-Ponty’s critique of pure empiricism is specifically directed against the fragmentation of the primordial unity or integration of an object and the partitioning of our human faculties that function to experience the wholeness of reality.⁹

Furthermore, perception is knowing in a very radical phenomenological way. Our body is no mere physical body. We learn with our whole body as it is oriented toward the world (intentionality). Can you play a guitar without moving your fingers? In *The Primacy of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty asserts that our primary device for phenomenology is our self. The body which stands between the interior consciousness and the natural world is a tool of knowing. The body is a milieu empirically exposed to

⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 346.

the lived world limited by space and time but it belongs to the transcendental reality that interprets what it is receiving. If the world is God's utterance and a code to be deciphered, then our perception is a direct encounter with the cipher. Knowledge is a kind of deciphering sensation.

In the perspective of Biblical realism, Grider considers "nature as the locus of grace." The natural order, including human physical existence, is the residence of grace. We celebrate our bodily constitution which links us with nature. The act of Christological incarnation validates the principle of sacramental world: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the [One] full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NKJV). We can view things eucharistically because it is indeed a residency of grace.¹⁰

Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* envisions the integral human person—body, soul, and spirit. The physical human body ostensibly signifies specific meanings pertaining to our fundamental questions about life's purpose, sacred vocation, relationship, reality, and God based on Scripture. As a person with a body and soul made in the image and likeness of God, we find the meaning of life through finding out what it means to reflect God and what our bodies have to do with it. We are not only living as a visible representation of God to the world through the gift of free will, but also through being in communion with others. "To be human means to be called to interpersonal communion."¹¹

One of the serious platonic errors linked to Christian moral thinking was centered on one fundamental aberration, "the flight from existence."¹² From the source itself down to various ramified interpretations subsequently, there consistently appears a radical separation of "being" in the realm of essences and "becoming" signified by the world of changing sense experiences. The Platonists elevated intellectual knowledge above

¹⁰ J. Kenneth Grider, *Wesleyan Holiness Theology*, fore. Thomas C. Oden (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 42–44.

¹¹ Brooke Williams Deely, ed., *Pope John Paul II Speaks on Women* (Michigan: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 131. For a more profound reflection on the intrinsic value of human body, see John Paul II, *Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997).

¹² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 39.

the domains of sensible objects and according to them, the superiority of reason to intuit the changeless eternal principle supersedes the faculty of human sensation.

On the contrary, Aquinas employed Aristotelian categories in explaining experiences in the light of hylomorphic reality which is based on a metaphysical assumption that all things are composite of form and matter, essence and existence. He advances his “this worldly” epistemology into the form of a philosophical dictum, “We have no knowledge of essences except through the gate of sense experience.”¹³ We are indeed a psychosomatic unity. Knowing is mediated through the world of sense experience. Every agent by its action teleologically intends the actualization of potential as precisely the fulfillment of *Imago dei*.

What then is the implication of this discourse to theological education? In searching for the rationality of meaning, there is always room for what Marcel calls, “primary reflection.” It is ordinary, everyday reflection, which employs conceptual generalizations, abstractions, and an appeal to what is universal and verifiable. Primary reflection is also the level of objective knowledge. This is because the concepts employed at the theoretical level are objective in two key senses. First, they represent essential features of the objects of experience (at an abstract level) as they really are in the objects. Second, these essential features are also objective in the key sense that they are understood by everyone in the same way.¹⁴ Primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience. It forces one to take up an attitude of radical detachment, of complete lack of interest. However, human beings are not *tabula rasa*. We have with us the basic intellectual orientation, cultural and mental baggage, and even spiritual divine image.

Objective knowing in terms of epoch or reduction is to behave like a little child taking events one item at a time without presupposition, anticipation and structuring.

A father was trying to read the newspaper, but his little son kept pestering him. Finally, the father grew tired of this and, tearing a page from the newspaper—one that bore a map of the world—he

¹³ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 144.

¹⁴ Sweetman, *Marcel Reader*, 4–5.

cut it into several pieces and handed them to his son. “Right now you’ve got something to do. I’ve given you a map of the world and I want to see if you can put it back together correctly.” He resumed his reading, knowing that the task would keep the child occupied for the rest of the day. However, a quarter of an hour later, the boy returned with the map. “Has your mother been teaching you geography?” asked his father in astonishment. “I don’t even know what that is,” replied the boy. “But there was a photo of a man on the other side of the page, so I put the man back together and found I’d put the world back together, too.”¹⁵

We assemble facts intellectually according to how the objects unfold themselves to us just as they are. Going back to the things themselves constitutes a presuppositionless mode of approaching what has been presented to us. Such a method of epistemology is objective cognition without employing colors of interpretation.

Subjective Faith

Much of Kierkegaard’s critique of the “present age” is a confrontation of a passionless *zeitgeist* manifesting itself in the deprivation of inwardness. The “present age” is an age without passion, and Western thought has lost its sense of inwardness. Its tendencies can also be observed in any age such as; people tend to identify themselves with the collective, to see themselves as just products of their time and place, to allow them to escape taking personal responsibility for their actions; people are afraid to make a passionate commitment to anything, particularly without guarantee, hesitating to take a leap of faith; the tendency to reduce people to the lowest common denominator, to discourage greatness and uniqueness, they prefer to live in the cellar; people want the comfort that religion can bring, without exerting effort; people fundamentally want an easy, secure life.

On the contrary, “Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is essentially passion, and in its maximum

¹⁵ Paulo Coelho, *Stories For Parents, Children and Grandchildren*, Volume 1 (Electronic Edition: <http://www.feedbooks.com>, 2008), n.p.

an infinite, personal, passionate interest in one's eternal happiness."¹⁶ Subjectivity is not selfishness or eccentricity, but it is rather genuine "inwardness" involving commitment, passion, and decision. Subjectivity means a concrete being developing because it is the being's creative counterpart to personal truth. Knowing is an existential reality rather than a purely cognitive and epistemic one. The condition of knowledge is ontologically built in to a person as he/she discovers being. Authentic Christianity therefore is conformity to Christ and becoming like Him. Truth is not a unity of all attributes or ideas constituting a person. The truth is the total person.¹⁷ Subjectivity, however, "culminates in passion, Christianity is the [absolute] paradox, paradox and passion are a mutual fit."¹⁸ If such is the case, only subjective faith and nothing else can deal effectively with the absolute paradox.¹⁹

The notion of paradox in Kierkegaard's existential thought renders two main uses such as, in broad sense, the contrasting relation between logical evaluation of faith and its psychological character, and in the descriptive narrow sense, subjective faith encounters the Absolute Paradox, the Logos embodied in human form.²⁰ The paradox of God's revelation by its nature is offense to human reason, and only to be grasped through infinite passion of faith.²¹ Paradox is a logical problem with no rational solution—the case of incarnation is a total contradiction. Kierkegaard advo-

¹⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941), 33.

