

# *Bible in Faith and Practice*

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# FOREWORD

*Rev. Dr. Domingo J. Diel, Jr.*

One very important Reformation Heritage of the 16th Century, which the Baptist churches share with other Protestant churches today is *sola scriptura* (the Scripture alone) tenet. In fact, this has become the touchstone for faith and practice of the Baptist Christians worldwide.

However, having stated that, it is also correct to say that what is professed faith based on the Scriptures is very often different from the practice of it. In other words, there is usually a “gap-problem” between faith and practice, even though one claims or believes that both are based on the Scriptures or the Bible. Not seldom is also the fact, that Christian practice, that is, the actual living of the supposedly professed Christian faith is more often based on church traditions long carried out than on the Bible itself. While this reality is observable in other Christian churches, the same is true among Baptist Christians.

The two Articles in the Journal “Local Autonomy: Historico-Critical Review” by Elizer Geromiano, and “St. Paul’s Concept of SKENOPOIIA (Tentmaking)...” by Armando S. Kole are Masteral degree paper and an excerpt of a doctoral dissertation, respectively. Both try to look into the “gap-problem” between what the Bible says about these specific themes and the practice itself of the Baptist churches under study. Both studies are important for the churches to re-examine their long practiced traditions whether in the light of Scriptures, they are indeed biblical/scriptural. The third Article, “Creation in the Book of Job” by Mona Lisa P. Siacor, is also a Masteral degree paper. The Paper draws the reader’s attention to parallel concepts of creation in Job and in Genesis: concepts discussed, compared and properly documented. Moreover, the study brought out the concepts of divine justice and the problem of human suffering, which ultimately underlined the idea who/what is God really as affirmed in faith by Job – in relation to His creation of the world, of humanity and of an individual person.

Hopefully, these biblical studies could start and open avenues of more interest in the Bible/Scriptures as indeed the basis of our Christian faith and practice in Christian living in the church and the community.



# LOCAL AUTONOMY: HISTORICO-CRITICAL REVIEW

*Pastor Elizer G. Geromiano*

## INTRODUCTION

### The Need for the Study

The Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC) Board of Trustees formed a committee to study the issue of Local Autonomy.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the committee did not work as expected. Consequently, on the 69<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the CPBC, “a resolution for the study of the definition, scope, and limitation of the Baptist’s Local Church Autonomy” was passed and adopted.<sup>2</sup> Two years later, on the 71<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the same, another resolution was passed and approved for CPBC “to pursue the attempt to study Local Autonomy and come up with an official interpretation.”<sup>3</sup> These were official initiatives to resolve the growing problem among CPBC member churches’ and CPBC-related institutions’ attitude, participation, and support to the Convention. The hands of CPBC leadership are apparently tied up that they cannot right away intervene on the problems of their members. This is because local leaders or some involved parties would often invoke Local Autonomy as basis to push the CPBC leaders away. Apparently, most problems such as conflict management, property management and the like are prevalent among local churches. There are numerous cases that have ended up in civil courts, local church split, and other unpleasant outcomes.

Indeed, Local Autonomy is one of the historic Baptist’s principles. Baptist history, since Europe and USA can attest to this. This principle is enshrined in the Constitution and By-Laws of CPBC. However, the charter up to its latest amendment is silent about the nature of Local Autonomy as a Baptist principle.<sup>4</sup> It is probable that the absence of standard definition (scope and limitation) is the cause for relative interpretation and practice among CPBC constituents. Thus, there is an urgent need to conduct an investigation on the history and development of Local Autonomy, as one of the Baptist principles and to uncover fundamental issues undergirding it. This paper is an attempt to respond to that need.

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<sup>1</sup> See CPBC BOT Minutes, 13 February 2004 Meeting.

<sup>2</sup> May 19-21, 2004, Capiz Evangelical Church, Roxas City.

<sup>3</sup> May 23-25, 2006, University Church, CPU, Iloilo City.

<sup>4</sup> The three CPBC By-Laws (1935, 1996, 2005) are not only silent of the meaning of Local Autonomy but of other Baptist principles as well. It is not surprising that relative interpretations are surfacing. The By-Laws renders itself inadequate guide for CPBC constituents.

## **The Objectives**

This study is an attempt to respond to the resolution passed and approved during the 69<sup>th</sup> CPBC General Assembly calling for the study of the definition, scope, and limitation of the Baptists local church autonomy. The urgency of such need was augmented when after two years another resolution was passed and approved on the 71<sup>st</sup> CPBC General Assembly. The other resolution, however, was more specific – to study Local Autonomy and come up with an official interpretation. Also, it is on this mandate that this study responds.

To do so, this paper attempts to review the history of Local Autonomy since the Sixteenth Century Reformation to the present, highlighting its development from Europe (Old World), North America (New World) and the Philippines (CPBC). Facts and data would not be novel to informed readers, only new interpretations will be.

Since the problem of Local Autonomy is fundamentally linked with ecclesiology, this paper also attempts to reconstruct the Baptist understanding of the church in the light of the New Testament.

The outcome of this paper will be offered humbly to CPBC as a suggested reference for institutional and organizational action on the issue at hand.

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is it happens at a moment when Local Autonomy is deemed very controversial in the Baptist world, especially in CPBC. Second, it is significant because empirically, this is one extensive work so far that put emphasis on Local Autonomy. Third, it is significant because it digs deeper on the issue and finds out that the problem of Local Autonomy is fundamentally a challenge of ecclesiology. Fourth, it is significant because of its historical and critical nature. In times when many Philippine Baptists are becoming more critical of Baptist faith, a critical review of history is a liberating event. Finally, this study is significant because it is intended as a guideline but not prescription on how to address specific issues in the church related to Local Autonomy. Given the historic Baptist emphasis on the Authority of Scripture over faith and practice, this study refers to specific NT passages that could be used as imperative in dealing with issues such as conflict management, property management and the like.

The results of this study could assist CPBC on its earnest and urgent need to understand Local Autonomy and formulate official definition of this principle. If this official definition is institutionalized it will eventually flow down to the grassroots through the initiative of dedicated CPBC workers whom the constituents look up to as having integrity and worthy of respect.

## **Expectations**

It is expected that this study on Local Autonomy and its underlying issues will contribute to arouse in-depth discussion and organizational action. It is hoped that the finding and recommendations of this study will not remain in library bookshelves and session halls after lectures but will be institutionalized and permeate the faith and governance of CPBC and member churches and institutions.



# I. BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF LOCAL AUTONOMY: PAST TO THE PRESENT

Local Autonomy as a Baptist principle cannot be seen apart from the whole spectrum of Baptist beliefs and history. Likewise, Baptist History cannot be dissected away from the arena of Church history, inasmuch as the latter is inseparable from world history. This brief review is an attempt to highlight Local Autonomy in Baptist history. It seeks to identify the historical context that gave birth to Baptist faith, especially its emphasis on Local Autonomy. Since Baptists and other church historians are unanimous that Baptists faith originated in continental Europe<sup>1</sup>, contemporarily with the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation, the writer opted to take the latter event as a starting point. This is without prejudice to citing pre-Reformation events and beyond that is found relevant to the presentation.

To see Baptist beginnings in the proper setting, we must retrace the stages by which they arose. Early Baptists claim they belong to the Protestants.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation is a strategic point to start. This is where a major paradigm shift in the Christian Church took place.

## 1. 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation

The word “Reformation” describing the revolution of the sixteenth century is in a sense, a misnomer. This is so for Robert Baker: “The principal events did not center in reform but in schism.”<sup>3</sup> There were sporadic clamor and dissent against the Roman Catholic Church and the Empire. One can hardly separate the religious from the political because the two were grossly entwined.<sup>4</sup> The church herself triggered the schism, clamor and dissent. For K. S. Latourette, “The Institutions which had been erected as bulwarks of the faith – monasteries, the clergy, and especially the papacy – were honeycombed with corruption.”<sup>5</sup> This situation of the church was carried over from the Medieval Age when the disintegration heightened.

Schism, which eventually led to the Reformation, came into being as a reaction or opposition to the church by many of her own. The “prince” of them was a scholarly monk named Martin Luther.<sup>6</sup> In studying the New Testament, especially Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, Luther found out the error in the doctrine of Indulgence, which the Pope, for some financial motive was selling at that time.<sup>7</sup> Luther, at first, did not intend to break away from the Roman Catholic Church; his

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<sup>1</sup> Though there are varying positions to the historical events and factors that led to Baptist faith. H. C. Vedder declares that Baptist originated from English Congregationalists. Norman H. Maring & Winthrop S. Hudson denies that Baptist had some historical connection from Continental Anabaptists. But William L. Lumpkin and Franklin Hamlin Littell affirm so, citing historical and circumstantial evidence for indispensable connection between the two. The researcher adheres to the latter.

<sup>2</sup> This term was first coined in the Diet of Spier (1529) when the Lutheran princes made a formal protest against the action of the RC over Lutheran churches districts. (See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, Harper and Brothers Publishers: New York, 1953, p. 727.)

<sup>3</sup> Robert A. Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, Broadman Press: Nashville, Tennessee, 1959, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Lewis W. Spitz, *The Rise of Modern Europe: The Protestant Reformation 1517-1559*, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1985, p. 59-66.

<sup>5</sup> K. S. Latourette, 1953, p. 684.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. R. A. Baker, 1959, p. 196-197.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. L. W. Spitz, 1985, p. 52-53; R. A. Baker, 1959, p. 147ff. “The financial gain secured by this fashion was not sufficient to care for the vast expenditures, legitimate and otherwise, of the papacy. Especially during the fourteenth century the papacy utilized every possible means for increasing its revenue. Some of these methods were through annates, collations, reservations, expectancies, dispensations, indulgencies, simony, commendations, the *jus spoliatorum*, tithing, and special assessments.” (For vivid explanation as to what these are, see p. 147-150.)

intension was only to reform her. But his attack on indulgences also became a grave assault on the authority of the pope and the church. The church authorities persecuted Luther that left him with no choice but to leave and start his own.

As mentioned earlier, there was, almost all over Western Europe, a sporadic clamor against Rome. The courageous act of Luther paved the way for the coming out of other Reformers, such as Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin in Switzerland, the Anabaptists and the Radical “left wing” Reformation, and the Anglican.<sup>1</sup>

As charged, the church was guilty of the following excesses in the religious life like (a) Unhealthy veneration of saints; (b) Disorganized pilgrimage; piety was distorted (marked by immorality and corruption); (c) Reform was needed in ecclesiastical administration; (d) The papacy was defective; (e) The episcopate was feudal; (f) Church practices e.g. worship, rites and rituals had become degenerated and poor in quality; (g) The lower clergy and laity were in bondage of poverty and misery; and, (h) The whole church is under the hierarchical power of the Pope and the church was grossly entwined with the state.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Baptist Movement somehow owed its development from the sixteenth-century Reformation.

## **2. In the Old World (Europe)**

### **2.1. A look at Baptist “Origins”**

Historians have differed in locating Baptist beginnings. Some Baptist historians such as W. H. Brackney declare, “It seems clear today that Baptist faith had its origin within English Congregationalism.”<sup>3</sup> Although there is a widely circulated notion that Baptist churches have had an “unbroken succession” (Successionist Theory)<sup>4</sup> from the first century, there is no reason to give credence to such a fanciful theory.<sup>5</sup> Historical evidence does not support the idea that a chain of Christian churches with definite Baptists traits has existed apart from the mainstream of Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. L. W. Spitz, 1985, p. 145-236.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. D. Diel, Jr. *Local Autonomy of the Baptist Church: A Review in Light of Tradition, Practice and Holy Scriptures*, in CPBC Assembly Souvenir Program. 2004; N. D. Bunda, *A Brief Review of Church History, Baptist Faith and Principles*, in N. D. Bunda, et. al., eds., *Revisiting Faith Resources*, Halad Prints Collective: Iloilo City, Phil., 2002, p. 88. While marked by the negative as mentioned, the time before the Reformation also displays encouraging aspects. These are the following: a.) The deeply religious trend of the time – gifts to the church, church constructions, impressive religious arts, brotherhoods/sisterhoods and charitable institutions (hospitals, alms, old-age houses); and b.) The church was also active in the religious education of the people that led to deep religious piety.

<sup>3</sup> William H. Brackney, ed. *Baptist Life and Thought: A Sourcebook*, Judson Press: Valley Forge, 1998, p. 23-24.

<sup>4</sup> See W. Morgan Patterson, *Baptist Successionism: A Critical View*, The Judson Press: Valley Forge, 1969, p. 13. Cf. Nestor D. Bunda and Francis Neil G. Jalandon, *A Review of Baptist Heritage and Principles*, “This viewpoint goes beyond mere “continuation of biblical teachings” and declares that Baptist churches actually existed in an unbroken chain since the time of Christ and John the Baptist. Commonly referred to as “Landmarkism” or the “Trail of Blood” theory (J.M. Carroll wrote a book of supposed Baptist history by this name), this view declares that those churches which stood outside the influence of the Roman Catholic Church at various times in church history were, in actuality although not in name, Baptist churches. What made them Baptists was their refusal to accept infant baptism, or, said another way, their refusal to accept the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian entity. However, many of the historical churches which Landmarkists labeled as Baptist churches were actually “heretical” with regards to doctrine.”

<sup>5</sup> Norman H. Maring, Winthrop S. Hudson, *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice*, Judson Press, Valley Forge, 1991, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> W. H. Brackney, ed., 1998, p. 19.

The Baptist Movement appeared in Europe in connection with the “left wing”<sup>1</sup> of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> For Lumpkin, “It has not been proven ... that the Baptist Movement has a genetic connection with any of the Pre-Reformation evangelical groups”. Nevertheless, there are manifestations of indirect connection. On this he wrote:

Careful study of their teachings leads one to judge that they reflected the outlook and some of the distinctive emphases of such groups as the Waldenses. At the beginning of the sixteenth century there were people in every country of Western Europe who earnestly protested against the corruption in the church who, therefore, welcomed the protests of Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli. Such were ... Anabaptists. Having much in common with the churchly reformers, these folks were at first identified with their movements, and they separated from them when the Reformation seemed to fall short of a full application of principles clearly enunciated by the Reformers.<sup>3</sup>

Another popular view connects Baptists with the Anabaptists<sup>4</sup> on the continent of Europe, particularly with a Mennonite<sup>5</sup> group in Holland. In spite of considerable research, no clear evidence has demonstrated that Baptist origins are traceable to a Mennonite source<sup>6</sup>, except for the association of John Smyth and his members with Mennonite, descendants of Anabaptists in Holland. Brackney records:

In 1610 John Smyth and his English followers in Waterland, after considerable discussion with the liberal Mennonite community there, agreed to accept the Dutch Confessions of 1580, which contained the Mennonites’ advanced views on baptism, war, oaths, and civil government. A shortened version of that confession was drawn up, translated, and submitted to Smyth’s congregation. The *Short Confession* (1610), signed by John Smyth and thirty-nine men and women, served as the basis for the General Baptist when they returned to England, *with their new leader, Thomas Helwys*.<sup>7</sup>

This may not be direct historical evidence, but for Dr. Diel, this is a “circumstantial evidence”<sup>8</sup> or indirect proof that confirms historic relationship between the two. This will be discussed in detail in the next segment.

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<sup>1</sup> Left – Socialistic, group or section favoring socialism; socialist collectively. See, Lawrence Urdang, ed., *The Oxford Desk Dictionary*, American Edition. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confession of Faith*, Judson Press: Philadelphia, 1959, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Lumpkin, 1959, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Franklin Hamlin Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church: A Study in the Origin of Sectarian Protestantism*, Starr King Press: Beacon Hill, Boston, 1958, p. XV. Anabaptists literally means “those who baptize again”. It is a label given by the Reformers and Catholic Leaders alike to the “left wing” movement who were disappointed with the compromise reform done by Luther, Anglican Church, Zwingli, Calvin and others. They preferred to be called “Brethren” as how the NT believers preferred to call each other. Anabaptists is a sweeping and inaccurate classification of the movement because there were various beliefs among these left groups. Among them there were varying tendencies, which their enemies (catholic and reformers alike) simply labeled “rebaptizers” because of this common practice among them.