¹⁷ Florentino H. Hornedo, "The Philosophy of Soren A. Kierkegaard" (Lecture, University of Santo Tomas, May 2010).

¹⁸ Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 206.

¹⁹ "Paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker without the paradox is like the lover without passion: a mediocre fellow. But the ultimate potentiation of every passion is always to will its own downfall, and so it is also the ultimate passion of the understanding to will the collision, although in one way or another the collision must become its downfall. This, then, is the ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think. This passion of thought is fundamentally present everywhere in thought." Søren Kierkegaard, Howard V. Hong, and Edna H. Hong, *Philosophical Fragments: Johannes Climacus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 46.

²⁰ S. Heywood Thomas, *Subjectivity and Paradox* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 103.

²¹ A. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology: Schleiermacher to Barth* (London: Collins, 1937), 217.

cated the principle of parsimony or economy that entities must not be multiplied without necessity because existence is unsystematic, fragmentary, and sometimes absurd; thus it cannot be reduced to a certain thought-bound philosophic system, likewise, the incarnation as the absolute paradox. God is “totally Other” at the same time not totally Other. Contemporary disciples failed to see Christ’s divinity in the human. Faith is an act of the will by accepting the non-cognitive truth. God is the very other, thus we cannot be united with Him. Communion is possible through the incarnate Christ representing both human and divine. The acceptance of grace gives us the privilege to participate in the life of God called redemption.²² Incarnation is not only contrary to rational evidence but is even self-contradictory on rational grounds.

Kierkegaard’s contribution is unparalleled in the history of philosophy for he is not especially concerned with knowing the truth but rather with being in truth or doing the truth. Truth is to be acted upon, an affirmation in a more personal way than epistemological in nature. Faith is a happy confrontation by setting aside reason and its structures in favor of the revelation contained in paradox. Faith is not putting aside reason but it is the equilibrium of faculties. Authentic faith is openness to the divine personal revelation and not just an organ of human knowing. Likewise, entering a marriage covenant is not the result of a logical conclusion; indeed you are not marrying a thesis or an excerpt but a mysterious presence.

Faith is the soul’s logic to the unknown, an inner intuitive wisdom. Faith then, according to Wesley, implies both “supernatural evidence of God and the things of God, a kind of spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof.”²³ It is also an act of our totally integrated human faculties. Tillich argues that faith, as being ultimately concerned, is a centered act of the whole personality. It is also a leap of constant becoming. In faith a mystery of self-transcending dynamic participation of the human spirit in the divine nature can be affirmed which leads into the fulfillment of our infinite value.

²² Hornedo, “Philosophy of Kierkegaard.”

²³ John Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” in *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 374.

Faith, according to the tradition of inquisition, is the affirmation of proposition. It emphasizes the preciseness of the statement. But faith is also the fullness of truth in giving the whole being, the totality of surrender to the will of God. The incarnation is not only the infinite taking human flesh, but also we, the finite will, become like Christ. Faith is a phenomenon of life, not a path of consciousness.

The paralysis of human understanding when confronted with existential questions reveals the utter impotence of rationality in the Hegelian sense to richly capture the sense of authenticity subsequent to the realization of a projected *telos*. Faith is therefore what the Greeks called the “divine madness.”²⁴ Pascal insists that faith can nevertheless be rational in the absence of proof—i.e., that it is rational in a prudential rather than an epistemic sense. Kierkegaard’s priority of the subjective dimension of faith vividly attributes it as the “objective uncertainty along with the repulsion of the absurd held fast in the passion of inwardness, which precisely is inwardness potentiated to the highest degree.”²⁵

The “Ultimate” discloses itself only to the passionate person, the one who allows oneself to be grasped by the ultimate. “Subjectivity is a passionate concern for one’s being. At every moment of living in whatever [one] is doing a subjective individual is absolutely interested in his eternal happiness... absolute *telos*.”²⁶

In the realm of mystery, the distinction between subject and object breaks down through secondary reflection which restores such unity. According to Marcel, secondary reflection is essentially recuperative. The most basic level of human existence, being-in-a-situation, or situated involvement, is the level at which the subject is immersed in a context, a level where the subject does not experience “objects.” This realm of human existence is best described as “mysterious,” from the philosophical point of view, because it cannot be fully captured and presented in ordinary conceptual knowledge. It is not an unknowable realm, but a realm

²⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and Sickness unto Death*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 11.

²⁵ Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 540.

²⁶ F. Russel Sullivan Jr., *Faith and Reason in Kierkegaard* (Washington, DC: University of America, 1978), 92. See also Herbert M. Garelick, *Anti-Christianity of Kierkegaard* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 19–20.

which is beyond conceptual knowledge and must be experienced to some extent to be truly known.²⁷ Subjective faith as a new dimension of knowing allows us to access the realm of being, understand the Absolute Paradox, and experience the unity of our being. It is also the dynamic structure of integrated knowing because our human faculties are united in the mystery of total involvement.

Intersubjective Truth

Marcel's most seminal formulation is the notion of ontological intersubjectivity, achieved through concrete approach to being and experiential thinking, as the basis of establishing a fraternal society. Searching for the meaning of being in humanity's specific mode of existence only occurs by opening ourselves up to other people whom we conceive as "thous," which in turn affords us the possibility to participate intimately in the grand mystery of being. Being is meditatively recovered by the restorative power of secondary reflection, that is, participation or a new immersion into being. Life devoid of personal engagement has become a widespread phenomenon in the postmodern technocratic milieu where the computer-generated dream world threatens to dehumanize and reduce us into systems of functions. The reification of human person is "a pitiless sacrilege to treat God's image merely as a factum."²⁸

The unfolding truth of being can only be realized through our mutual participation in humanity's meaning as we are all journeying together to achieve existential wholeness. To be a subject, to be a person, is to be with. A symphonic truth is experienced by the distinctively unique participation of each instrument to produce a beautiful harmony of the orchestra under the common inspiration of music. The multidimensionality of truth makes us aware that no individual, race, or civilization has the monopoly of truth, and in order to achieve it we need to engage ourselves in personal communion. Truth in phenomenology is not hypostatic, substantive or objective. It is like gestalt, mosaic, harmonic, and participatory. Essential fragments create the whole image. The position of each fragment

²⁷ Sweetman, *Marcel Reader*, 5.

²⁸ Vincent P. Miceli, *Ascent to Being: Gabriel Marcel's Philosophy of Communion* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965), 33.

determines the meaning. Even in scholarship, a similar principle applies. For instance, peer review in publication is a social confirmation of the greater possibility of being right.

Isolated entity may affirm itself but cannot explain itself. Meaning is a relationship, metaphysical in nature not empirical, not physically documentable. A concept must be understood in the context of its whole relationship. Gestalt-meaning is relatedness. Wholeness is the interrelation of parts, the perception of the interrelationship of the parts. Likewise, being is a community. The Trinity speaks loudly of this concept. Allah's essence is transcendental solitude. The living incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, is a personal being. Marcel expressed a crucial insight by employing Augustine's words: "To know the truth, we must be in the truth,"²⁹ intersubjective truth.

Marcel at one point in his philosophical engagement attempted to elucidate his concept of person as opposed to that anonymous and irresponsible element which is designated by the definite pronoun "one." This "one" is therefore, by definition, unable to be pinned down. Here is an example:

A rumor is circulated about a certain person. I ask, "Who says so? Who vouches for this?" I am told simply: "I can't tell you who, but one is or they are saying that it is true.... What is proper to the person is precisely [his or her] being opposed in a radical way to this illusive "one" or "they." It is essential to the person to be exposed in a certain way, to be engaged, and consequently, to be involved in an encounter.... Truth is itself only where it is spirit, not only a light, but an openness to light. And if truth is such, then one can understand much more easily how it is allied to love."³⁰

When Marcel emphasizes that our being is a being-in-a-situation, he is indicating that the only experience we have of existence is participating-in-existence. The crucial aspect of participated subjectivity is that it is never merely an experience of subjectivity. Every participation is a revelation not only of self, but also of other. If I were to divorce myself in

²⁹ Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. Katharine Farrer (Westminster, UK: Dacre Press, 1949), 113.

³⁰ Gabriel Marcel, "Truth and Freedom," *Philosophy Today* 9, no. 4 (1965): 232, 236.

thought from every mode of participation, what I would have left would not be a privileged self, but nothing at all. Apart from participation, the self is nothing but an abstraction; for the concrete self is *esse est co-esse*. To be is to be with. The question of truth becomes the question of the scope and depth of participation. Obviously, a participated datum is a datum in which my self is involved and from which I cannot separate my self. It is not something I have, but something through which I am. That is why in questioning the datum I call my self into question.³¹ Being is not an idea, but a presence.

We participate in the realm of humanity through freedom as well as in the infinite transcendent ground motivating our exigence for being. Human self emerges within an enfolding absolute presence, and one's thought, arising out of that self, is in contact at its source with the presence of being. The organ of ontological truth is freedom. Liberty, in turn, must be understood, not as an occurrence in the void, but as participation—as a response to the invocation of being. In affirming being, I affirm myself in a uniquely intelligible way. Apart from this self-affirmation, there is no possibility of affirming being or the truth of being. The instrument for the revealing of truth is nothing less than the intersubjective movement by which the whole self turns to the source from which all illumination proceeds.³²

Conclusion

Some objective thinkers, like the logical positivists, would claim that, outside empirical verification and falsification of scientific procedures and rational validity, any proposition is nonsensical. In the same way, phenomenologists suggest that we need to go back to the things themselves, the *Lebenswelt*, or lifeworld, to access the essence of things. Other contemplative people merely rely on the mystical phenomena of life and will only embrace faith as the only means to deal with the irony of existence. Many people extremely emphasize community-based undertaking in their search for truth. However, to have a balanced perspective in our religious

³¹ Kenneth T. Gallagher, "Truth and Freedom in Marcel," in *the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Arthus Schilpp and Lewis Hahn (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1984), 375.

³² *Ibid.*, 378, 382, 386.

consciousness, the objective lifeworld, subjective faith, and the intersubjective truth should be taken into consideration as we engage ourselves in the grand enterprise of achieving what passionate thinkers in history called thus far, an “authentic mode of life.”

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The BEST and GREAT APNTS of the CROSS

January 7, 2014¹

Im, Seung-An

I. Words of Thanks

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to open my inauguration message with words of gratitude. These words of gratitude to you may be short in terms of quantity but long in my heart in terms of quality.

First of all, I do give utmost thanks to my God who has called me to partake in His Life. It is God's grace that enables me to serve the entire community of faith through the ministry of our educational institution, APNTS. Surely God is so Good that He has loved me and that He gave His eternal Life through a revival meeting at Yee Cheon Church of the Nazarene at my home town in Korea in 1968 when I was 16 years old. From then until now, He has never forsaken me. Thus, I confess that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28 NIV).

I want to thank all of you who are here now. Some of you came to APNTS by walking, by driving, or by airplane. For some of you it took less than one hour, for others perhaps more than twenty-four hours. But there is one common reason why you come here. That is, all your hearts are full of love for APNTS. Our professors, our staff, and especially our students (the future of our Nazarene Church) exemplify loving commitment to be part of this institution. Therefore, words are not enough to say thank you very much for being here during my inauguration as the sixth president of APNTS.

I would like to say thanks to Dr. Neville Bartle, the Chairman of our Board of Trustees, and to all the board members. They wanted me to be inaugurated on the thirtieth anniversary of APNTS last November. But

¹ Editor's Note: The following represents a substantial expansion of the original address, presented on January 7, 2014. A recording of President Im's address is accessible from http://www.apnts.edu.ph/media/chapel/?sermon_id=29.

they have been very patient until today. I give thanks to Rev. Mark Louw, Asia-Pacific Regional Director. He has given many words of encouragement to serve APNTS for the Nazarene churches, especially in the Asia-Pacific Region. I would like to say thanks to Dr. Daniel Copp, our Education Commissioner of the Church of the Nazarene, who gave me words of support and encouragement to serve APNTS. I would like also to express my gratitude to Dr. David Busic, our General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. He was not only a pastor but also the former president of our sister school, Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, so he has special concern for APNTS as well. I believe that he is praying, not only for NTS in Kansas City, but also for APNTS continually. I would like to learn from his leadership.