<sup>5</sup> Followers of Menno Simmons, an Anabaptist leader. Menno with a colleague and contemporary, Dirck Philipsz, in “The Seven Ordinances of the True Church” (c. 1560) listed the institutions in terms familiar even today: 1. true teaching, correct ministry; 2. proper use of two sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper; 3. foot-washing; 4. evangelical separation; 5. brotherly love (including mutual admonition and communal sharing); 6. keeping all His commandments; 7. accepting suffering and persecutions. (A section of *The Church of God*, “in the Enchiridion; GHW?M, Section 11, pp. 226-60, in F. H. Littell, 1958, p. 42.)

<sup>6</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> W. H. Brackney, ed., 1998, p. 35. Italics mine.

<sup>8</sup> D. J. Diel, Jr., in CPBC 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly Souvenir Program. 2005.

It should be acknowledged further that Baptists share with Anabaptist in general a vision of the believers' church. Nevertheless, "there is a spiritual kinship between these pioneers of the Radical Reformation and Baptist. The Anabaptists suffered persecution for their advocacy of believer's baptism and the believers' church, as did Baptists. In the United States, Baptists have joined with descendants of the Anabaptists in conferences devoted to strengthening support for their common acceptance of the concept of the believers' Church."<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2. The Development of Baptist Faith

Baptists originated from English Congregationalists.<sup>2</sup> This is true as Lumpkin explains:

The English Reformation, in spite of formative influences from the Continent, is generally agreed to have its roots in native soil. Thus, in English manifestation, the Baptist Movement reflected, particularly, a heritage from an older native reform spirit as well as a heritage from sixteenth-century Continental Anabaptism and Calvinism...<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that Anabaptism arrived in England, coming by way of the Netherlands, early in the reformatory period. This radical reform movement spread after 1525 with amazing rapidity, from Switzerland to many parts of Western Europe. About Anabaptism, Lumpkin wrote:

The Anabaptists held that the New Testament church is a voluntary community of individuals who have been transformed by the working of the Holy Spirit, in an experience of grace, and that the baptism is a "symbol and seal of the faith of the regenerated." From these views there followed the doctrines of the brotherhood of baptized believers and the separation of the church from the state and the world.<sup>4</sup>

With the great Reformers of the sixteenth century, Church and State were practically coexistent. All citizens of a territory, except those excommunicated, were held to be members of the established Church. The Anabaptists were despised by the reformers for insisting that the Church is composed only of deliberate followers of Christ, that admission to it is by confession and baptism, that it is autonomous, and it keeps itself pure by pure discipline.<sup>5</sup> Anabaptists were bitterly persecuted in England, which years afterwards led to the loss of their organized life and witness. Yet the spirit and distinctive emphases of Anabaptism survived on the English scene. "Principles of Anabaptism became a part of the thinking of zealous Englishmen who were seeking a more thorough reformation of the church in their land."<sup>6</sup> Evidently, Radical Reformation through Anabaptism has strongly penetrated England second to North Germany and Netherlands.<sup>7</sup> With

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<sup>1</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> See Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of Baptist*, American Baptist Publication Society: Philadelphia, 1891, p.108-109.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Lumpkin, 1959, p. 12. As for "an older native reform spirit" Lumpkin mentioned the Lollards, fourteenth-century co-laborers of John Wyclif, whose movement of evangelical dissent continued in many part of England until well into the sixteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> W. L. Lumpkin, 1959, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. F. H. Littell, 1958, p. XII-XVIII.

<sup>6</sup> Heath, *Contemporary Review*, p. 400, in W. L. Lumpkin, 1959, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. F. H. Littell, 1958, p. 2-12.

these antecedents, we are ready to see how the Baptist Movement came to being in English soil.

Again, Baptists originated from English Congregationalists. The latter traces its origin from English Puritanism<sup>1</sup>, which is a protest against the Anglican Church. Having expected a thorough housecleaning in the Church of England after the break with Rome occurred, many were disappointed that Queen Elizabeth chose middle way between Roman Catholicism and the stricter reforms inspired by Calvin's Geneva. Therefore, the Puritans sought to reform the English church more thoroughly "according to the Word of God." Their program called for the removal of certain practices reminiscent of what they called "popery". Objections were raised to the too much ritual of the Book of Common Prayer and the wearing of special garb at the Lord's Supper. As the movement developed, its aims were expanded to include a demand that a *presbyterial* system of church government be substituted for the Episcopal polity. The authority of bishops would then be transferred to presbyteries.

Although these Puritans stood for a deepened spiritual life in the churches, they did not reject two critical assumptions that were almost universally held in Europe. First, they expected everyone in a given geographical area to be a member of the parish church. Thus, they had no objection to laws requiring that all infants be baptized. Second, they acknowledged the right of civil ruler to supervise the life of the church. In their view, it was the duty of the state to support and protect the church by wise legislation, by financial support, and by suppression of heresy. In both of these views, the Puritan outlook accorded with that of the Church of England, as well as with those of the Roman Catholics and most Protestants in Europe.

Out of this Puritan wing of the Anglican Church, however, there developed a Congregationalist party which did not accept the idea that everyone automatically belongs to the church. Rejecting the concept of the "parish church" with its mixed multitude of believers and unbelievers, the leaders of this group declared that visible churches ought to be composed of "visible saints"; they insisted that churches should admit to membership only those persons who could testify to their own Christian experience. With membership restricted, congregations were transformed into "gathered" instead of "parish" congregations. Having covenanted to form a congregation, the members of each church became responsible for governing their own affairs.

In taking this step, however, the early advocates of Congregationalist principles still stopped short of pursuing their basic contention to its logical conclusion. Although they wished to limit church membership to believers, they were reluctant to exclude children completely. Thus, they retained baptism for the children of the church members, and said that churches are composed of visible saints and "their children". It was expected of course, that when these children grew up they would be able to testify to God's saving work in their lives. They would then be admitted to the Lord's Table and to full membership. In actuality, however, when the baptized children became adults, many of them were unable to testify to any experience of conversion. The presence of such persons who had been baptized, but had been unable to qualify for full membership in the church, was embarrassing. The practice of infant baptism is inconsistent with the idea of a "gathered" church. Dissatisfaction also arose at another point. The

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Heath, *Contemporary Review*, p. 400, in W. L. Lumpkin, 1959, p. 14. "The Anabaptists were Puritans before Puritanism had sprung into recognized existence, and held substantially all that Puritans afterwards contended for..."

Congregationalist party still adhered to the idea that the civil government was responsible for the welfare of the church. Although they claimed the right to withdraw from the Church of England, they hoped for a day when they would enjoy state support as the official faith. It soon became apparent to some that this position too was also inconsistent.

Those who advocated a clean break with the Church of England were labeled *Separatists*. There were others who held a Congregational theory, but were unwilling to break away from the Church of England. Out of the Separatist group came the Pilgrims who eventually founded the settlement at Plymouth, New England in 1620, whereas the less radical Puritans started the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. In the New World, unhampered by the civil government or the older churches, both groups found opportunity to translate their theories into practice.

In the rise of a people with Congregationalists' sentiments may be seen a movement which reached the very brink of adopting principle that would have made them Baptists. In the ferment of religious ideas in the seventeenth century, it is not surprising that some persons decided to take the next step. Consistent adherence to the gathered-church principle required the rejection of infant baptism and of the state church concept. When people were ready to take these two steps, the Baptist arrived on the scene.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.3. Origin from English Congregationalism Illustrated

In some cases Baptists emerged from Separatists. In other instances their background was that of non-separating Congregationalists. In many ways, the Baptists continued to resemble Congregationalist. They maintained the idea of the "gathered church", and they emphasized the importance of the local church in governing its own affairs. At only two important points did the Baptists take a different line: namely, by insisting that believer's baptism was necessary to the gathered-church idea, and by advocating the **freedom of churches from the control of civil government**.<sup>2</sup>

The first illustration of the transition from Congregationalist to Baptist principles is found in a Separatist congregation that fled from England to Amsterdam, Netherlands. When their pastor, John Smyth, concluded that infant baptism was wrong and persuaded the congregation of the correctness of his views, the church was reconstituted upon a basis of believer's baptism. Smyth was a *Se-Baptist*; he baptized himself and then baptized the others. Smyth was also convinced that a church, which is responsible to Christ as its head, must have freedom from ecclesiastical and civil interference. This conviction led him to publish one of the earliest defenses of **liberty of conscience**.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after Smyth had baptized himself and his congregation, he was criticized by other Separatists-in-exile for his action. If he insisted upon being *rebaptized*, he could have applied to local Mennonites that might have led to a rebaptism and perhaps to union with them. Some members of his congregation, however, saw no reason to question the validity of their baptism by Smyth. When their pastor persisted in his negotiation with the Dutch Mennonites, this group,

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<sup>1</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 14. Bold for emphasis.

<sup>3</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, Broadman Press: Nashville, Tennessee, 1990.p. 14. Bold for emphasis.

now led by Thomas Helwys, returned to England. In 1612, they formed the first Baptist church on English soil.

These first Baptists had been affected by current theological discussions about the role of free will in the process of salvation. They adopted an *Arminian*<sup>1</sup> position supporting free will, which was anathema to the strictly *Predestinarian* Calvinists. Because these Baptists asserted that the atonement of Christ was sufficient to save all human beings, not just the elect, their adherence to the concept of a general atonement led to their being called *General Baptists*. Although these General Baptists experienced some growth during the seventeenth century, their movement dwindled after 1700 and never had much influence upon the mainstream of Baptist development. It is important to note that these Baptists limited baptism to those who had made a profession of faith and **opposed all interference by the civil government.**<sup>2</sup> Thus, they were differentiated from the Congregationalist party with whom they had been associated.

A second instance of Baptist beginnings, unrelated to that of the Smyth group, came about in 1638. Several people withdrew from a Congregationalist church in London to form a new church on the basis of believer's baptism. The parent Church had been Congregationalist in its emphasis upon the concept of a gathered Church, but it had shied away from complete separation from the Church of England. Sharing the general outlook of the nonseparating Congregationalists, these Baptists were more typical Calvinists than were the General Baptists. Holding the doctrine of "particular" atonement (Christ having died only for the elect), they were known as Particular Baptists. Living in complete isolation from each other, the General and Particular Baptists developed in different ways. The principles that these groups had in common, distinguishing them from their fellow dissenters, were the practice of believers' baptism and a specific **theory of religious liberty.**

The third case of an independent Baptist beginning saw the leading spirit on an American colonist, Roger Williams. "Having moved from being a moderate Puritan to a strong Separatist, he **denied the right of civil government to interfere in matters of conscience** at all. Expelled from the Massachusetts Bay settlement, he established the new colony of Rhode Island, where in 1639 he joined with others to form a church on the basis of believer's baptism. He himself was associated with the Baptist church at Providence for only few weeks, and the Providence church exercised little influence upon the spread and development of the Baptist cause in America. Once more, however, it may be seen how Baptist emerged, logically and naturally out of the Congregationalist setting by refusing to baptize infants and by affirming the freedom of the church from the authority of the state."<sup>3</sup>

This historical development is implicit about Local Autonomy as evident in Baptist understanding of church polity. As stated, early Baptists asserted on their view of the church, different from that of the Reformers, especially the Anglican

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609 from 1603 professor at Leiden) rejected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Salvation, he taught, certainly depends solely on God's grace. Man has the freedom to receive this grace or reject it. This view was more Erasmian and humanistic than Reformed. His opponents accused him of *Socinianism* (Unitarians) and semi-Pelagianism (Pelagianism). In 1604 he engaged in a public debate with his colleague Franciscus Gomarus (1563-1641, who struggled a *Supralapsarian* doctrine of predestination). The struggle lasted until the death of Arminius, and its effect continued for some years. See Alasdair I. C. Heron, in, Erwin Fahlbusch, et. al. eds., *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Brill. Vol. 1A, 1999. p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Bold for emphasis

<sup>3</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 11-16. Bold for emphasis

reform. Baptists, like Anabaptists, as quoted above sees the church as “voluntary community of individuals who have been transformed by the working of the Holy Spirit, in an experience of grace, and that the baptism is a ‘symbol and seal of the faith of the regenerated.’” Thus, they differ from the Reformers’ understanding of the church. Believers’ baptism and regenerated membership are explicit here. However, the development does not end here. Baptist church, as an organization had to tackle its relationship with the civil government. Thus the principles, as highlighted above, such as, “**Freedom of churches from the control of civil government**”, “**liberty of conscience**”, “**theory of religious liberty**”, and the like, were developed. All these sprung out from the emphasis on the “Authority of the Scripture as rule of faith and practice”.<sup>1</sup> By this, the early Baptist believed that the church is autonomous from any authority – religious hierarchy and civil government – except for the authority of the Jesus Christ, as recorded in the scriptures, and as witnessed to by the Holy Spirit. It is on this milieu that Local (church) Autonomy, as a Baptist principle emerged.

The early Baptist churches emerged in 17<sup>th</sup> century England as autonomous units. Each church had an ordained leader (minister, pastor, or teacher) and deacons elected by the members. Some churches also had elders while others appointed messengers to organize new churches or minister to those churches lacking a leader. Each church disciplined its own member, using a variety of practices, and each congregation kept its own records of membership and discipline.

Congregational autonomy also resulted in a variety of worship patterns. Gradually the Particular Baptists (Calvinists) began to form loosely organized region and urban association so as to put forth a common confession. Afterwards the General Baptists (Arminian) followed suit. Eventually all but the Seventh Day Baptists followed this trend. With the formation of regional and national associations came more uniformity of polity, offices, praxis, and creed.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the idea of Local Autonomy as a church polity was already manifest in the outlook of early Baptist in the Old World, most particularly in England. This idea is closely knitted with their struggle to be in the church that is consistent with the New Testament church polity.

Baptists Movement originated in Europe, but the movement flourished in the New World. Briefly, we will see how it started and whether Local Autonomy, as manifest in the Old World, was continued in America.

### 3. In the New World (USA)

The United States of America (USA), with more than 28 million Baptists, developed as the center of world Baptist strength. In the seventeenth century, the first Baptist churches were organized in America. Roger Williams initiated the establishment of the first Baptist church in Rhode Island in 1639. In 1638, Ezekiel Holliman baptized Williams by sprinkling. Afterwards, Williams baptized Holliman and ten others. About 1644, John Clarke established a second church in Newport. Mark Lucar, immersed in England in 1642, became a member of the Newport church, and introduced **baptism by immersion** in the US. Williams

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<sup>1</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See W. H. Brackney, ed., 1998, p. 47-61. Brackney records an English Baptists Confession of Faith, probably the earliest which Thomas Helwys (1556-1616) authored. The confession (1611) borrowed much from Helwys’ association with John Smyth, and the Dutch Mennonite community. It strongly asserts the congregational autonomy of believers’ church tradition.



soon left the church he founded and the Rhode Island Baptists were soon divided into three groups – General Six Principle Baptists who believed in Christ's general atonement, Particular Baptists, who as Calvinists believed in limited atonement, and Seventh Day Baptists.<sup>1</sup>

Baptist Movement in colonial America, like in Europe, also suffered continued persecution because of their faith principles:

Neither the Puritan establishments in New England nor the Anglican establishments in the South would grant them liberty of worship. Weak and unsure of themselves, the early Baptists had to overcome years of prejudice stemming back to the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 and the Munsterite Rebellion of 1535-1536, both of them were blamed upon the Baptist (or Anabaptists, as their enemies continued to label them in America).<sup>2</sup>

### 3.1. The Struggle for Religious Liberty

The Baptist struggle for religious liberty in America can be viewed almost as two separate stories. Political and religious laws varied widely between the New England and the Southern colonies, with the middle colonies from the first forming a buffer zone of religious toleration.