I also would like to say thank you very much to all of our former presidents: Drs. Owens, Fairbanks, Nielson, Fukue and Cunningham. God has used all of these leaders so that APNTS could be what it is today. I believe that APNTS has been an educational provider faithfully serving the churches first in the Asia-Pacific Region and also throughout the world by nurturing the ministers whom the churches have needed for the last 30 years. At this moment I would like to give great thanks to Dr. Owens, the founder of the APNTS and my father in Christ, who is now 88 years old. He was determined to travel from the United States to APNTS for this particular occasion. He prayed for me while I served at Korean Nazarene University, the institution he founded in 1954, and he will also pray for me while I serve APNTS, the one he also founded in 1984.

I would like also to mention some names of those who came from Korea as my friends, my seniors, my mentors, and my supporters. The first one is Rev. Ryu Doo Hyun. He is the chairman of Korean Nazarene University. He was also my church's senior pastor, and he has been helping me like my elder brother. I would like to call my older friend, Rev. Hyun Hae Chun. He was also a former chairman of the KNU Trustees Board. He has been a model to me both as a Christian and as a theologian who loves the Bible as the unique foundation of his theology of sanctification. I would like to thank Dr. Shin Min Gyu who is the present KNU president. He and his church, along with KNU, have supported APNTS very much. I thank Rev. Han Gi Dong, the Korea National District Superintendent. He and I were junior high school students at the same school. I

want to thank Dr. Lee Key Suk who has encouraged me to persevere whenever I encountered very hard times for more than one decade. You may also know Dr. Kim Young Baek very well. He is the living history of the Korean Church of the Nazarene and has made great contributions, not only to Korean Nazarene churches, Korean Nazarene University, and the global Church of the Nazarene, but also to APNTS in many ways. Finally, I give thanks to my wife who has prayed for me with a loving heart from God, my second daughter who came from the United States, and my first daughter with her two children. I want to introduce also my first daughter's mother-in-law, who is taking care of my first daughter's second child. I have many other Korean friends here, but due to limited time I cannot mention all of you, I deeply apologize.

Lastly, I would like to give great thanks to our former president, Dr. Floyd Cunningham. I really respect his leadership, honesty, faithfulness, and scholarship. I think that he has shown a model life of an entirely sanctified Christian and genuine member of the Church of the Nazarene. Our Board of Trustees chairman conveyed already our appreciation, respect, and love, but once again I honor him: Thank you, Dr. Cunningham, for your great contribution to APNTS for the last 30 years.

II. The Ministry of the Great Commission to Dispense God's Life

Dear brothers and sisters, as I start my ministry to serve APNTS as a humble servant of God, I cannot but pray first: O, my God who is Good, help me so that the Life of the Father and the Love of the Son by the Power of the Spirit may overflow through my ministry at APNTS to the churches in the Asia-Pacific Region and throughout the world.

Thus, my ministry at APNTS should be a means to manifest God's eternal and ultimate will, which is nothing else than the dispensation of the Life of God in order to build the Body of Christ by making His children entirely holy as His people for His Kingdom, or making them entirely qualified to enter into New Jerusalem.

As I share with you my prayer request above, it must be first of all related to the ministry for the Life of God to overflow to the churches and all the nations in the Asia-Pacific Region. I may call this ministry, the ministry of the Life of God, the ministry of evangelism, the Great Commission, or simply Life ministry. As Jesus made the purpose of his coming

to the world clear in John 10:10, all Christians mission should be related to the Life ministry or the ministry of dispensing the Life of God: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (NIV). This ministry must be fruitful as blessed and commanded by God in Genesis 1:28. The reason why God created Adam and Eve has been implied here: that they must be multiplied to rule over the earth, which is "formless and empty" (Gen 1:2 NIV). Thus, APNTS was founded to be used for the Life ministry or the multiplication of the Life of God for His Kingdom. Here is the reason why those courses at APNTS like missiology, evangelism, church planting, church growth, and preaching must be treated as fundamentally required core subjects. I am strongly convinced that I have come to APNTS for the ministry of evangelism, or the Life of God for His Kingdom by helping the students to become capable pastors, missionaries, and educators for their ministry of sharing the Life of God.

III. The 21st Century as the Century of Two Kinds of Crises

When I say that I have come to APNTS to make our students Christlike disciples enabling them to share the Life of God, I feel that the 21st century is full of crises that have threatened our mission of evangelism more seriously than the previous ones. In order for our ministry to be fruitful, we may think about what these crises are. There are several types of crises, and these may be categorized into external and internal crises.

The first type of external crisis is related to the disasters that are beyond our simple thoughts of management. These are the problems related to the issues surrounding human lives, the disasters of nature, or the existence of the earth. These crises could be listed like environmental pollution of the earth, earthquakes, seismic tides, great floods, numerous kinds of war weapons threatening genocide, and actual wars due to the conflicts between nations. All of these make us feel terrified so much very often that it makes us think as if the end of the earth is coming near. South Koreans are tremendously afraid of wars threatened by North Korea and even by both Japan and China. The second type of crisis is related to human physical needs. The lack of daily bread and water, the lack of the basic medical treatment threatening human health and lives, the lack of conducive housing facilities to give shelter for people who are homeless, the lack of jobs to help families survive economically, etc. I was

born and grew up during the Korean War with these conditions. My mother passed away immediately after giving birth to her last son because my hometown had no good hospital to provide the blood my mother needed. Even after returning to Korea with a Ph.D. degree from Drew University, I had no place for my families to dwell. We know that many people, especially in the third world countries, have been threatened by such problems in their daily lives. Human beings in this condition could feel serious disappointments and anger.

The third type of crisis threatening human life is closely related to human minds or sociocultural and moral dimensions. These kinds of crises may be political and economical corruption, military oppression, social injustice, racism, sexism, child trafficking, chauvinistic patriotism, ethnocentrism, no chance of education, a clash of civilization, etc. These crises will also last until the end of human existence.