In New England the Congregational Church was established by law and supported by public taxation. Baptists there struggled against popular prejudice and against the various Exemption Laws that at times regulated the terms of their payment of taxes to support their opponent's church. Their primary spokesman was Isaac Backus, a Massachusetts pastor who drew insights from such diverse sources as John Locke and Roger Williams to develop his view for religious liberty.

In the South, Baptists faced popular prejudice everywhere, and pressures from the Anglican Church in areas where the Church had any real establishment. John Leland of Virginia became the most prominent Baptist spokesman for religious liberty. Baptists in the South faced nothing comparable to the Exemption Laws of New England, but they did face other laws whose intent was to restrict their freedom of worship and preaching, and to coerce taxes and support of the Anglican Church.<sup>3</sup>

At first the Baptists in Puritan and Anglican colonies sought only toleration, the right to worship as they pleased; not until 1740s did they launch a concerted effort for **religious equality and separation of church and state**. The Baptists tried to persuade their neighbors to grant them exemption from religious taxes to support the established church. Occasionally, they appealed to the King in Council for justice. As a result, they were considered in the 1760s to be opponents of the movement for colonial independence. In Virginia, Baptist ministers were mobbed and jailed in the years 1763 to 1775 because they refused to ask civil authorities for license to preach.<sup>4</sup>

By 1800, according to some calculations, Baptists had become the largest denomination in America. Influences that led to such an incredible turn in Baptists conditions in the New World include such factors as the impact of Great

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Leon McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, Broadman Press: Nashville, Tennessee, 1990, p. 82ff, 142ff ; William H. Brackney, ed., *Baptist Life and Thought: A Sourcebook*, Judson Press: Valley Forge, 1983, p. 95-161.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Brackney, ed., 1983, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> H. L. McBeth, 1990, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> W. H. Brackney, ed., 1983, p. 109-110. Bold for emphasis.

Awakening<sup>1</sup>, the improved social status of Baptists, this winning of religious liberty, their willingness to form associations to strengthen the churches and lead in planting new ones, and their preference for a style of theology and worship that encouraged evangelism and church growth.<sup>2</sup>

As soon as the Baptist churches became sufficiently numerous, they proceeded to organize into associations. This arrangement has proved eminently conducive to the prosperity of the body. Carefully guarding against the assumption of ecclesiastical power, and avoiding all interference with the affairs of individual churches, the ministers and the delegates who assembled from time to time exercised a brotherly supervision over the Baptist cause, and often “devised liberal things”<sup>3</sup> on its behalf. Personal edification was promoted by the religious services; Christian friendship was renewed and extended; important questions of doctrine and practice were discussed, and advice given in difficult cases; weak and destitute churches were assisted; and plans for the wider diffusion of the Gospel truth were originated. Almost all Baptists denominational enterprises may be referred to the influence of these associational gatherings. The Philadelphia Association of 1707 was the first of its kind. This Association is still a large and flourishing body, notwithstanding the numerous offshoots that it has given out. There were seventeen other Associations in the United States during this time.<sup>4</sup>

At first, Baptists have preferred *cooperation* over exaggerated *independence*. Therefore, when they reached a sufficient number in an area, they grouped their churches into *associations*. In England, Particular Baptists associations leaned over backwards to avoid any hint of superintendency over the churches, but the General Baptist associations frankly assumed and exercised some power over the churches. The earliest continuing association in America, the Philadelphia Association, was founded in 1707. In its early years, the Association played its role by ear, so to speak, but some feared it might assume some church prerogatives.<sup>5</sup>

Local Autonomy, in the New World, took shape as a struggle for religious liberty. At first, it was an external struggle; later it became internal. At first, it was an attempt of the American Baptist to free the church from control of state authority and dictate of religious hierarchy. Later, when they won the struggle for religious liberty, they also had to struggle with the tension of relationship among local churches. Yet, as discussed above, local Baptist churches maintained their autonomy while engaging in regional and national associations<sup>6</sup>.

In 1814, the interest in foreign missions encouraged the Baptists to organize the first national Baptist organization: the General Missionary Convention of the Baptists Denomination in the US for Foreign Missions (or the Triennial Convention). Baptists later formed different national bodies to coordinate the work

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as Revivalism – refers to concerted efforts among evangelical churches to revitalize the spiritual ardour of their members and to win new adherents. Revivalism in the modern form can be attributed to that common element in Anabaptism, Puritanism, German pietism and Methodism in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries which stressed personal religious experience (*Herzensreligion*), the priesthood of all believers and holy living, in protest against established church systems which seemed excessively sacramental, sacerdotal and secularistic. Each of these pietistic movements contributed to the revival tradition. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, W. Benton Publishers, EB, Inc.: NY, USA, vol. 19, 1965, p. 240

<sup>2</sup> H. L. McBeth, 1990, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Present Time*, Elliot Stock: London, 1871, p. 460.

<sup>4</sup> J. M. Cramp, 1871, p. 460-461.

<sup>5</sup> H. L. McBeth, 1990, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> The Philadelphia Association, in 1749, adopted an Essay, written by Benjamin Griffith, which defined the powers of an association as compared to the rights reserved to the churches. The full text appears in H. L. McBeth, 1990, p. 146-147.

of the various Societies or convention boards. The American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society (ABFMS) that started missionary work in the Philippines in 1900 was the name adopted later by the General Missionary Convention of the Baptists Denomination in the US for Foreign Missions.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. In the Philippines<sup>2</sup>

The history of the Philippine Baptists began in 1898 when Braulio Manikan was baptized by immersion and subsequently started to translate the Bible into Hiligaynon together with Eric Lund. By 1900, the American Baptist mission started in Iloilo, Philippines with Manikan and Lund as their first missionaries. The coming of the Protestant missions to the Philippines including the Baptist missionaries was a consequence of the victory of the United States over Spain.

Through the efforts of both Filipino men and women and American Baptist missionaries, congregations were organized in different places in Western Visayas, especially in the rural areas of the provinces of Iloilo, Capiz, Negros Occidental, Antique, Aklan, and Romblon; later in Mindoro, Palawan, Mindanao, and in some areas of Luzon. The missionaries brought with them their Baptist tradition and the American way of life, which greatly determined the features of the local congregations. The translation work and the distribution of the *Hiligaynon* Bible enabled the inhabitants to read in their own language. The Bible immensely influenced many people in the rural areas to join the Baptist churches.

Dr. Nestor Bunda, a Filipino Baptist historian, accounted the “six basic principles” that guided the American missionaries in teaching the converts and in organizing Baptists congregations<sup>3</sup> or *local churches*. The idea of local autonomy was manifest in these six principles, but expressed in synonymous terms. These are the principles and their meanings, and how the rule of local autonomy is related to the rest of the principles. In other words, it is best to see these Baptists beliefs as whole and not as fragmented concepts.

The first basic principle introduced was ... “authority of the Bible”. Baptist adherents were expected to be “loyal” to the Scripture for it was regarded as the final authority superior to the authority of the pope, bishopric, creeds and confessions of faith....

The second principle stressed was “the competency of the soul to work out its religious destiny”. This principle recognizes the right of an individual person to interpret its own belief in Jesus Christ based on its understanding of the Bible. According to this principle, the individual is also able and responsible to work out its salvation by accepting Christ as the personal Savior. No other individual or a church could save a person. Salvation consists in faith in and through Jesus Christ only.

The third principle was the belief in “a regenerated church membership”. The church as revealed in the New Testament was composed exclusively of “regenerated persons”... In order to become a member of a Baptist church a person had to accept Jesus Christ in public and submit to baptism by immersion....

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<sup>1</sup> N. D. Bunda, et. al., eds., 2002, p. 95-96.

<sup>2</sup> For comprehensive Philippine Baptist history, see Nestor D. Bunda, *A Mission History of the Philippine Baptist Churches 1898 – 1998: From a Philippine Perspective*, University of Hamburg Dissertation, 1999; and Raymond W. Beaver, *Partners in Mission: American Baptists and Philippine Baptists in Mission Together (1900-1985)*, ABC Printing Center: Iloilo City, Philippines, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 96.

The fourth principle, which should guide the action of the Baptist congregation was “democracy and independence of the local church”. The local church was important in itself and decided for itself. No higher ecclesiastical authority had the right to dictate in matters like ordaining, hiring or dismissing a pastor. The local church manages its affairs through democratic means whereby pastors and lay people had equal rights to decide on almost all issues affecting the church. Ecclesiastical structures were created in a way that the local churches were autonomous. This type of church structure had a close resemblance to that of the American Baptist churches which adhered to the same principle.

The fifth principle, the “separation of church and state”, stresses that the allegiance of the church is only to God through Jesus Christ. It was denied that the State should give favor to any religion or church bodies. It was supposed to rule only the political affairs of the country and not the church. Similarly, it was not accepted that the church meddled in politics and run the government.

The sixth principle, the “principle of religious liberty”, emphasizes the freedom of a person to choose a religion without external interference and the freedom to join any religious body.<sup>1</sup>

Bunda added that many missionaries thought this was a way of “Americanizing” the recipient Filipinos. Charles W. Briggs, especially emphasized that to Americanize the recipients, he encouraged the building of separate Baptist communities<sup>2</sup> whose members were trained for the propagation of American ideals. Thus, the systems that were imbued in the establishment of schools and other Baptist institutions were patterned to that of the American Baptists’.

About the use of the word “independence”, Bunda noted:

The word “independence”, as used by the Philippine Baptist churches is not common. The usual term used by most Baptist congregation in other countries, especially in the United States of America is “autonomy”, rather than “independence”. Yet the word “autonomy” could mean either “independence” or “the condition of being autonomous. Perhaps the Philippine Baptists choose the word “independence” because in the 1930s they were struggling for independence not only from the American Baptist missionary leadership but also from the United States governance.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.1. 1935 – 1971

Under Japanese occupation, the Philippine population was always in mortal danger. Many of them including some of the numerous Philippine Baptists died in a war which was not of their own making. For the CPBC the war was a setback and in spite of its devastating effect, many Philippine Baptists continued to serve their churches. They survived and the war tested their faith. During the war, they continued to propagate the gospel, to study the Bible, to hold communion and worship services, to help the wounded in battle, and to visit American missionaries who were hiding or imprisoned. They also established closer

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<sup>1</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 96-99.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of these Baptist communities are mostly found in the Province of Iloilo: Ito, Cabatuan; Good Hope and Forward, Janiway; and Bingawan; and Capiz: Bag-ong Bario and Libertad, Tapaz. Majority of the population in the said communities are Baptist by religious affiliation.

<sup>3</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 98, footnote 6.

interdenominational relationships with other Christian churches and started to reconcile with schismatic Baptists who had separated from them in 1925. The latter was one among the noteworthy events during the war.

CPBC and Doane Baptist – which had split in 1925 as a result of a conflict among Baptist groupings in the United States. The reconciliation came to an abrupt end when the American missionaries returned after the war claiming the leadership position. Unfortunately the Baptist churches split again.<sup>1</sup>

Women Baptists were prominent in serving their church and country. They supported or even participated in the guerrilla resistance movement against the Japanese invaders fighting for a nationwide liberation. The Philippine Baptists struggled for self-reliance. Church members organized financial and material support to their pastors and churches. Philippine Baptists took lead in their churches when the American missionaries vacated their positions implementing the programs of CPBC effectively.

The Philippine Baptists continued their religious activities not only for the survival of the Baptist churches in the Philippine but also in their service for the liberation of their country.

In many ways the desire of Philippine Baptist leaders, which was to empower the laypersons in the Baptist churches so that they could serve the people within their area became partly realized during the Second World War.

For the first time in the history of the Philippine Baptist churches, the work was carried out without any financial and personal assistance from the American Baptist Missionaries. On the contrary, the Philippine Baptists raised financial, economic, moral and security support for the missionaries who were hiding or in prison houses.

Evident during this war time experience, the competence (soul competency) of the Philippine Baptist individuals and churches marked by independence (local autonomy) in taking initiatives and working together (Interdependence/Associational) with other churches and even denominations in carrying over the work of the Lord for peace, justice and welfare of people.<sup>2</sup> On how they carried this out, Bunda wrote:

Without any exceptions all Baptist pastors accounted in 1941 continued their service in the churches. In danger and need the pastors remained with the people. It was reported that there was a constant demand for the Protestant pastor, especially in children's dedication, marriages and funerals of the Evangelicals, the Aglipayan, and even some liberal Catholics when a priest of either was hard to secure. This partly helped to ease out sharp edges of prejudice of other religions against the Evangelicals.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Johnny V. Dela Fuente, 1996, September 12, Interview, in, N. D. Bunda, 1999. p. 204. The cause of this controversy, D. Diel, Jr. asserted, was not just a matter of educational policy of the Home Board and of some missionaries. On the contrary it was "a result of a wider and deeper theological controversy" that swept the United States of America during the 1920s and early 1930s. The "main issue" he maintained, "being the 'pure Gospel' or the 'social Gospel'; which means, either the preaching of the 'pure Gospel' or the implementation of the consequence of the Gospel in all areas of human life. D. Diel, Jr., *A Story of the Baptist Churches in the Philippines*, 1975, p. 11, in, CPBC, SBMP, 9-14, in, N. D. Bunda, 1999. p. 102f.

<sup>2</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999. p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999. p. 200.

All Baptist churches in the different provinces, especially in Capiz, Aklan, Iloilo and Negros, continued their normal activities like conducting worship services and Sunday schools. At the time when private and public schools were closed down, Baptist churches maintained Bible study classes for children, youth and adults. There were those who took care of refugees in their villages and supplied their daily needs. Philippine Baptists also offered their assistance to their fighting fellow citizens by assisting and feeding wounded soldiers. They also visited and provided necessities for American missionaries who were imprisoned in provincial jails in Bacolod and Iloilo.<sup>1</sup> They also protected missionaries who were hiding from Japanese soldiers. In so doing, many of Philippine Baptists were persecuted; a number lost their lives in the hands of Japanese soldiers.

These historic events show that Philippine Baptists were autonomous with their decisions. There was no hierarchical or state authority that dictated them but they were united in rendering service to people regardless of religion and their country, in the name of their faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

#### **4.2. 1972 – 1998**

From the beginning of the Baptist mission in the Philippines in 1900, the American Baptist missionaries were either silent or supportive of the policies of the US government in the Philippines. When the US granted a limited freedom by creating a Philippine Commonwealth government in 1935, the missionaries supported it. When the Philippines was involved in the Second World War the missionaries identified with the US. When Marcos imposed a dictatorial regime with the backing of the US government Ralph L. George did not criticize it. He felt that martial law was better than other options of that time.