The fourth type of crisis is due to religious issues in the world. World history may be regarded as the history of religious conflicts. While this world has developed in the area of science and culture, some religions still seem to remain at a primitive level. Orthodox ways of thinking have become intolerant of those sects or religions with different belief-systems, orientations, and worldviews. This sectarianism often ends in persecution. Monotheistic religions could produce the most serious crises in the world in this 21st century.

While the first four types of crises are external ones, I want to call the fifth crisis an internal one, for it could come from the lack of the inner value of human dignity. People seek after peace, freedom, justice, righteousness, and compassion. They would like to be treated as “somebody,” not as “something.” They desire to enter personal relationship with and be respected by others. They would like to express emotions in personal forms and sympathize with those who are in tears and happiness. All of these could be expressed in one word, that is, love. They want to be loved and love others. Love could be the noun to convey all kinds of the fundamental components above so that “love” is always first in human life. If these inner components of love are given to the people whose daily lives are threatened by the four types of external crises above, they could be encouraged to endure even though their current lives are in the midst of miserable conditions due to the external crises.

From this perspective, the real crises are mainly related not to outside problems (the first four external crises) but to the inside one (the fifth one). When people are not treated as human beings, as “beings of love,” or when their lives are not guaranteed with love, they could be like a live volcano ready to explode quickly in many ways. All human beings want to be honored as “beings of love” by others. They want to be respected with the value of love. All human beings, regardless of their race, sex, age, economic condition, or nationality, wish to be treated with love. They are thirsty for love, that is, they are hungry for peace, freedom, nonviolence, joy, justice, righteousness, etc. These have been the fundamental components necessary to their daily lives.

At this point, we may say that if somebody falls with a groan, it might be, not only because they are under serious and heavy external crises, but also because they have not given internal values. Human beings who have not been treated with love might not have any power to endure external crises because they also lack faith and hope. If somebody thinks that the fundamental needs of love, like peace and freedom, could be interchanged with another type of fundamental need of human beings, like economic welfare or prosperity, it would be a great mistake and temptation. Even this need of love should not be regarded as if it could be interchanged with religious rituals or experiences.

While we emphasize the important role of love, it should also be remembered that human beings wish all of the three kinds of needs to be satisfied comprehensively and holistically as implied in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Humans have physical and material need of bread and water with a healthy body; mental and social need of love (peace, freedom, justice, righteousness, joy, etc.), and supernatural or spiritual need of religious communication with the Absolute Being. After God created Adam and Eve, He promised them to provide what they eat: “[Every seed-bearing plant and every tree that has fruit with seed in it] will be yours for food” (Gen 1:29 NIV). Healing the daughter of synagogue leader, Jesus told them to give her something to eat (Mark 5:35–40). Thus, if one of these three types of needs (physical, mental, and spiritual) is disregarded, the Christian ministry of evangelism might be fruitless and ineffective. Or in some cases, the ministry of evangelism could unexpectedly produce actual crises. Faithful Christians who devote their lives to evangelism need to be

aware of these fundamental and holistic needs of human beings: bread, love, and religion. But Christian churches need to know that those Christians who emphasize Christ's great commission have to recognize that ordinary human beings in the 21st century are generally interested less in God, and more in silver or gold: environmental safety, economic prosperity, civilized comfort, and social and political stability.

If these fundamental and external needs are deprived of by special classes of social, political, and even religious groups, history shows that unaddressed needs engender some identifiable consequent problems. A society in which the rich become richer and the poor poorer is like a peaceful-looking huge mansion that has matches, oil, and bombs together in its basement. It will produce psychological fear, anger, and revenge against rich people, including Christian churches favoring prosperity theology or silver and gold. A society that allows political corruption, economical greed, or chauvinistic patriotism is to be explored with disasters. Unfortunately, religious dogmas and rituals or religious ideologies supplemented by philosophy and theology could even become possible weapons of genocide that might end up in mass murder. All religions, including even Christianity itself, could contribute to the production of internal and external crises if their ministries do not consider external needs and internal values. If Christian churches try to "keep Sabbath" rather than rescuing humans from their urgent needs, they are to be warned by Jesus as He did to the Jewish leaders. Internal value of humanity in terms of love should not be interchanged with the religious ministry of evangelism or world mission. The internal components of love are related, not only to the issues of culture, race, and nation, but also to issues like theology, evangelism, and world mission. Christian churches in the 21st century still seem to regard the external needs and their values lesser than the ministry of evangelism and religious conviction. There must be faith, hope and love, but first and foremost love. Without love, everything can be considered nothing, so to speak, as is strongly taught in the whole chapter of 1 Corinthians 13. Love may be regarded as the primary source of many types of human life values, such as peace, freedom, joy, nonviolence, reconciliation, compassion, justice, and righteousness, because all of these components of love have been universally accepted by all people regardless of culture and generation. While Chris-

tians do concentrate on their religious ministry of evangelism and world mission, they should not devalue these internal values and the external needs. We may say that the fundamental causes of the crises in the 21st century come both from the tendency of disregarding the inner value of love and from the lack of practice to love our neighbors. Without love, therefore, even the religious ministry of evangelism would be fruitless and, furthermore, could even produce awful tragedies to humankind as exemplified in human history. From this perspective, the lack of love could be pointed out as the crucial sign of the crises of humankind, especially in the 21st century.

Here is one example that once Christianity either concerned itself too much with silver or gold or disregarded the need of silver or gold of the common people, it could produce awful mistakes like what we have seen in the movement of Communism. And if religious communities do not consider the internal value of love but concentrate only on their religious value in terms of evangelism, this too will produce incredible tragedies. Once “the Soldiers of the Cross” in the Middle Ages killed with violence numerous of Muslims in order to extend their boundary. Now very recently we have been hearing that Muslims in the Middle East tortured and killed Christians in very cruel ways. Both sides have violated the value of the ministry of the Great Commandment in the name of the ministry of the Great Commission: they have taken revenge against each other, and it may persist until the end of the earth. They kill people simply because they have different religions. Whenever we see their lifestyle that disregards the value of love and admires only their enthusiastic ministry of evangelism, they will make us feel as if we are not human beings, but animals faithful to their own instincts. Do we really live in the 21st century, or in primitive ages? All religions need to admit first of all human beings are beings with body and heart, as well as spirit. All religions need to take care of the needs of the first two parts of humanity, if they are genuine, high religions. They need comprehension, communication, and cooperation at least for the world of love and for the sake of our next generation.