The change in the American missionaries' view of the US policy in the Philippines occurred in the 1980s. Missionaries like Sandra Mosher and Steve Mosher began to be critical. They learned to identify with the Philippine Baptist pastors and members in opposing the Marcos regime. They appealed to their mission board in the US to oppose the US policies that endangered the human rights of the Philippine people. Moreover, they tried to live a simple life as they learned that they had more financial privileges than their Philippine Baptist friends. Finally, they asked "difficult questions" and challenged "some time-honored traditions" of the ABC/BIM and hoped for the sake of God's mission that they will be taken seriously.<sup>2</sup>

The years from 1972 to 1998 have been a significant period in the history of Philippine Baptist churches. It began with the dictatorial regime of President Ferdinand Marcos and ended with the presidency of Fidel Ramos, former military General of Marcos and the first Protestant president of the Republic. The dictatorial regime created economic and political crisis and a situation that forced the majority of the population into poverty. Yet the crisis situation became also an opportunity for the Baptists to witness to their Christian conviction and stand on issues like human dignity, human rights, social justice, and ecumenical relations. In the course of time, projects for the poor like in areas of health, income-generating projects, cooperatives and home for children multiplied. Moreover, the campaign for self-reliance intensified. Obviously, the missionary spirit has broadened to include not only the traditionally accepted "healing, preaching, and

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<sup>1</sup> H. W. Munger, 1967, p. 189f, in, N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 202f.

<sup>2</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 288-289.

teaching” work but also social projects for the poor, deprived and oppressed, ecumenical relations, self-reliance and foreign missions. Recently a project of writing and publishing religious songs in *Hiligaynon* was started, a move that is very meaningful in propagating the Christian message in the local language.

The shortage of pastors and church workers in the local congregations and church related institutions have been partly resolved through the creation of Bible Schools. It has to be added that more than 50% of all pastors are women. Recognizing their contributions and ability, the church ordained women during this period.<sup>1</sup>

Since the “cutting of the umbilical cord” of the Philippine Baptist churches from American Baptists, they had been exposed to numerous blessings, problems and challenges. Like a young child they had to learn how to crawl before walking and running. The growing Philippine Baptist churches since the formation of CPBC in 1935 are facing problems in leadership, finances, mission, education, political and associational problems. However, Philippine Baptist leaders are optimistic about these setbacks, working in principles and plans to resolve the substantial issues.

Another major problem is on self-reliance. Although its financial crisis in 1975 has been partly resolved in 1996, the problem of self-reliance still confronts CPBC today. In 1997 only 28% (201 of 729) of local churches gave financial support to the CPBC. In addition, regular subsidy from the American Baptists has been gradually withdrawn. Hence, local generation of funds is a must. Domingo J. Diel, Jr. insisted that the idle properties of the CPBC should be developed to make them income generating.

The problems on leadership and self-reliance, however, are mitigated by the fact that the Philippine Baptists are now prime decision-makers on all matters concerning their own affairs. This is a reversal from their status before 1935 whereby the American Baptist missionaries were taking the lead. Now, they are really in the position to give immediate and long-term resolutions to solve those problems. They could even make use of their “culture of participation”. The resolution of those problems will largely determine the prospects in advancing the missionary task of the Philippine Baptist churches in the light of Philippine realities.

In spite of these problems and prospects confronting the Philippine Baptist churches, the statement of Dr. Domingo J. Diel, Jr. in 1975 seems to be relevant today:

The present work ... is open to the prospects of the future, when kingdoms shall become the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The past, the present, and the future achievements (of the CPBC) are no other but the work of God and though it is an ‘earthen vessel’ and through ‘earthen vessels’, nevertheless His work, and let no man claim the credit to himself, but let all say ... “To Him Be Thy Glory, All Things He Has Done.”<sup>2</sup>

## 5. Historic Baptist Emphases

Early Baptists migrated to Holland and America in their quest for a haven wherein their religious freedom would be realized. In both England and America,

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<sup>1</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 365-367.

the Baptist faith constantly faced bitter persecutions from established religious groups because of their convictions.

In America, two Baptist historians, Norman H. Maring and Winthrop S. Hudson co-authored “A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice”. They wrote down a list of typical Baptist distinctives, which includes the following points:

The Scripture, or the New Testament, as the supreme authority for faith and practice; priesthood of believers; freedom of conscience; soul liberty, and the right of private interpretation; congregational polity and autonomy of the local church; religious liberty and separation of church and state; believers’ baptism by immersion; and regenerated church membership.<sup>1</sup>

In the Philippine setting, mainly in CPBC, there are some available materials that provide information about historic Baptist principles. The Preamble of the CPBC 1935 Constitution & By-Laws states:

In order to more intimately unite the Baptist Churches in the Philippines and the Baptist missionaries, to work more effectively for the spread of the Gospel ministry, to give more harmony to the work of the different Baptist churches in the Philippine Islands, and to promote the Baptist principles which include **(a) the authority of the Bible, (b) the competency of the soul to work out its religious destiny, (c) a regenerated church membership, (d) democracy and independence of the local church, (e) separation of church and state and (f) religious liberty, ....**<sup>2</sup>

Evidently, the term “autonomy of the local church” was not the term used but “democracy and independence of the local church.” It is in the Amended By-Laws of May 24, 1996 that the former was used. The Preamble reads:

The Baptist Churches in the Philippines, reposing faith in the Almighty God and heavenly Father, in gratitude for the redeeming knowledge of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the missionary movement, ...to promote the spread of the Gospel in unity of purpose with other Baptist and Christian bodies engaged in the world mission of Christianity; to conserve and perpetuate Baptist principles which include: **authority of the Bible, competency of the soul to attain its spiritual destiny by the grace of God, baptism of believer by immersion, autonomy of the local church, separation of church and state, and religious liberty;** and to establish such charitable and religious institutions as may be necessary to implement this purpose, ....<sup>3</sup>

This is reiterated in Article II (Purposes) Sec. 1, b.

To conserve, develop and perpetuate Baptist principles which include (1) authority of the Bible, (2) competency of the soul to attain its spiritual destiny by God’s grace, (3) believer’s baptism by immersion, (4) autonomy of the local church, (5) separation of church and state, and (6) religious liberty.

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<sup>1</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 7. For detailed definition of these principles see p. 7-10.

<sup>2</sup> See CPBC, Inc. 1935 By-Laws Preamble, in, N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 385. Bold for emphasis.

<sup>3</sup> See R. L. Lucas, ed., *CPBC Manual of Ministry*, CPBC, Inc.: Iloilo City, Phil. 1998, p. 9-10. Bold for emphasis.



In the new By-Laws (adopted May 26, 2005) the Preamble and Article II (Purposes) Sec. 1, b. are copied verbatim from the Amended By-Laws (1996).

As to the definition of these “Baptist principles”, the By-Laws of 1935, the amended By-Laws of 1996, and the latest amendment of 2005 are all silent. This fact is probably one of the many factors of varying perspectives and contradicting interpretations. However, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these principles were already manifested in the work of American Baptist missionaries (ABFMS).<sup>1</sup>

There are, however, available documents, written by some Filipino Baptists that provide definition to these principles.

In 1952, Juan P. Empig<sup>2</sup> wrote to explain these principles. For him, a Baptist church is a group of people who bind themselves together as a body of baptized (immersed) believers who place their faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation. Moreover, this church believes in the teachings and practices of the Baptists and in those great distinctive principles for which they have ever stood. According to Empig, there are ten Baptist principles to be followed by Baptist churches in the Philippines.

1. The preeminence of Christ as our divine Lord and Master.
2. The supreme authority of the Bible and its sufficiency as our only rule of faith and practice.
3. The right of private interpretation and the competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God.
4. The absolute separation of Church and state.
5. A regenerated Church membership.
6. The beautiful, symbolic ordinance of believer's baptism in obedience to the command of Christ.
7. **The complete independence of the local Church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with other Baptist Churches.**
8. The solemn obligation of majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privilege to none.
9. The spiritual unity of believers, for which the master so earnestly prayed.
10. A worldwide program of missionary fervor and evangelism in obedience to the final command of Jesus.

In 1999, Johnny V. Gumban<sup>3</sup> delivered a lecture called “Basic Christian Doctrine”. He also discussed the historic “Baptist Distinctives”:

- I. *The authority of the Scripture as the sole norm for faith and conduct.*

This means that when it comes to our faith in God, the Bible is the faithful witness to God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Allowing the Scripture to convey its own meaning, we understand the true meaning of our faith in God especially the truth about salvation. The scripture provides principles, upon which the conduct of Christian living can be based. Tradition is respected as long as it is not

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<sup>1</sup> See N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 96-99.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Empig, *How to Make Church Organization Work*, in, Dean Kirkwood, ed., *Outline of Theology Used in Baptist Work in the Philippines*, 1952, in, N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 222-223. Bold for emphasis.

<sup>3</sup> J. V. Gumban, *Basic Christian Doctrine*, in, N. D. Bunda et. al. eds., *Managing Faith Resources*, CBMA, Inc.: Iloilo City, Philippines, 2003, p. 260-263. Bold for emphasis.

contrary to the Scripture and as long as it embraces the meaning of the Scripture. The Bible is believed to be the Word of God because through it God reveals His will as it is supremely shown in His Son Jesus Christ. The Bible is the source of the Baptist belief that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

#### II. *Baptists believe in the Priesthood of all believers*

This means that believers in Christ share in His priesthood. In Christ, believers have direct access to God who is the Father by virtue of their adoption as children of God. God's grace in Jesus Christ is sufficient for man's salvation. Belief in grace as conferred by the church or by saints in order for us to be justified is denied. This principle of the Priesthood of all believers restores the importance of the laity in the church. All believers are people of God, including the pastors, ministers, and priests. All who believe are people of God who have different gifts, but they are all servants of God.

#### III. *Baptists believe that God has ordained two ordinances to be administered in the church.*

The two ordinances are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism as an ordinance is the symbol of the believers' participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because of this, Baptists believe that the meaningful symbol of participation in the death of Jesus Christ is immersion in the water. Participation in His resurrection is symbolized by the believers' rising from the water. Baptists believe that since baptism is an expression of faith in Jesus Christ, only believers are to be baptized. The presence of God in baptism is a reality that is beyond human description.

The other ordinance is the Lord's Supper. It is a commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ and expectation of His coming again. The elements are taken as symbol. The bread is the symbol of His body, which was broken for us. The cup is the symbol of His blood, which was shed for the remission of sin.

The commemoration must be done with great reverence. Believers are reminded to enter this celebration after serious self-examination. If this is taken unworthy sin against the body and blood of Jesus Christ is committed.

Why ordinance and not sacrament? An ordinance is ordained by God to be celebrated. A sacrament is believed to be a means of conveying the grace of God. Baptists believe that God's grace is conveyed to man only through Jesus Christ. Such grace is sufficient for man's salvation.

#### IV. *Liberty of Conscience*

Thomas Helwys declared that a king has authority over his subjects in temporal matters. But he has no authority over the conscience of his subjects. In matters of faith human conscience is free to express man's relationship to God. In matters of religion, especially in worship, man's right to observe this must be kept inviolate. When it comes to religion, religious freedom means that man is accountable to God alone.

## **V. Authority of the Local Church**

Because of religious freedom, a local church has authority to govern her own life according to what is deemed proper by the whole congregation. The Baptist polity (or church government) is congregational. The authority resides in the congregation. But, the right of the congregation to govern itself should be done under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In other words, the congregation can do anything if it is consistent with the will of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Local authority should not be observed as a license for anarchy and evil. Local autonomy of the Church does not mean for the church to be isolated by itself because Baptists believe that the church is by nature associational. This means that it seeks to associate and work with other movements of kindred spirit.

## **VI. Separation of Church and State**

This is one principle that the Anabaptists Movement during the Reformation insisted on because Luther, Calvin and Zwingli opted to link their churches with state authorities. Separation here means basically separation of function. The state is ordained to provide physical well-being to its people. The church on the other hand is mandated to meet the spiritual needs of the people. By separation it means that the church cannot and must not determine for the state what the state is mandated to do for its people. But, when it comes to concerns that would enable each to fulfill its respective functions, both are mutually related to each other. Baptists are encouraged to participate responsibly in the life of the larger community according to the dictates of their conscience.

On the same theme, Rev. Danilo Borlado<sup>1</sup> gave a lecture. A portion of which was printed in the CPBC Manual for Ministry. It was not deliberately stated whether the definition is officially adopted or not. Clearly, there is discrepancy between what is provided in the By-Laws and indicated in Borlado's lecture portion. The relevant part of his discussion is as follows:

### ***B – Believers' Baptism***

*Other churches practice infant baptism but Baptists insist on believer's baptism on the following grounds: (1) It is explicitly taught in the Bible (Matt. 3:13-13-15; 28:19-20); (2) It stresses public confession of faith and personal commitment to Christ; (3) It highlights the conscious, free and glad human response to God's grace of forgiveness.*

### **A – Autonomy of the local church**

The local church is a free and independent body in terms of determining and implementing its policies and programs. A

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<sup>1</sup> This is summarized in the acrostic **B A P T I S T S**. D. Borlado, *Our Baptist Heritage: Becoming Faithful Baptist Disciples*, a Lecture during the 61<sup>st</sup> CPBC Annual Assembly at Bakyas Evangelical Church, Bacolod City, in, R. L. Luces, ed., 1998, p.21-22.

Baptist church is congregational which means that the congregation is the final authority. In the exercise of autonomy, a church joins the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches. As a member of this national body, she submits herself to the decision of the general assembly and the Board of Trustees, and policies/guidelines as provided for in the CPBC Constitution and By-Laws.

**P – Priesthood of all believers**

All believers are equal and stand on the same level before God; all believers have equal and free access to God through Jesus Christ (Heb.4:14-16; 10:19-22).

**T – Two ordinances: Baptism by immersion and the Lord Supper**

For Baptists, both baptism and the Lord's Supper are not sacraments but ordinances. An ordinance is something that is required as expression of our faith but does not in anyway convey grace.

**I – Individual liberty of salvation of the soul**

The other name for this is religious freedom or freedom of conscience. It means that we are free to believe what we want to believe; we can follow the dictates of our conscience. No one could tell us what to believe neither should we force others to believe what we believe (Rom. 14:5-12).

**S – Separation of church and state**

The state has no right to interfere with the affairs of the church or to show preferential treatment to one religious group over others. The church on its part has no claim upon the state for financial support or any form of favor. Separation guarantees freedom, and freedom requires separation. In other words, union means compromise of message and mission for one is not free to challenge or correct the other. "Without separation, freedom is a fallacy, without freedom a responsible witness is impossible."

**T – The authority of scriptures over life and practice**

This means we accept the teachings of the Bible as the norm of life and practice. We believe that the writers of the scriptures were divinely inspired. By inspiration we do not mean literal and word for word dictation from God. When it was necessary to put into writing the oral traditions of their faith, God, through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, moved the writers to put into writing their experiences of God. There is no other book like the Bible, not only in terms of literary style and scope but also because of its content. It tells us about God's plan for and dealings with the world and how he works to accomplish it through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

## S – Sanctity of Human Life and Creation

Human life and creation are good and sacred. They must be treated with respect and dignity not simply as tools for profit. To use people and the environment as means of our greed is not only insanity but idolatry. Life is precious because it is a gift from God. It must be respected and valued to the fullest. Creation is good and for the sustenance of human life. The resources of the earth must be shared not accumulated at the deprivation of others. Human beings are caretakers of the “garden” not destroyers.

Apparently, “Priesthood of all believers” and “Sanctity of Human Life and Creation” are not found in other documents, chiefly in the CPBC By-Laws, which should have been the operational basis of CPBC. It appears that this is just an added interpretation of the lecturers. Interestingly, “Priesthood of all believers” appears in the list of American Baptist historians.

Another list collaborated by Dr. Nestor Bunda and Pastor Francis Neil Jalando-on renders BAPTIST<sup>1</sup> as another acrostic. It reads:

- B – Baptists have regenerated church membership
- A – Authority of the Bible
- P – Persons have religious liberty
- T – The Independence and Democracy of the Local Church
- I – Individual Soul Liberty
- S – Separation of Church and State
- T – The American Way of Life

If we highlight all the documents’ positions and discussions on “democracy and independence of the local church” or “Local Church Autonomy”, we can infer consistency among them. J. Empig’s seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) distinctive is “The complete independence of the local Church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with other Baptist Churches.” On local church autonomy, J. V. Gumban explained, “Local authority should not be observed as a license for anarchy and evil. Local autonomy of the Church does not mean for the church to be isolated by itself because Baptists believe that the church is by nature associational. This means that it seeks to associate and work with other movements of kindred spirit.” Further, D. Borlado suggests, “In the exercise of her autonomy, a church joins the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches. As a member of this national body, she submits herself to the decision of the general assembly ....”

Summarizing all these, Bunda and Jalando-on, after citing the development of Local Autonomy in comparison with other churches’ structures, quoted a reflection:

We can reflect that with freedom (autonomy) comes great responsibility. It is the responsibility of being the church – of listening for and responding to God’s call so that the congregation will remain faithful in its life and ministry. No one can tell a local Baptist congregation what it

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<sup>1</sup> N. D. Bunda, FN G. Jalando-on, *A Review of Baptist Heritage and Principles*, 2005. “We will also use the acronym BAPTIS(T) to recall the Six Baptist Principles which were enumerated in the 1935 CPBC constitution. These six principles are still enshrined in the Preamble of our current CPBC Constitution. The T in the BAPTIST acrostic is an interpretation of the American culture left to us by the American Baptist missionaries.”

must be and do except God. It is the congregation's responsibility to listen and obey when God speaks. This means each local congregation needs to develop a listening stance, refusing to be so caught up in its own issues and survival that it cannot hear the voice of God. It means it must constantly be open to change, willing to move in new directions when God calls. It means that it must be willing to risk, seeing and doing things differently from others because of its sense of God's will for them. Each local congregation has this responsibility. It cannot rely on bishops or outside structures to tell it what to do in order to be faithful. It must claim the responsibility of faithfulness on its own.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Philippine Baptist, in the earnest attempts of some of its past and present members, include in its "distinctives" or emphasizes the fellowship or communal aspect of the life of the local churches. Though the "Association of local Baptist churches" as a principle is not specified or stated separately by most of Baptists records, but this concept and practice is clearly visible and dominantly existing since the early stages of the Baptist history.

Local autonomy, against modern misconception, is not against Association: it strengthens it. A document called "A Book Containing a Record of the Acts of a Congregation of Christ in and About Bedford" contains an article entitled "The Successor of the Apostles or A Discourse of the Office of the Messenger" (1671), by Thomas Grantham, provides a historic evidence of a concerted effort of the early Baptists. William H. Brackney paraphrased:

With other Independents, Baptists rejected episcopacy and grounded their leadership firmly on the local congregation. With Christ as the head of the church, each congregation elected a pastor, deacons, and, in some cases, ruling leaders. As the congregations grew in numbers and needs became more complex, regional assemblies approved messengers or traveling pastors.<sup>2</sup>

In the Philippines, the creation of the CPBC in 1935, perceived from another perspective was not only a Philippine Baptists' struggle for selfhood; it was also an attempt to be truthful to the historic emphasis of Baptist on associational life of local churches. The Philippine Baptists had only become true to their heritage that Jesus is the only Lord of the church; and not any society or other Baptists organizations abroad should replace that Lordship of Jesus Christ in the lives of Philippine Baptist churches. The Philippine Baptists wanted to be free: free to initiate, cooperate, witness, and worship together with other churches, in their commitment to serve the Lord.

The above stated facts and historical evidences confirm substantial reasons for affirming that while early Baptists emphasized Local Autonomy, they affirmed and organized *Associations*, or to mention a more significant term, *Communion*. Thus, communal life of churches should be considered a major Baptist emphasis. This is intended to safeguard the independence as well as the interrelatedness and/or interconnectedness of churches.

Terms such as *association and convention* are commonly used to mean the fellowship of local churches. English Baptist used the former and the Americans also followed through. Later, the American Baptist coined the term convention

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<sup>1</sup> "Congregational Autonomy" by William F. Keucher, in, <http://www.judsonpress.com>, in, N. D. Bunda, FN G. Jalando-on, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Brackney, ed., 1998, p. 53.

that missionaries brought to the Philippine Baptist mission. The terms, however, seem to only have sociological connotations that could not fully express the essence of the church as a theological body. It seems to appear that *association* and *convention* as terms limit the church only as a sociological entity that should not be.

The church should be understood theologically. Thus, the term *communion* seems appropriate and essential to the biblical nature of the church. The Greek word **κοινωνία** (*koinonia*) is its original equivalent. Communion had always been in the mind of the Philippine Baptists, inasmuch as it had always been in the system of the NT early believers and the OT people of God. This will be discussed thoroughly in chapter four.

Meanwhile, the term “Baptist Distinctive”, as commonly spoken and written of means Baptists’ beliefs and principles, is naming diverse convictions into a confused cluster or category.<sup>1</sup> The CPBC Manual for Ministry (Section IV) and a “Teacher’s Manual for Sunday’s School”<sup>2</sup> both called the Baptist historic beliefs as “Baptists distinctives”. Distinctive might be true in some but not in all. This is so because “Presbyterians and other Congregationalists and even Lutheran shared and practiced some, if not all, of the Baptist principles.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, Baptists have no absolute claim to call them their “distinctive”. In this paper, the writer prefers to use the term “emphases” rather than “distinctives”.

Before proceeding to the biblical and theological discussions on local autonomy, it is necessary to devote a chapter on the perspective of Philippine Baptists on the subject. It is important to mention this before we seek the judgment of the Scriptures on our understanding of our faith and practice.

## II. LOCAL AUTONOMY IN THE CPBC CONTEXT

After a brief review of the history of Local Autonomy, it is now time to look into the context of CPBC in relation to this Baptist principle. In the review, the historical events in Europe, North America and the Philippines were concisely discussed. This segment is intended to investigate how CPBC, especially its key leaders understand its faith principles, highlighting Local Autonomy.

The investigation calls for a collection of qualitative data. The researcher opted to use “in-depth interview” as a methodology or a tool, as it is deemed fitting to serve the desired end. The informants were carefully chosen members of CPBC, clergy and lay alike. Most of them have occupied and are occupying key positions, mostly in the CPBC headquarters, institutions, related organizations, local congregations and other organizations, where CPBC is a member. Many of them have been members of local churches that have undergone schism and have ended up in split congregations.

Technically, qualitative data are subjective. Answers of the informants may be biased. By this, I mean, the informants are always seeing issues from their personal perspective, clouded by interests that only themselves can choose to reveal or not.

The researcher works on the principle that “learning precedes doing.” Informants’ views do not reflect the view of the office and the

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<sup>1</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Domingo J. Diel, Jr., Danilo Borlado, *Baptist Heritage, Beliefs and Distinctives*, (Pamphlet, Sunday School Manual) CPBC, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 12.

organization/institution they occupy. No less than their views also reflect the view of the whole CPBC. This is intended for us to have a glimpse of what and how much CPBC members, especially its key leaders, know of the issue. How our leaders perceive the issue can lead us to surmise how they do as leaders who play vital roles in running CPBC affairs. Again, "learning precedes doing." One cannot do unless s/he knows. If one knows right, under normal circumstance, s/he does right. The opposite is also true: one who knows wrong...does wrongly.

Due to limited time and resources, the researcher has reached and interviewed more or less thirty-nine (39) key leaders and members of CPBC. Due to personal limitations, the researcher focused in Iloilo, Negros and Capiz. This does not mean that these three *Kasapulanans* are much more prominent than the rest. Two factors were practically considered for the preference: (1) Most, if not all key leaders are residing in these three provinces; (2) They are near to the researcher's base – Iloilo city. The desire to reach other *Kasapulanans* was intense, but the researcher's resources limit his wishes during the time this paper is written. The selection of the informants may have not covered other *Kasapulanans*, especially the distant ones, but those who were selected can help us see portion of the whole, if it is too ambitious to hear the whole for now.

To ensure the authenticity and the nuances of the material, the researcher opted to state verbatim the answers of the informants. They used "*Hilish*" (Hiligaynon and English) since most of the informants' native tongue is Hiligaynon, while most of them are also acquainted with the English language. *Italics* were added to clarify statements that are conversationally understood but blur when written.

## 1. Views

### 1.1. On Being a Baptist

On the question of "How long have you been a Baptist?" informants answered relatively. Three answers were prevalent: 1. Born in a Baptist family; 2. Converted and later baptized; 3. Both. Some informants trace their being Baptist from their parents and foreparents. They seem to look at being Baptist as an inherited faith. Some locate being Baptist at the time they were converted and baptized: some, while born to a Baptist family, trace being Baptist from their time of baptism.

### 1.2. On Understanding Local Autonomy in CPBC

Rev. Job Santiago, the CPBC General Secretary, understands Local Autonomy as "one of our Baptist practice or distinctive which was brought to us by the ABFMS when they started mission work in the Philippines and was instrumental in organizing our convention. It was based on the concept of "congregation" as a reaction to a hierarchical structure of other church denominations. The local congregation is having it's own governance and the final decision and plan lies with the congregation. The local church runs and manages its own affairs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Job Santiago, 2005, October 25, Interview. Rev. Santiago is an ordained minister of the CPBC. He pastored several local churches since 1981 after his graduation from CPUCT. He worked as Executive Minister of Capiz Kasapulanan of Baptist Churches (CKBC). At present, he is the General Secretary of CPBC.



For Rev. Elias P. Laprades, Local Autonomy means; “each local church is self-governing, self-propagating, self-supporting. Indi madiktahan sang iban nga church kag sang state ang local church. Even though we cooperate with other churches kon may maaprobahan nga for the good of the whole. So the local church must be willing to support and cooperate with our association. CPBC’s practice is not consistent with my understanding. May mga dalok kag maiyayyahon nga leaders kag members, nga daw ginagamit lang ang Local Autonomy para indi mag-cooperate.”<sup>1</sup>

Local Autonomy for Ms. Alpha Sorenzen is, “a local Baptist church’s prerogative to formulate ideas and decisions independent from other governing church bodies or institutions.”<sup>2</sup>

Pastor Alfred Morales, understands Local Autonomy as, “A local church under the CPBC can operate its church governance (polity) without external intervention from other local churches or from any external organizations, etc.”<sup>3</sup>

For Rev. Prudencio Bañas, the congregation is the authority of a local church (congregational). Lain sa may hierarchy nga may gadikta. Pero kon may kasugtanan, we can also cooperate. In CPBC, daw wala gaintindihanay: May Local Autonomy kita pero ano ang ginahimo sang Convention sa aton? May mga churches nga gusto sila giyahan sang Convention and yet they also assert their autonomy. Wala pa kita makalambot sa understanding nga ang autonomy kag cooperation mag-blend.”<sup>4</sup>

For Pastor Rudy Acosta, Local Autonomy means, “ang Convention wala nagagahom sa aton pagpili sang pastor kag paghatag sang contribution. Affiliation – nagabuligay – may reciprocal relationship. And Convention naga-help nga magnami ang local church by introducing programs and helping in training pastors and laymen”.<sup>5</sup>

Rev. Samuel Escobin explains Local Autonomy as “Gamay nga unit sang government. Nagadecide kita nga magcooperar kay nasadyahan ta kag ang desisyon nga ginhimo ta may benipisyo. May mga churches nga ang akon definition makita – may consensus sa pag-govern. Sa mga well-established churches, ang ila Local Autonomy ginaguba sang pila ka mga dalagkuan nga mga tawo: dalagko amot or support. Kon magtigulang sila nagadevelop sang sense of ownership. Batyag nila ang simbahan balay nila.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elias Laprades, 2005, December 06, Interview. Italics mine. Rev. Laprades is an ordained CPBC minister and has worked with numerous churches. In CPBC, he worked as Promotional Secretary of Total Integrated Church Development Assistance Program (TICDA); Field Secretary and Coordinating Minister in Capiz, Aklan, Romblon, Mindoro and Luzon. At present he is retired but still pastoring a congregation in Guimaras.

<sup>2</sup> Alpha D. Sorenzen 2005, December 13, Interview. Ms. Sorenzen graduated *cum laude* at CPUCT. She is involved as volunteer worker in the Curriculum Program of the CPBC. She visits and speaks, whenever she is invited to local churches where CPUCT students are assigned to work on weekends.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Morales, 2005, December 16, Interview. Pastor Morales, a church youth and student leader, was a Registered Nurse before he entered Master of Divinity program at CPUCT. At present, he works as Youth Pastor of UC-CPU.

<sup>4</sup> Prudencio Bañas, 2005, November 30, Interview. Rev. Bañas, a retired ordained CPBC minister, worked as Pastor with Odiongan Baptist Church, Odiongan, Romblon (1962-64); Professor at CPUCT (1986-98); Director of Baptist Student Center (1999-2001); Member, CPU Corporation (1979-84); Philippine Bible Society (PBS) Translator (1968-76); Chairman, Baptist Center Church (BCC) (2003); BCC Radio Preacher (1965-2005 on and off).

<sup>5</sup> Rudy Acosta, 2005, November 19, Interview. Pastor Acosta, a Summa Cum Laude graduate of CPUCT and has MA degree in Church History at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, has worked with Pulaw Baptist Church, Dumangas, Iloilo; Rizal Fundacion Baptist Church, Pototan, Iloilo; and Ma-o Central Evangelical Church, Negros Occ.; Director of Baptist Student Center; Professor at CPURE; presently, the Senior Minister of Jaro Evangelical Church and a part time professor at CPUCT.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Escobin, 2005, November 30, Interview. Rev. Escobin, an ordained CPBC Minister, is graduate of CBBC, CPUCT and has worked with Ginbirayan Baptist Church, Sta. Fe Baptist Church, Romblon; Forward Evangelical Church, Januiai, Iloilo; Bo, Ma-o Baptist Church, Rosario Heights Evangelical church, Negros Occ.; and University Church. He had been a staff of CPU Chaplain’s Office and presently works as Staff of University Student Center.

Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Fabula looks at Local Autonomy as “self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating; although some churches cannot support themselves. In CPBC, it’s not completely locally autonomous. Some would go to CPBC to seek help”.<sup>1</sup>

For Pastor Ronny Luces, “Local Autonomy is both strength and a weakness. Strength because the local church can make its stand and implement its own programs; weakness because it manifests individualism, *indi makita ang cohesiveness*. How can local churches work together as a body? Baptists can be strong as a church but not as a convention. Ang mga members puede magbulig, puede *indi*. Local church should have local identity as well as identity as a national body.”<sup>2</sup>

For Pastor Ricarido Bata-anon, Jr. Local Autonomy is, “Miembro upod sa pastor may consultasyon kag pag-isa sa mga bagay nga tagaan importansya para sa pag-umwad sang iglesia.”<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Rey Bayot understands Local Autonomy as “self-governing local church. CPBC, as an umbrella organization of Baptist churches, has made Local Autonomy working without dictating or imposing its promulgated policies, even in problems of churches and pastors”.<sup>4</sup>

Ms. Martha Mae Luces defines Local Autonomy as “The local church has the power to decide matters on their own without consultation from their national, hierarchical order, especially pertaining to the implementation of their local church’s vision, mission, goal.”<sup>5</sup>

Ms. Excelyn Landero expounds on Local Autonomy as “Local governance. The power or authority resides within the local governing body. However, there is limitation in the scope of autonomy of the local church because it is under bigger bodies. There will be times that decisions must be consistent within the parameters of the bigger bodies. Therefore, local autonomy ... is not independence but interdependence with other bodies.”<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Geronimo Ortega likens Local Autonomy to local government *unit*. Local churches exercise their own authority but in consonance with the rules and by-laws of the CPBC. Membership should be subject to the rules. They prefer to be

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<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Fabula, 2005, December 01, Interview. Rev. Dr. Fabula, a graduate of CPUCT and has a Doctoral Degree at Tübingen University, Germany, is an ordained CPBC Minister and has worked with several churches; Member, CPBC BoT, has been the CPBC General Secretary, member and chair of several committees; President, CBMA; Faculty of CPUCT and CBBC; BoT Member, IMH, FCC, CEH. Presently, he is the VPAA of CPU.