IV. The Prior Ministry of Love for the Ultimate Ministry of Life

We know that there will be no century without external crises, as the last

twenty centuries have proved. It is also historical fact that Christian churches have been stronger when they have been threatened by these external crises. On the other hand, Christianity has been abandoned by the people when they are free from external crises that make people fall with groans. From this perspective, when we say that 21st century is a century of crises, it is not simply because 21st century is full of external crises, but also because Christians may feel a lack of their internal value of loving others, which is the effective means for us to be able to overcome external crises. If Christian churches experience crises, it may be because they have emphasized too much faith and hope without fully practicing the ministry of loving neighbors in the midst of crises. It can be expressed conversely that when the ministry of love operates enough to manage and satisfy the external crises, Christian faith and hope seems to be authentic to the “Gentiles,” and these two components could be fruitful like the ministry of the first Apostles in the Early Church: “Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47 NIV). Otherwise the faith could be religious fanaticism and the “hope” psychological illusion. From this perspective, the production of the ministry of life (or the ministry of evangelism) must ask the prior ministry of love (or the ministry of compassion).

When Wesley emphasized the doctrine of sanctification, it conveyed always both “faith and hope” and the behaviors of “love.” To him sanctification is nothing else than loving God and neighbors in need. Wesley, who once in front of the Bishop of Bristol replied that “the world is my parish,” started his ministry in Bristol by taking care of poor children. Wesley emphasized always the great commission in terms of evangelism and simultaneously expressed the great commandment in terms of sanctification. Thus, the Christian ministry of love (or great commandment) is expected to come prior to the ministry of life (or great commission) as implied in John 3:16. And the two have actually been combined into one, as manifested and practiced throughout the ministry of Jesus for thirty years.

History teaches us that the ministry of love has been the constant means to rescue the people in the midst of external crises or tragedies. Our Lord commands us to obey, not only the Great Commission in terms

of evangelism or making disciples, but also the Great Commandment in terms of loving others. The Great Commission to make all nations His disciples must be accompanied with the Great Commandment to love even our enemies. Here could be great tension between world evangelism and the personal commandment of love, or between the evangelical ministry of Life and the compassionate ministry of Love. However, these appear as two principles outwardly but one inwardly and essentially, as implied in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (NIV). Here it is very clear that the Love ministry and the Life ministry become one through our faith (“whoever believes in him”) with hope (“shall not perish”). Thus we are required to keep these two to fulfill the will of God. But if we lose one of the missions of “Love and Life” or even one of the means of “faith and hope,” our ministry might not be fruitful and might even bring unexpected disasters. When we emphasize the ministry of evangelism (Great Commission), we are also required to enhance the compassion ministry (Great Commandment). Evangelism ministry for the Life without compassion ministry of the Love could result in unexpected tragedies and disasters, as our history has proved constantly. Even when we fail to balance these two, Christian ministry should face times of crises. As our ministry starts with Love, the ministry of Life should be actually fruitful. Christian schools including APNTS, thus, are required to teach and discipline these two values simultaneously. Then the first commandment and blessing of God in the Bible (Gen 1:28) will be fulfilled in terms of ruling over the earth which consists of crises (or “formless and empty,” Gen 1:2). Thus love and life should be united together. These two values are not two but one. If the Life is an invisible value, then the Love may be the visible clothes of the invisible Life. If the Life is “wine,” then the Love is “skin.” These two are to be one, as clearly taught in Isaiah 43:4, and particularly in 1 John 3:1. From this perspective, APNTS needs to provide students with the opportunity to participate in compassionate ministry for the people in need. Students should go to the societies to provide what the people need for their daily lives. Not only classrooms and libraries but also streets and societies must be the best places for the students to learn how to become capable great ministers to be able to solve the problems of 21st century crises.

V. Do Not Fear the Crises that Make Us Fear

If we overcome our crises by emphasizing the Love ministry while holding the Life ministry as our ultimate ministry, we can gain another lesson from Isaiah for how to complete our vision of the kingdom. That is, we should not fear what makes us fear. In Isaiah 43, He told His people: “Do not fear” (v. 1); do not fear water (v. 2); do not fear fire and flames (v. 2); do not fear the sea and the mighty waters (v. 16); do not fear the wilderness and the wasteland (v. 19). Why? Because God makes a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. God has used our churches to make roads in the midst of the wilderness and rivers in the midst of the desert. Here are the reasons why our faith and hope are required in order for the ministry of Life and Love to be fulfilled.

From this perspective the wilderness and the desert themselves are not simply crises; rather, they are the necessary and inescapable means by which we can manifest both the Life of God and the Love of God. If we are afraid of external phenomena like water, fire, wilderness, and desert, we could lose great opportunities to fulfill our ministry of Life and Love, and consequently it could produce other types of crises, such as feeling of fear, anxiety, disappointment, embarrassment, complaint, revenge, or temptation of suicide. We should be convinced that the external crises should be the means of manifesting the values of the internal essence in terms of life and love (which contains peace, freedom, nonviolence, justice, and righteousness.) The angel Gabriel told Joseph and Mary not to fear as they became aware of her pregnancy, and Joseph welcomed Mary to give birth to Jesus. Jesus very frequently taught His disciples not to fear anything in any circumstances. Paul confessed, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:35, 39 NIV). Let us not fear anything but confront the trouble and hardship as the means to manifest His Love for the sake of the ministry of His Life. If we do not fear them and consistently practice loving His people in wilderness and desert, then we can have the time of seeing “roads and rivers.” But if the churches fear the Amorites, they shall not be given the Land of Canaan. If they fear the Goliath, they shall not overcome the threatening voices of the Palestine

soldiers. If Paul had feared the prison in Philippi, he could not have prayed and praised the Lord in the prison, nor proclaimed, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household” (Acts 16:31 NIV).

VI. Love the People Who Fear the Wilderness and Desert

As churches face the wilderness and desert, they should not fear them but should love the people in the wilderness and desert. If the people in the wilderness and desert have regarded Christian churches as no longer a loving community of God, then these needy people shall abandon the God of Life. If our churches are regarded as a community that is not full with Love, the Life of the Father both in Christ and in us will not overflow to the people in the wilderness and desert. The 21st century, which has been facing external and internal crises (or the “formless and empty”), will result in total confusion, chaos, and finally collapse. Once again, let us be reminded of John 3:16: its last word is Eternal Life, but it starts with the word Love of God through faith and hope. “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish” conveys the necessary gate for us to enter into the Kingdom where the King of kings dwells and reigns.

According to Wesley, Christian churches have been corrupted since Constantine proclaimed the Milan Edict, and from that historical point, the Church came to have no chance to face persecution. Rather, they received secular crowns: political power, financial abundance, popular honor, etc. These represent other types of crises to Christian churches. They have enjoyed silver or gold, but they have lost “the name of Jesus.” They have come to confront the external and internal crises simultaneously. The community of Love and Life in the Early Church (Acts 2:42–45) was the foundational ground to make the gentiles Christlike disciples; but as time went on, it was replaced by theological creeds, religious rituals, and political powers. Consequently, throughout the Middle Ages, scholastic debates confronted the crises of confusion, conflict, and collapse.

Martin Luther thought the Church of the 16th century was no longer Biblical. John Calvin argued the same in the 17th century and John Wesley in the 18th century. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the 20th century who told us that the grace of God had been treated very cheaply, without costs. These statements could mean that the Love and Life centered ministry of Jesus

Christ has come to fear the atheistic spirits like religious rituals, sophisticated theologies, ideological dogmas as well as all kinds of humanism-oriented secularism: rationalism, romanticism, materialism, chauvinism, blind nationalism, modernism, racism, and both radical communism and democracy. Whenever these kinds of thoughts have appeared, churches have responded in five ways according to Richard Niebuhr. But it is also certain that whenever our churches have not feared them and actively participated in the ministry of Love and Life, they could function as Light and Salt, rescuing the world in the midst of wilderness and desert. Otherwise, they have been abandoned by the world as shown particularly in the last two centuries through Communism movements entrenched in Russia by Lenin and Stalin, in Germany by Karl Marx, in China by Mao Zedong, and in North Korea by Kim Il-sung.

VII. The Declining Churches in Europe, USA and Korea

Dear Brothers and Sisters, when we say that the 21st century is a century of external and internal crises, it is partially related to the declining tendency of our current churches. When we consider the churches in Europe during the Middle Age in the 10th century, they seemed to be very influential in many ways. But as the churches gradually began to turn their concerns from the daily bread of the common people to the religious clergy and political leaders, they also began to be rejected by the same people who were in the midst of wilderness and desert. Consequently churches had to fade in Europe.

It has been rare for us to see very active evangelical churches in Europe. The Protestant churches originated by Luther, Calvin, and Wesley have not been easily visible in Germany, Geneva, or England. The churches in the United States and Korea in the 20th century were once very powerful and influential. But it has been said that the churches in the United States which had sent numerous missionaries to many nations in Africa, Asia, Central America, and throughout the world have been decreasing in membership, barely increasing any more. The United States is no longer called a missionary-sending country but mission field that needs missionaries from other countries. Some say that Korean churches that once showed radical growth no longer have active children's Sunday School or have only a few children attending churches, especially in small

towns or the countryside. We must be aware of that the ministry of Jesus Christ is the ministry of Love and Life. If we only stress one side of these, it brings out crises and inevitably comes to result in the confusion, chaos, and collapse at any time. In responding to these crises, then, what shall we do?

VIII. How to Fulfill the Mission of Love and Life in the Midst of Fear

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to introduce one person to teach us how APNTS will faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. How can the Life of the Father in the Son by the Spirit overflow through APNTS in the ministry of love and life to the churches and the nations in the world? I want to introduce one person who may teach us how to actually overcome the overwhelming crises in the 21st century. He is Peter in Acts. Peter's life and ministry can be a good illustration to help us learn how Christian churches may overcome the external phenomena that threaten us in the 21st century and fulfill the ministry of love and life.

In Acts 3:6 he proclaimed—yes, he proclaimed, “I have no silver or gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, stand up and walk” (NET). To the man who begged for silver or gold, Peter proclaimed, rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ who is the Power of Love and Life. He rescued the man who confronted crises from the day of his birth.

Then, when could Peter start to proclaim the name of Jesus and liberate the man from the crises of which he stood on the brink? Was it when he received his calling on the Sea of Galilee; was it when he saw Jesus walking on the water; or was it when he saw Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain? No! Peter who was once a fisher of fishes was totally changed into the fisher of people. It came to be possible through his many kinds of painful failures. It was after the denial of his Rabbi, Jesus who came to be crucified on the cross. It was after the Resurrection of Jesus who visited Peter in the midst of fear of the Jewish leaders. Consequently, it was after Peter received the Power of the Spirit. Thus, Peter was able to start his ministry of Love and Life after the Lord's faithful coming to Peter as the Spirit of Power. Yes, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the Spirit of Life, Love, and Power.

Our current churches, at least in the United States and Korea, may

have enough silver or gold today like the churches in the Middle Ages, but they are very reluctant to proclaim, Rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ. They may be very conservative religious churches, faithful to the Great Commission of Evangelism. They may be very outstandingly moral churches, faithful to the Great Commandment of Love. And they may be optimistic churches preaching psychological ways to make church members cope with various kinds of inner oppression and outer threats. Especially, they have been educated very highly for many years.

Then, why can our churches that wear the religion of evangelism, morality of love, and psychology of fear, not actually rescue the person who has confronted internal and external crises from the day of birth? Here is the answer from the Lord Jesus: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NIV). As Peter was totally changed after receiving the Power of the Spirit, our church needs to be transformed entirely by the Power of the Spirit. Our churches need to seek after the day of Pentecost like they did twenty centuries ago. Jesus was born through Mary by the Spirit. Jesus was baptized through John the Baptist by the Spirit. Jesus’ ministry was led by the Spirit. The first Word of the resurrected Jesus to His disciples was, receive the Spirit. The final Word of Jesus in this world was the promise to give the disciples the Spirit. Thus, the life and ministry of Jesus started with the Spirit and will continue until He comes back again. Here we may point out at this moment that one crucial element of our crises in this century is the tendency for churches not to ask after the Power of the Spirit! I wish all families to be “poor,” not asking “silver or gold” of theology or religion but, first of all, the Power of the Spirit for the ministry of Love and Life! The most serious crises threatening the Christian churches may be from neither environmental nor mental crises, but from the lack of seeking after the Spirit of Love, Life, and Power. Only when the Christian churches are inspired, anointed, and led continually by the Spirit, will they be equipped to overcome the external and internal crises threatening people who fall with groans in the wilderness and desert. Like the 120 of Acts 1 who all joined together constantly in prayer, let us ardently seek after being filled with Holy Spirit of Love, Life, and Power to fulfill the will of God, that is the dispensation of His Life to build the

Kingdom where the King of kings reigns.