<sup>2</sup> Ronny Luces, 2005, November 18, Interview. Pastor Luces is CPUCT graduate and has worked with Bucana Baptist Church, Negros Occ. & Sambag Baptist Church. In CPBC he has been the Coordinator of Stewardship & Resource Development, Research and Documentation; Technical Assistant, Development Ministries; and Editor in Chief of *Manugbatala*. At present, he is the CBMA Treasurer, Associate Minister of JEC and Project Administrator of Iloilo Kinder Home, Veterans' Village, Iloilo City.

<sup>3</sup> Ricarido Bata-anon, Jr., 2006, January 26, Interview. Pastor Bata-anon is a CPBC pastor and has worked with Barotac Viejo Baptist Church for seven years; Antioch Christian Church for one year; Puntalan, Navarro, Barrio Rojas, Ajuy for one year; Carles Baptist Church for ten years. It was during his time that the church in Carles divided into two. He stayed for five years with the main congregation, and five years with the “split”. Until now this two “churches” exist. Pastor Bata-anon has been the Vice President and Auditor of North Iloilo Baptist Ministerial Association (NIBMA) and President of Barotac Nuevo Circuit. At present, he works with Amuring Baptist Church, Sara, Iloilo.

<sup>4</sup> Rey Bayot, 2006, January 05, Interview. Mr. Bayot has been an active member and leader of his home church; member, CPBC Personnel Committee; past President of Philippine Baptist Men; and BoT Member, Negros Baptist Men. At present, he is a BoT member and Corporate Secretary of Bacolod Christian Center.

<sup>5</sup> Martha Mae E. Luces, 2005, November 16, Interview. Pastor “Matang”, as she is fondly called is a graduate of CPUCT. She has worked with several churches before she became the Christian Education Director of JEC, whose focus of work is with youth and children. She is married to Pastor Ronny Luces.

<sup>6</sup> Excelyn Landero, 2005, November 05, Interview. Ma’am Ex, as she is fondly called, is a graduate of CPUCT and has worked as Pastor with Astorga Baptist Church, Dumarao, Capiz; Kinder Teacher, Bacolod Christian Center; Kinder Teacher, CPU. She had been the OIC of CPURED. At present, she is a fulltime faculty member of CPURED.

members, yet they violate the policy of “member of good standing”. CPBC, in terms of church growth, masyado ka hinay – tithing and practicing the teaching of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

For Ms. Lucy Dela Fuente, “Local Autonomy means the church exercises self-governance in everything, in all aspects of its life as a church. Waay sing may makadikta. It runs its own affairs. CPBC as an organization respects the Local Autonomy of the church (although sometimes they fall into lapses).”<sup>2</sup>

For Ms. Sweet Calinawagan, Local Autonomy of the local church is, *local* church – may awtoridad sa pagtawag sang ila manugpangabudlay. May budget ang *local* church, nagahatag lang share sa Kasapulanan kag CPBC.<sup>3</sup>

For Dr. Elmer Pedregosa, Local Autonomy is self-governing; meaning, independence. “I am accountable for my actions, I will not be bound by anybody above.” The decisions are based on the organizations’ rules, guidelines and objectives.<sup>4</sup>

For Dr. Juanito Acanto, Local Autonomy is freedom to administer local affairs, including the right not to follow decisions of CPBC.<sup>5</sup>

Pastor Rudy Bernal defines Local Autonomy as “The right and power of local organizations to be self-supporting, self-financing, and self-propagating; their power is on themselves as an organization. They have not surrendered their power and authority to the national government and to national organizations. It is the capacity of members and leaders to decide on their own direction, mission, by their own leadership component. Yet Local Autonomy is not practiced in CPBC. Some churches do not want to be “pahilabtan”, but some look up to CPBC to help them as an organization. In coming to CPBC, the local church gives up or surrenders her right to be under the direction of the National Organization. My understanding of Local Autonomy is not consistent with what is practiced in CPBC.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Geronimo Ortega, 2005 November 24, Interview. Mr. Ortega was a work student who had become one of the numerous successful graduates of CPU. He was “converted” and became a member at UC. He had been a member of the Finance Committee during the reign of W. Guanzon sa President, Rev. Sacapaño as GS and Antonio Dela Cruz as Finance Chair. He has been the Treasurer and Business Manager of IMH since August 1988 – present.

<sup>2</sup> Lucy Dela Fuente, 2005, November 25, Interview. Ms. Dela Fuente is a Pastor’s kid. She has been a member of BCC and elected President in 2002; Chair of the Board of Deacons, Worship and Search Committees. At present, she is the Editor of Church Bulletin; member, Baptist Student Center Advisory Council; member, CPU Corporation since 1993; CPU Retired English Teacher; member, FCC BoT; member, CPBC Amendments and Resource Generation Committees; Hostess, Eco forum, TV-8 Sky Cable, CPU Alumni Channel.

<sup>3</sup> Mansueta Calinawagan, 2005, November 29, Interview. Manay Sweet is a CPBC pastor, retired. She worked with Libertad Baptist Church, Tapaz, Capiz (1975-76); CPBC Staff on Family Life (1969-75); Provincial Missionary in Capiz and Aklan (1963-68); Director, Veterans’ Village Community Center (1968-69); Director, Baptist Student Center (1977-79); IMH Chaplain, 1997-present.

<sup>4</sup> Elmer Pedregosa, 2005, December 02, Interview. Dr. Pedregosa is a licensed Surgeon. He has been an active church member and had become the Business Manager at his home church in Pototan, Iloilo. He is still involve in church work as adviser. Member, CPU and IMH Corporations. At present, he is the Director of IMH and also an ex-officio member of its BoT.

<sup>5</sup> Juanito Acanto, 2005, December 05, Interview. Dr. Acanto is a Lawyer by profession. He has been the president of Baptist Center Church (1985). At present, he is the President of CPU. He is active in supporting CPBC.

<sup>6</sup> Rudy Bernal, 2005, December 15, Interview. Pastor Bernal used to work as Editorial Staff of Philippine Herald Newspaper and News Editor of French News Agency. As pastor, he worked with Kawayan Baptist Church, Carles, Iloilo; Central Ma-o Evangelical Church, Negros Occ. He also worked with Urban Industrial Mission (CPBC Pilot Program) in Insular Lumber Co., Hinobaan, Negros Occ. He helped strengthen rural churches in the area. Through the said program, advocacy work in Sipalay, involving Skills-Training and Labor Education, was started. He had been the Director of CPBC New Frontier Ministries, “new” because it explored programs that CPBC has not yet tested, such as Advocacy, Peasant Organization. The years 1984-86 were the most intense moments of Martial Law. The program helped to expose human rights violations to the public, particularly in Western Visayas. He had also been the Vice President of CPBC; Chair, Committee on Social Issues & Environmental Concern; Vice Chair, Development Committee; Member, Amendments Committee; Member, IMH BoT, Finance Committee; Member, CPBC Personnel and Executive Committee.

Local Autonomy, for Jessie Contreras, is “An organization has their own decision-making. CPBC, *has somehow*, become chaotic.”<sup>1</sup>

For Rev. Webster Bedicir, Local Autonomy is independence, self-governance, self-administration. Sa CPBC, may bintaha kag disbintaha: Bintaha – may ligwa ang local churches sa pagpadalagan sang programa kag kabuhi sang iglesia; disbintaha – nagaduha-duha ang churches sa iya pagsupport sa CPBC. Confused ang local churches, indi klaro sa both parties (CPBC and local church) ang responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Suzette Elegado defines Local Autonomy as “The church has freedom to call its pastor; independent church polity and freedom to innovate. The local church is free to worship as it pleases. My understanding is consistent with how Local Autonomy is practiced in CPBC. You can hardly feel the presence of the Convention, daw wala gid man gabulig. As far as other services are concerned, indi gid felt.”<sup>3</sup>

For Mr. Wilson Guanzon, Local Autonomy is “No outside intervention for the local church in its administration, calling of pastor, budgeting, hiring and firing of employee. But the local church has the relationship with other government... Extremes *ang nagakatabo sa CPBC*. We follow Local Autonomy to the fullest even when the stability is at risk. Daw dinalok. *Tungod sina* slow ang growth sang Convention kay indi sia ka impose. Ang local church indi makaexercise Local Autonomy kon ang CPBC damo kwarta. We should follow Local Autonomy as one of the Baptist Distinctives.”<sup>4</sup>

Local Autonomy for Ms. Josita Alpha Jalando-on is, “The church has its own organization financing itself – and yet interconnected with others who share the same purpose and goals. In CPBC, daw ka ‘one-way: Akon ni kwarta, myembro’. Wala maka-establish from the past sang mutual relationship.”<sup>5</sup>

Local Autonomy, for Donato “Mike” Enabe is, “local church can make decision on its organizational structure; indi hierarchical, it is an inverted pyramid. However, Local Autonomy is not absolute in CPBC because we are members of both national and provincial organizations. That in a sense dilutes the essence of Local Autonomy. *Pero subong* daw kalaputyak *sang practice sa CPBC*, daw Local Autonomy daw indi man.”<sup>6</sup>

For Mr. Rey Pedrosa, Local Autonomy is independent governance *and* financial management. Ang pastor spiritual leader, overseer for the glory of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Jessie Contreras, 2005, December 29, Interview. Mr. Contreras has been an active church member of Capiz Evangelical Church (CEC) of which he served as Deacon, Auditor and President. He is the Administrator of Capiz Emmanuel Hospital (CEH) at present.

<sup>2</sup> Webster Bedicir, 2005, December 09, Interview. Rev. Bedicir is graduate of CPUCT and an ordained CPBC Minister. He has worked with several churches and later as Chaplain of Iloilo Mission Hospital. He has been President of Capiz Baptist Ministers Association (CABMA) and BoT Member of Capiz Kasapulanang Baptist Churches. At present, he is the Chaplain of Filamer Christian College and preaches on Weekends at Bago Chiquito Baptist Church, Panay, Capiz.

<sup>3</sup> Suzette Elegado, 2006, January 04, Interview. Dr. Elegado is a Physician by profession and is actively involve in church work as Chair of the local church's BoT; Chair, CBBC BoT; Member, CPU BoT; Vice President, Negros Kasapulanang; Member, CPBC BoT. At present she serve as member of the Board of Deacons at her home church, Rosario Heights Evangelical Church, Bacolod City.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson Guanzon, 2006, January 04, Interview. Italics mine. Mr. Guanzon has been the CPBC President (1989-1992); President, NKBC; Vice President, NCCP (1992-93); Member, IMH Corporation and an active member of Cosmopolitan Evangelical Church. At present, he serves as Chairman of Bacolod Christian Center, Bacolod City.

<sup>5</sup> Josita Alpha Jalando-on, 2006, January 04, Interview. Ms. Jalando-on is a Pastor's Kid. She has been an active member of La Carlota Evangelical Church and serves as member of the Board of Deacons. Vice President, CPBC; Vice President for women, NCCP. At present, she is the OIC of CBBC.

<sup>6</sup> Donato “Mike” Enabe, 2006, January 04, Interview. Mike has been President of NEKCYFU; Chair, Deacon and Trustee of Bacolod Evangelical Church. He was the centennial President of CPBC. He is, at present, the Treasurer of the BoT of the Bacolod Christian Center.

Sa CPBC, sobra ang independence sang local church. There is relative understanding *among members*.<sup>1</sup>

Pastor Edgardo Daitol defines Local Autonomy as “localized ang government *sang* local church; may kaugalingon nga policy kag rules. Pero indi maathag ang definition sang Local Autonomy sa mother organization (CPBC). Ginaemphasize lang ang freedom pero wala ang limitation. *Ano pa* lain-lain ang konsepto *sang mga myembro*.”<sup>2</sup>

Local Autonomy, for Ms. Glory Bullo, is “ang local church may right to call their pastor kag pagmanage sang ila finances.”<sup>3</sup>

For Pastor Elizer Distor, Local Autonomy is “the church has its own self-governing body. Indi sya madiktahan sang iban. But the practice of Local Autonomy in local church nagadepende sa maturity sang leader sa church kag sang pastor. There are leaders *and pastors* who do not really know. They should know their faith before they can learn *to cooperate properly*.”<sup>4</sup>

Ruben “Boy” Jalando-on likens Local Autonomy to government structure such as stated in the Local Government Code that gives freedom to Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), for instance. “May bintaha kag disbintaha and Local Autonomy sa CPBC: bintaha – madasig ang decision-making process, especially kon innovative ang leaders sa local church; disbintaha – indi centralized kag indi standardized and sweldo *sang pastor*. Daw indi gid mabatyagan ang programa sang CPBC sa *grassroots*.”<sup>5</sup>

Pastor Nobe Joy Fran understands Local Autonomy as “Ang isa ka church may iya kaugalingon nga officers kag iya kaugalingon nga decision. *The CPBC practice is not* purely Local Autonomy because may Circuit, Kasapulanang, Convention. Daw ‘earthly’ pero indi sya dapat mag go against sa whole system.”<sup>6</sup>

Pastor Francis Neil Jalando-on simply defines Local Autonomy as “Independent decision-making.” As to the nature of Local Autonomy, he says, it is related to ‘Competency of the Soul to work out its destiny and religious liberty’ (two of Baptist distinctives). Gapati gid ya ang mga Baptists sa kahilwayan sa paghimo sang decision. Ang original nga mga Baptists nagapati nga may ikasarang ang tawo sa pagpili; grabe ang emphasis sa liberty sang tawo, bisan pa ang tawo makahimo sang sakto/mayo ukon sala nga decision. *Surprisingly*, wala ang Local Autonomy sa term sang mga Filipino. In the 1920s, there was a widespread clamor for nationalism; 1935 was the Commonwealth year. The pastors became nationalists. Democracy and independence of local church is

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<sup>1</sup> Rey Pedrosa, 2006, January 06, Interview. Italics mine. Mr. Pedrosa is the Chairman of Bacolod Evangelical Church and President of Negros Baptist Men.

<sup>2</sup> Edgardo Daitol, 2006, January 12, Interview. Italics mine. Pastor Daitol has been a youth leader before he entered and finished as CPUCT. He has worked with several churches. At present, he is the Pastor of Estancia Baptist Church, Estancia, Iloilo.

<sup>3</sup> Glory Bullo, 2006, January 12, Interview. Pastor Bullo has worked with Kawayan Baptist Church and Batad Baptist Church. She has been the Treasurer of Women Federation. She has served as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of Carles Baptist Church. At present, she is retired yet active in church work as member of the local church.

<sup>4</sup> Elizer Distor, 2006, January 12, Interview. Italics mine. Pastor Distor has worked with Estancia Baptist Church, Estancia; Binon-an Baptist Church, Batad; Capiz Evangelical Church, Roxas City; Cawayan Baptist Church, Carles. Sometime in the past, he has been a Staff of Medical Ambassador, a CPBC partner. At present, he works with Ajuy Baptist Church as Senior Minister.

<sup>5</sup> Ruben “Boy” Jalando-on, 2006, January 13, Interview. Italics mine. Boy Jalando-on has been a Member of CPBC Property Committee; Vice President, Iloilo Baptist Men; and at present, the Chair of Ajuy Baptist Church.

<sup>6</sup> Nobe Joy Fran, 2006, January 14, Interview. Italics mine. Manay Nobe, a graduate of CPUCT, used to be a Sunday School Teacher and a Leader when she was a young person. As pastor, she has worked with Hilltop Baptist Church, Astorga Baptist Church and Libertad Baptist Church. Now, she is the Christian Education Director of Capiz Evangelical Church, Roxas City.

political because early Baptists were independent, *not from each other*, but from America.”<sup>1</sup>

Rev. Dr. Armando Kole looks at Local Autonomy as “It is the local church that manages its own affairs: finances. The local church is self-supporting, self-propagating, self-sustaining. It is somehow a misnomer, for the local church should be dependent. Local Autonomy is a carry over of the American Baptists who affirmed independence of local church from state control. In CPBC, there should be interdependence rather than independence, *because* centralized churches are strong churches.”<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Demy Sonza defines Local Autonomy as “Self-governance, local church governing itself. The local church is autonomous, not dictated upon by any other autonomy. In the Philippine setting, it is partial self-rule. The Convention as a body has been allowing churches under its umbrella to practice Local Autonomy. As I see it now, this practice has not been conducive to the growth of both the CPBC and local churches. Many are not viable economically. Even if they (local churches) want to help, they cannot because *wala sila nagdako*”.<sup>3</sup>

For Ms. Evangelica Padernilla, “Local Autonomy is independence or freedom from control of any organization where the local church is a member. It is disadvantageous to CPBC because it has no authority and control over its members.”<sup>4</sup>

Rev. Dr. Jerson Narciso looks at Local Autonomy as “Ang local church may autonomiya – self-supporting, self-propagating, self-governing; *indi lang ang civil* government, but CPBC has no power over it. This is a misapplication because this is usually used by local church against CPBC.”<sup>5</sup>

For Rev. Joniel Howard Gico, “Ang local church manages/does its own day-to-day affairs, independent of others. There are good things as well as things that should be modified about Local Autonomy. Good thing is doing things in different context and situations; Local Autonomy helps address these. However, there is a kind of an extreme understanding that everything is cut off from anybody outside. This would lead to isolation. The local church should be aware that they are part

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Neil Jalando-on, 2005, December 07, 05, Interview. Italics mine. Fneil is an Accountancy graduate before he took and completed Master of Divinity at CPUCT. He has been one of the advisers of the Convention Baptist Youth Fellowship of the Philippines (CBYFP) and member of the Pastoral Staff of La Carlota Evangelical Church. Now, he is the Administrative Assistant of Institute of Advance Theological Studies (IATS), a CPBC partner.

<sup>2</sup> Armando Kole, 2005, December 17 Interview. Italics mine. Rev. Dr. Kole, a graduate of CPUCT and has a Doctoral Degree, has worked with Maloblog Baptist Church, Astorga Baptist Church, Bakyas Evangelical Church, and Garden Ville Baptist Church; President, CBBC; President, CBMA; BoT Member, Bacolod Christian Center; Member, CPBC Overseas Mission Commission; Part-Time Faculty, CBBC, CPUCT, ATS Bacolod; Representative, Commission on Evangelism and Evangelical Concern; BoT and Corporation Member, CPU. Now, he is the Senior Minister of Bacolod Evangelical Church and CPBC President.

<sup>3</sup> Demy Sonza, 2006, February 06, Interview. Mr. Sonza used to preach and teach at Bolong Baptist Church, Sta. Barbara; President, Bolong, Langka, Malawog, Pavia, Sta. Barbara (BLIMPS) Circuit; Member, CPU & IMH corporations; Director, CPU Planning & Development; Consultant to the CPU President. At present, he serves as the Vice President of CPBC.

<sup>4</sup> Evangelica Padernilla, 2006, January 17, Interview. Ms. Padernilla has been Moderator, UC Council; President, Iloilo Kasapulanang of Baptist Churches (IKBC); BoT Member, CPBC; Vice President, CPBC; President (the only woman president so far), CPBC; BoT Member, CPU; Corporate Secretary, CPU Corporation; Vice Chair/Chair, CPU Centennial Celebration. At present she is involved in church work as Sunday School Teacher of the Professional Group in UC and active in the Widows Support Group, an organization she herself started.

<sup>5</sup> Jerson Narciso, 2006, February 01, Interview. Rev. Dr. Narciso, a graduate of CPUCT, has worked as pastor with Forward Evangelical Church, Janiway (1988-90); Jaro Evangelical Church (1990-96); Calvario Evangelical Church, Janiway (1996-98). He has been the President of IBMA and CBMA; Member, CPBC Faith and Order Committee and NCCP Peace Commission. Now, he is the Chaplain of CPU and serves as Pulpit Minister of UC.

of a larger fellowship. Sharing of gifts and resources would help strengthen each other.”<sup>1</sup>

For Dr. Lester Edwin Ruiz, “Local Autonomy is the prerogative of the local congregation to govern itself in relation to the larger context of the denomination. In the CPBC practice, local church does not want CPBC to be dictated by the denomination; Local Autonomy is misinterpreted as ‘freedom from the denomination’. Local Autonomy should include responsibility to the community; freedom has corresponding obligation.”<sup>2</sup>

Ms. Royena Asis comprehends Local Autonomy as “Ang isa ka organization/ local church may freedom sa pagdecide sa iya kaugalingon basi sa context kag kinahanglanon. Wala sang dikta halin sa outside. It is may be advantageous to some local churches but disadvantageous for CPBC as an umbrella organization. Ang CPBC ginabudlayan sa pagpapanaog sang mga decision ...basi wala makahangop ang local church sang Local Autonomy; basi wala ini madefine *sing nagakaigo*.”<sup>3</sup>

For Ms. Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz Duremdes, “Local Autonomy is the local churches have a particular dynamism para maka decision based on the analysis of their local situation and identification of appropriate response on the local situation, within the framework of national organization’s understanding of mission. The problem seems to be that the local churches are not knit or consolidated. They are still inward looking and only look after their personal interests.”<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Synthesis

The interview shows that there is a relative perception among CPBC clergy, lay leaders and members alike. Some pointed out the absence of a clear-cut definition of Local Autonomy as a Baptist principle. Because of this local churches do not have an operational basis for practice. It seems to project that how the local churches operate depends on the personal perception and interpretation of their local leaders. One can infer that these interpretations usually serve personal interests at the expense of the whole organization. Thus, it is an utmost need for CPBC leaders to have an official definition of Local Autonomy and other Baptist emphases. This is important to secure the unity of CPBC as it seeks to fulfill the mission of the church (people) of Jesus Christ in the Philippine context.

Further, there is a need for CPBC to have a common ecclesiology. There seems to be no official CPBC understanding of the church’s nature and mission. CPBC members are at the mercy of pastors and leaders, who have varied interpretations. Perhaps it is time for CPBC national leaders to sit down and

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<sup>1</sup> Joniel Howard Gico, 2006, February 2, Interview. Italics mine. Rev. Gico, a graduate of CPUCT, has worked with San Jose Evangelical Church and University Church; Dean, CBMA; Member, CPU Corporation; President, CBBC; Chair, CPBC Peace and Mediation Committee; Member, Theological Education & Pastoral Concern Committee; Vice Chair, SAO Philis. At present, he is the Vice President for Administration, CPU.

<sup>2</sup> Lester Edwin Ruiz, 2005, November 29, Interview. Rev. Dr. Ruiz, an ordained CPBC Minister, has been member of the Board of Stewards in Baptist Youth at JEC. He is, at present, the Associate Dean of New York Theological Seminary, New York. He usually visits and delivers lectures in CPBC and CPU.

<sup>3</sup> Royena Asis, 2006, February 03, Interview. Italics mine. Ms. Asis is a pastor’s Wife. In her youth, she had been President of Antique Baptist Youth Fellowship Union; Secretary, Deaconess, Treasurer and President of Sambag Baptist Church; Secretary, IKBC and ICCBC; Member, CPBC Development Ministries, Camp Higher Ground, Personnel, Past Actions Committees. She is, at present, the Program Staff of Western Visayas Ecumenical Council (WVEC).

<sup>4</sup> Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz Duremdes, 2005, November 11, Interview. “Nang Shar” as she is fondly called, a graduate of CPUCT, has served as IKBC President; BoT Member, CPBC; President, Women’s Federation; Teacher at CPUCT and CPUAS. Now, she is the first woman General Secretary of NCCP.

discuss historic Baptist principles, reconstruct official interpretation, and promulgate it to its members as guidelines for faith and practice.

The following is the analysis and synthesis of the views of the respondents.

## **2.1. What Local Autonomy IS NOT ... What Local Autonomy IS**

Since there is no standard definition of beliefs<sup>1</sup> on which to base understanding by CPBC leadership and membership, relativity of perspective can be expected. The traditional understanding of Local Autonomy, i.e. “the ‘local church’ is self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting” is erroneously interpreted with perception such as, “Ang Convention indi makadikta sa local church”. It appears that the question is right away focused on power; on who should be followed. The main issue should be more on “what is to be done” than “who should be followed”. The latter, for an enlightened Christian, should have been resolved long before. Decision-making processes such as during elections, business meetings, calling of pastor, whether to make or not to make a statement on a social issue, and the like are usually critical for CPBC. The idea behind the expression “let us divide the house” has proven in essence to be more divisive than democratic.

Rev. Elmo D. Familiaran suggest a methodology which is “unitive” and faithful to the Christian and biblical ideals. He wrote:

... “Consensus” must not be understood as “uniformity.” ... Rather, “consensus” in the best sense of seeking the “mind of Christ” is about seeking “common ground.” Understood this way, consensus leaves room for disagreements around other aspects of an issue (as Baptists always do) but invites participants to coalesce around its vital center. Here a mechanism for negotiation needs to be in place that will provide for a systematic approach to analyzing the various layers of an issue, enabling all to sort out clearly what is secondary from the primary.<sup>2</sup>

From this statement we can infer a lot of questions about our life together as a ‘people of God’ (church, community of gifts) and lives as individuals. Do we seek the “mind of Christ” in our election, leadership style, evangelization and mission, education and the like? If we do not, whose mind are we following then? Dr. Domingo Diel, Jr. wrote a satirical statement about this:

...Wala kita Papa (luwas sa mga Katolico), wala Hari, wala Reyna. Apang tungod kay wala kita matudloi o wala kita kahibalo sing maayo sang patakaran/pagginahum sang Papa sa Iglesia, sang Hari o Reyna sa Iglesia, ang pila sang aton mga lideres – pastor o lay people – nangin magagmay nga papa, hari kag reyna sa mga ka-iglesiahanan. Ang awtoridad sang “gathered community of believers” nadula.

...We have no Pope (except the Catholic), neither king nor queen. But because we are not properly taught or we only have insufficient

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<sup>1</sup> In the Preamble of CBPC By-Laws, Baptist Distinctives are stated, but they are not defined. The CPBC Manual of Ministry, “Yellow Pamphlet” adopts a definition from Danilo Borlado’s lecture, *Our Baptist Heritage: Becoming Faithful Disciples*, delivered during the 61<sup>st</sup> CPBC Annual Assembly at Bakyas Evangelical Church, Bacolod City. But probably, implementation and dissemination of this information has have not been institutionalized that it has not permeated the grassroots of membership.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Elmo D. Familiaran, *Chaos or Community: A Reflection on the Baptist Principle of Autonomy as it is Lived Out in the Reality of the American Baptist Churches, USA*. Written for my Sisters and Brothers in the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches and their Own Struggle to Seek the Mind of Christ



knowledge of the governance of Pope, king and queen in the church, some of our leaders – clergy and laity – have become demi-pope, miniature king, and diminutive queen in the local churches. The authority of “gathered community of believers” is gone.<sup>1</sup>

Autonomy is synonymous with “freedom”. It would be easier to understand Local Autonomy if we locate its place in proper historical setting. An account was laid in the first chapter that Baptists along with other Protestant groups emerge in the post-medieval period when the church and the state were erroneously entwined. Corruption of power, violation of human rights, suppression of creative ideas, and oppression of the poor by the clergy and civil nobles were as bright as the sun.<sup>2</sup> The early Baptists did not adhere to the state of being dictated by a corrupt and immoral religious hierarchy, and being ruled by an oppressive and unjust civil government.<sup>3</sup>

They only wish to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, which they plainly followed on their assertion of baptism by immersion (which later became their label) and other New Testament-supported practices. Simply, the early Baptists struggled to be autonomous from “sinful” religion and “wicked” government.<sup>4</sup> But among them they struggled to build an egalitarian community that is strictly patterned on the NT believers, where both community of gifts and goods were celebrated and lived. Evidently, for William Lumpkin, Baptists did not think of reforming the National Church (Anglican Church) but of building an entirely new structure on the New Testament pattern.<sup>5</sup>

Local Autonomy, in the context of the church as the body of Christ, should be understood as “freedom for” instead of “freedom from”.<sup>6</sup> Where life is “no longer mine but of Him who lives in me” should be the constitutive meaning of freedom. It is no longer freedom from outside entities, but “freedom in Christ” (Gal. 3:28). The Golden Rule best illustrates this freedom: “Do unto others what you want others to do unto you”. And you do it not because of your own capacity, but by the gift (*charisma*) of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus promised and fulfilled.

Thus, autonomy, for those who believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, is complete submission to His will. Such people seek the “mind of Christ” through the Scripture and take it as a command, like the Great Commission. Because it is an imperative, disobedience is not an option. You are only free, using your own God-endowed creativity, to obey it. If one proclaims to be a follower of Jesus and does not observe Jesus commandments, he is guilty of what Jesus said, “You call me ‘Lord’ and yet you do not follow me.”

In concluding this section here are quotes from three prominent Christians: St. Augustine, Martin Luther and St. Paul. Augustine said, “Love God and do whatever you want”. Don’t get him wrong for “whatever you want” is bound within the boundaries of God’s will. Luther said, “Love and be freed. Love and be obligated”. He said this in the context of the church. The community of believers should not be a place of limitation but of freedom. But this freedom is always intimately linked with one’s obligation to love the neighbor as a spontaneous result of God’s love. Finally, St. Paul said, “But now that you have been set free

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<sup>1</sup> D. J. Diel, Jr., in, CPBC 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly Souvenir Program. 2005. Translation mine.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K. S. Latourette, 1953, p. 684

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. A. Baker, 1959, p. 154ff.

<sup>4</sup> “Reformers within the Reformation, radicals or revolutionaries” were labels given to Anabaptists and Baptist for their attempt for painstaking cleaning of the Church by going back to the ideals of the Scriptures, especially the NT.

<sup>5</sup> W. L. Lumpkin, 1959, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> Lester Edwin Ruiz, 2005, November 29, Interview.

from sin, and have become slaves to God, the benefit leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life” (Rom. 6:22).

In other words, Local Autonomy is to be understood proactively. Freedom is to seek the mind of Jesus and the will of God, and obey them unconditionally. The Philippine Baptist is called to seek and obey the “mind of Christ” in its attempt to live as a church of God. CPBC is left with a challenge on how to incarnate the “mind of Christ” in a polity that will serve the mission of God best.

### 3. Towards a Faith as Foundation of United Practice

Some of our CPBC constituents have spoken, what is next? What is the problem? This is the very question that an informed person should ask in order to diagnose the situation accurately. Scientific way of solving problem starts with ‘Identification of the Problem’.

Many informants mentioned that CPBC has problems such as “conflict management, property management, calling of pastor, discipline of members, priority, leadership crisis, reluctant membership, unenthusiastic leaders and staff, and the like.” However, it seems to appear that they are only symptoms of a deeper problem. A number of informants cited the absence of CPBC definition of faith principles. Perhaps, many of CPBC members know the Baptist faith, but do they fully understand what they believe? How could they understand if they have no position to base their practice on? It follows then that the burden lies in the shoulder of CPBC leaders to address this urgent problem – “the challenge of faith.”<sup>1</sup> Only by knowing and understanding her faith can CPBC regain her identity and nature. Only by understanding her faith principles can she have a clearer grasp of her past and future. Only by seeking the mind of Christ CPBC can respond faithfully to the call of God’s mission.