O Lord, “as the deer pants for streams of water” (Psalm 42:1 NIV), we thirst for Your Spirit of Life, Love, and Power! We put our faith and hope in You. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10).

IX. The BEST and GREAT APNTS of the CROSS

Dear brothers and sisters, I wish APNTS to be able to nourish the faithful and capable servants who are filled with and anointed by the Spirit. I wish them to be able to perform the Great Commission of Life with the Great Commandment of Love by the Power of the Spirit. I wish the churches which they serve after their graduation may grow and be multiplied to rule over the crises from the wilderness and desert which are full of void, emptiness, and darkness that the church members confront every day.

For the sake of this, I would like to pray for APNTS to be the BEST and GREAT APNTS of the CROSS. Here is my prayer: may the Life of the Father overflow to the churches through the Love of the Son and by the Power of the Spirit. For the sake of the fulfillment of this prayer, I want to put four words in my thought which convey nineteen components for the ministry of the Life of God: BEST, GREAT, APNTS, CROSS.

APNTS shall be the BEST school to nourish GREAT ministers by providing the BEST education, discipling the students to live out the life of the CROSS. Yes! Let us make APNTS the BEST and GREAT APNTS of the CROSS!

APNTS shall be the BEST school providing the BEST education: 1) Bible-based education, 2) Ecclesia-centered education, 3) Society-relevant education, and 4) “To go To the glocal world” oriented education.

APNTS shall be a GREAT school by making our students GREAT ministers who focus on five areas when they serve their churches: 1) Glorifying our Good God ministry 2) Regeneration ministry, 3) Evangelism ministry, 4) Agape ministry, and 5) Transformation and Transfiguration ministry.

APNTS shall be a school of the CROSS by their discipling themselves to take the CROSS in John 17: 1) being Crucified [v. 1], 2) being Resurrected [v. 1], 3) becoming One among them [v. 11], 4) being Sanctified [v. 17], and 5) being Sent by the Father and Sending disciples [v. 18].

APNTS shall make its campus full of the five elements: 1) a campus of

Agape, 2) a campus of Prayer, 3) a campus of “No to evil spirits, but yes to the Holy Spirit,” 4) a campus of Trusting God with Total commitment, and 5) a campus of Spirit-filled integrity.

O Lord of the Life, the Love, and the Power, please come and help your little servant to serve APNTS, making your students to become great ministers for the Life of the Father to overflow through us and by the Love of the Son and the Power of the Spirit to the Church, the Kingdom, and New Jerusalem, which is full of peace, joy, freedom, justice, and righteousness. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it” (1 Thess 5:23–24 NIV)

May the God of Love, Life, and Power bless all of you!

Call for Papers

The Mediator provides a forum for dialogue about theological issues related to ministry in Asian and Pacific contexts. In keeping with this purpose, the editorial committee seeks quality papers related to Bible, theology, missions, evangelism, and church growth. Also welcome are reviews of publications, including books and music. Contact the editor for more information.

Guidelines for Submission

1. Please submit all proposed articles to the editor in electronic form (Microsoft Word is preferable). Please put “Mediator Submission” in the subject line.
2. Articles must be written in standard international English.
3. Authors must provide complete bibliographical information either in citations or in a bibliography at the end. Citation style may be either parenthetical or footnote style, but must be consistent within each article. If used, format as footnotes rather than endnotes.
4. Articles must conform to the latest edition of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*.
5. Papers may be of any length, although authors may be asked to condense longer papers.
6. A list of non-standard abbreviations should be provided.

Information

Mission

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, a graduate school in the Wesleyan tradition, prepares men and women for Christ-like leadership and excellence in ministries.

Vision

Bridging cultures for Christ, APNTS equips each new generation of leaders to disseminate the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia, the Pacific, and the world.

Strategic Objectives

1. Provide solid biblical, historical, and theological foundations and encourage lifelong learning.
2. Demonstrate the power, spiritual formation, and transformation possible within a multi-cultural community of committed believers.
3. Create a dynamic environment that reinforces spiritual gifts and graces, and the call to ministry.
4. Challenge to reach across ethnicity, culture, gender, class and geographical region for the sake of the Gospel.

The seminary exists to prepare men and women for ministry in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world by developing personal and professional attitudes and skills for analytical reflection upon Christian faith and life, and competencies in the practice of ministry. Since its founding in 1983, APNTS has trained men and women for a wide range of vocations. Today, over 350 graduates serve as pastors, teachers, Bible college presidents, missionaries, and various other church and para-church workers.

Degrees and Programs

APNTS offers the following academic courses:

- **Master of Divinity (90 units)**
- **Master of Arts in Religious Education (48 units)**
- **Master of Arts in Christian Communication (48 units)**
- **Master of Science in Theology (48 units)**
- **Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development (60 units)**

English is the language of instruction in the classrooms. Students must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the APNTS English Proficiency Exam to register. A score of 500 is required for the M.Div., 510 for the M.S.T. (Pastoral Ministry) degree and 550 for the M.A., M.S.T. (Biblical Studies, Faith and History, Intercultural Studies), and Ph.D. degrees.

Faculty

The well-qualified teaching staff upholds a high level of education. Adjunct and visiting professors from both within and outside the Asia-Pacific region help expand students' worldviews.

Accreditation

APNTS is accredited by the Philippines Association of Bible & Theological Schools (PABATS), Asia Theological Association (ATA), and the Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia (ATESEA), and is recognized by the Philippines Commission for Higher Education (CHED).

Contact

For further information or for an application, please write to the address below:

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