CPBC, like other Protestants, also suffer organizational problems. Dr. Fely David said that when you know that others have problems equally bad or worse than yours, you feel better about yourself.<sup>2</sup> That is true. But that “better feeling” should not blind us to things that need to be done to resolve the problem no matter how minute they are compared with others’. A problem is always a problem no matter how minor it is. They are to be resolved; else, they become chronic or perennial. Of course, CPBC’s problem is too enormous to be shunned. Rev. Dr. Lester Edwin Ruiz wrote:

I think that part of the problem that needs to be addressed when dealing with the notion of "autonomy" is the notion of "community" that almost always accompanies it. Part of the dilemma ... is that the problem of autonomy is tied to the fact that we inherited a particular, but often unacknowledged, "secular" understanding of the individual and the community (from the liberal philosophical heritage); which, in part conflicts with our local (cultural) understanding of the individual and the community. Part of the dilemma is also that when we interpret the Bible, we interpret it through the lens of this "secular" notion of the individual/community instead of letting the Bible and its non-liberal context speak to us about the meaning of individual/community. In other words, we have inherited a western, "colonized" understanding of individual and community (from our missionaries). Until we see it as that,

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<sup>1</sup> L. E. Ruiz, *Thoughts on Local Autonomy: A Question of Faith* This paper was written as a critique to *The CBBC-CREED Committee's Study: Local Governance vs. Centralization: The Case of Pastors in the CPBC*. 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Dr. Fely David's lecture on Research Methods, CPUSGS.

we will have very little real sense of the problems we face that come under the name "autonomy."<sup>1</sup>

This quest affirms Dr. Ruiz's diagnosis of the CPBC situation to be sound. As a starting point it becomes evident that CPBC's main problem is not primarily structural or organizational, rather, a problem of faith. Further, he has explicitly drawn the separation or, shall we say, cleavage between theology and governance, where, normally, polity or system is "the confluence of governance and theology".<sup>2</sup> To illustrate this, he said, "We need to look into what I call our 'operative' faith (which may not be the same as our 'formal' faith, or the faith that we supposedly proclaim."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, though in different setting, John Kavanaugh writes an accurate description of this separation between "formal" faith and operative faith. "Fideists and activists"<sup>4</sup> are his terms to sketch the extreme leanings of present day Christians. Further "Fideists and activists need each other to be whole. They need each other even to be who they are."<sup>5</sup> On these he proposes two things:

...to activists that they become more profoundly rooted in faith: in the life and action of Jesus and in the life of a believing people ... to fideists, who profess a serious belief in Jesus that they become more deeply activist in their loving service and fully critical of the ways their faith has become acculturated.<sup>6</sup>

So, this is a problem of faith. What CPBC needs is not a "formal faith" alone, but a faith that is "operative"; faith that permeates through the structure; faith that penetrates the lifestyle of the community, thus the individual. We need a faith that is active and relevant to the present time, not a faith that is alienated from the context where it is supposed to operate. We can only do that if we choose to become "radical in seeking the basics or fundamentals of our faith". "Radical" basically means, "from the root", and fundamental means "basic or essential". In other words, this quest seeks to be radical in digging the fundamentals of Baptist faith so that thorough change might be achieved.

One of the problems that the researcher met in the process of looking for material sources is the rarity of available literature on Ecclesiology, Christology, and Missiology written by Filipino Baptists. The interview conducted reveals the relativity of our people's understanding of what we believe. Most of the informants would say, "Well, we Baptists cannot do that ... the CPBC cannot dictate ... we have our own". It seems to appear that the issue is right away focused on whether CBPC should or not dictate on its constituents. We should bear in mind that Baptists, like Filipinos, detest autocratic or dictator leaders, but that does not mean we cannot unite. This is so true because according to Rev. Ernesto B. Carvajal, "*Kon nagakalasugot kita, waay na ya nagapierde sang doctrine of Local Autonomy.*" (If we agree among ourselves, it doesn't defeat the doctrine of Local Autonomy).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lester Edwin Ruiz, *Thoughts on Local Autonomy: A Question of Faith*, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> LE. Ruiz, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> L. E. Ruiz, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> John Kavanaugh, *Still Following Christ in a Consumer Society: The Spirituality of Cultural Resistance*, St.Pauls: Philippines, (Revised Ed.)1996, p. ix.

<sup>5</sup> J. Kavanaugh, 1996, p. ix.

<sup>6</sup> J. Kavanaugh, 1996, p. xiii.

<sup>7</sup> P. Bañas, Interview. Rev. Bañas mentioned this quote from the late Rev. Carvajal. Translation mine.

After one hundred years of Baptist mission in the Philippines, we have come to the point of transition. We are in crisis, whether we admit it or not. But this is not the time to be passive. This is the time to risk. We should be optimistic about this. When viewed from a bright side, crisis becomes a “dangerous opportunity”; dangerous, because when you do nothing about it, you will end up in chaos, meaninglessness and loss. But there is opportunity, in that, when you do something about it, growth is bound to happen. Dr. Diel’s assessment of CPBC’s present state says, in part:

Nagapatubo (sige gihapon), nag-edukar sang mga Lideres – babaye, lalaki – kag nagpagguwa sini sa ila agud maka-serbisyo sa mga National kag International Organizations nga sa diin ang Convention miembro. Ang ila positions indi man lahug-lahug!

CPBC is still grooming and educating leaders – male, female – sending them to serve in national and international organizations where CPBC is a member. They are occupying crucial positions.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt, CPBC has produced leaders, making names for themselves nationally and internationally. Its “related-institutions” had become landmarks in the country, especially in Panay. But the “worldly” notion of “position as power” is still prevalent among its constituents, especially leaders. Using Jesus’ lifestyle and standard of leadership as servanthood, many of our leaders would be found wanting. However, this is not the time to point a finger on whom to blame. This is the time to seek God’s will for our life together as people who claim to belong to God.

Enough with the “war of each against all”<sup>2</sup> period! We need to start a new stage: an era of cohesiveness, collaboration, unity, communion, witness, service and celebration of abundant life with people. Let the work begin!

### **III. BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY ON LOCAL AUTONOMY**

#### **1. New Testament (NT) Perspective**

Tolle, lege; tolle, lege – take it and read it; take it and read it.

*St. Augustine*<sup>3</sup>

One of the historic Baptist emphases is “The Authority of the Scriptures over faith and practice”. In Roy McNutt’s formulation, Baptists claim to be “Bible Christians”<sup>4</sup>. Against the common notion that Baptist emphasizes, “regenerated church membership”<sup>5</sup> publicly expressed in Baptism, Henry Cook plausibly expounds:

But the doctrine of the church is in its turn largely conditioned by our conception of the origin, nature and purpose of the Church, and for that,

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<sup>1</sup> D. J. Diel, Jr., in, CPBC 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly Souvenir Program. 2005. Translation mine.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L.E. Ruiz, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Cook, *What Baptists Stands For*, The Carey Kingsgate Press: London, 1958, p. 29. “This is what Augustine confessed to have heard in his mystical conversion experience.”

<sup>4</sup> William Roy McNutt, *Polity and Practice in Baptist Churches*, Judson Press: Philadelphia, 1935, p. iv

<sup>5</sup> W. T. Whitey, *A History of British Baptists*, 1932, in, H. Cook, 1958, p. 17, 19.

Baptists argue, we must always go back to the New Testament, since it is in the New Testament that we have the revelation of the mind and will of Christ, the Church Founder and Living Head. That revelation is given partly in Christ's own life and ministry and partly in the experience of His apostles, the men who were his immediate followers and who by Him were endued with the Spirit at Pentecost. From the New Testament we learn the essential principles of faith and practice for the Church as Christ Himself conceived them, and it is our duty as Christians to make loyalty to these essential principles and constant aim and concern.

Everything for Christian thought and practice runs back to what Christ Himself revealed to those who knew Him best and who, under the guidance of the His Spirit, preserved for all time the record of "those things which are most surely believed among us.

This is the fundamental Baptist position. With this belief in the Supremacy of the New Testament, Baptists always begin, and from it they draw all their conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

This was one of the manifold consequences of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation. Dr. Domingo J. Diel, Jr. pointed out the discrepancy in the importation of Baptist faith from Europe to America and the Philippines. Perhaps American bias that "sifted" Baptist principles left the Philippine Baptist with "*Kulang kay Sobra*".

Ang ginapabugal nga ang Biblia, Sole Authority for Faith and Practice, nangin forma na lang, imbis nga **foundational** kag **substantial**, subong sang paggamit sang mga Baptists anay sa Europa kag England...

Sobra pa gid ang aton pagka-secular: ang decision – legal, binding – ang religio-spiritual, indi kay advisory lang?

The Bible, proudly claimed as Sole Authority for Faith and Practice, have only become in form, instead of being foundational and substantial, like how it was used by Baptists in Europe and England ...

We have become extremely secular: the decision – legal, binding – the religio-spiritual, became advisory only?<sup>2</sup>

It seems to appear that there had been distortions of the Baptist faith and tradition as it traversed in mission through the three continents. For Dr. Diel, Baptist faith and practice had been sifted principally in America.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned earlier, this work seeks to be radical to locate the historical foundations of Baptist faith. So, seeking to be faithful to Baptist historic emphasis on the authority of the Scripture, the writer seeks to reclaim the Bible as "foundational and substantial" to Baptist faith. Meaning, in whatever we do as Baptist, we seek and pray for the "mind of Christ" and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as witnessed to by the Scriptures. Simply, Baptist should look at the Bible as the sole source of faith and practice imperatives. One should bear in mind that, while early Baptists created

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<sup>1</sup> H. Cook, 1958, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> D. J. Diel, Jr., in, CPBC 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly Souvenir Program. 2005.. Translation mine.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Diel notes the following which had been sifted through American Baptist mission: 1. Social Justice – the very issue that Anabaptists in Germany stood and struggled for, which was why they were bitterly persecuted; 2. Context – In Europe and America they had Pope, king, and queen. Unlike in the Philippine context, we don't have such. Because we were not properly informed of the policies and governance of that of the Pope, king and queen, some of our leaders – pastor and lay people – had become little Pope, king and queen in local churches. The authority of "gathered community" is gone; 3. Puritan Legalism (do's and don'ts) that has no biblical basis and are not of Baptist heritage, were added. Freedom in Christ (Gal 5:2), which is a "new yoke" that also enslaves, was not properly taught. D. J. Diel, Jr., in, CPBC 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly Souvenir Program. 2005. (paraphrased).

numerous Confessions of Faith, they were only supplemental guides to the interpretation of the Scripture; neither did they rule over nor replace the authority of the latter. With these in mind one can now ask, "What does the Bible say about Local Autonomy?"

The term "Local Autonomy" is not explicitly found in the Bible, specifically in the NT. But the term is a descriptive principle of the local church, which when stated in full is actually "local church autonomy". It appears that real issue is not whether Local Autonomy is in the NT, but whether Local Autonomy as a descriptive principle is coherent with the NT images of the church. Whether it is true to the normative polity or structure of the early believers. The researcher does not expect an absolute copy of the New Testament pattern to be literally transmitted to the Philippine Baptist context. Rather, a challenge to seek a foundation where to build our structure on and an essence to mold our form. In other words, while we lay emphasis on the decisiveness of the New Testament account as a "seed of faith", we also deem the significance of the context as a "soil" where it should be planted. This is where the interplay of "text and context" becomes integral. This will be discussed further in the next segment.

Meanwhile, what does the NT say about the church. The writer opts to cite explicit passages about the subject. Reflection and interpretation shall be made in the next segment.

The writer preferred to enumerate the accounts about the *church* in this order:

1. The Gospel of Matthew

*"And I tell you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18a). "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or as tax collector."* 18:17

The word *church*<sup>1</sup> is a derivative of the Greek terms *κήριακον* (*kyriakon*) and *ἐκκλησία* (*ekklesiā*), which literally means "a place of assembly or gathering".

2. Acts of the Apostles

*"On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church, going from house to house, he dragged men and women and put them in prison."* 8: 1b-3.

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<sup>1</sup> See John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Geoffrey Chapman (The Bruce Publishing) Co.: London-Dublin, 1966. p. 133-134. The Anglo-Saxon group of words (Eng *church*, Scots *kirk*, German *Kirche*, Dutch *kerk*) are derived from the late Gk word *κήριακον* (*kyriakon*) "the Lord's (house)." The Gk word *ἐκκλησία* (*ekklesiā*) signified in classical Gk the assembly of the citizens of a city for legislative or deliberate purposes. This assembly included only the citizens who enjoyed full rights, and thus the word implies both the dignity of the members and the legality of the assembly. The Gk word *ekklesiā* had no religious usage. It was adopted by the LXX to render the Hebrew word *kāhāl*, which with the Hebrew *'ēdāh* signifies in later Hebrew the religious assembly of the Israelites. These two words were adopted for the local religious assembly of the Jews who lived outside Jerusalem, and *'ēdāh* is more commonly rendered in Greek by *συναγωγή* (*synagogue*); J. D. Douglas et. al. eds., *The New Bible Dictionary*, W.M. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962. p. 228. The English word *church* is derived from Gk. adjective *κήριακος* as used in some phrases as *κήριακον δωμα* or *κήριακε οικια*, meaning 'the Lord's house', i.e. Christian place of worship. 'Church' in the New Testament, however, renders Gk. *ekklesiā*, which mostly means a local congregation of Christians and **never a building**.

*“Then the **church** throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in fear of the Lord.” 9: 31.*

*“Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the **church** and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” 11: 25-26.*

*“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the **church** of God, which he bought with his own blood.” 20: 28.*

### 1.1. Pauline, Pastoral, and General Epistles

*“To the **church** of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with those everywhere who call in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 1: 2-3.*

*“To the **church** of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia...” 2 Cor.1: 1b.*

*“To the **churches** in Galatia ...” Gal. 1: 2b.*

*“To the **church** of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” 1 & 2 Thes.1:1b.*

*“...To Philemon ... and to the **church** that meets in your home.” Phile. 1: 2b.*

*“To the seven **churches** in the province of Asia.” Rev. 1: 4a.*

The verses cited contain the use of the term church in some NT writings. Evidently, *church* is not a standard term used to mean the apostles, believers, followers, and the like of Jesus. The fact is it is only one of the numerous terms that were synonymous with each other and interchangeably used by NT authors. Maring and Hudson wrote:

At first there was no one standardized term by which the Christian community was designated. It was referred to by equivalent terms such as brethren, *followers of the way*, assembly, household, people, body, etc. It was not until later that the term *ecclesia* (meaning, in its broadest sense, a “calling out” or “assembly,” and translated “church” in the English versions of the Bible) came to be as the standard term. There is no special reason why a word meaning “people” (*λαος του θεο* – *people of God*) or “household” (*οικος*) could have not been adopted instead. Certainly such words occur *more* frequently than *church* in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maring & Hudson, 1991. p. 22. Italics except *ecclesia* mine.

Indeed, this is evident in the NT. Of the three synoptic authors, Matthew was the only Evangelist who used the term church (*ekklesia*); Mark and Luke, surprisingly, did not. Hans Küng wrote:

Only twice – and, moreover, in two passages from the same gospel which are hotly disputed by exegetes (Mt. 16:18; 18:17) – does the word “church”, or rather ἐκκλησία, appear in the gospels. On the other hand the words “kingdom of God” (βασιλεία του θεου) appear about a hundred times in the synoptic gospels. This is a disturbing fact for any ecclesiology, even today.<sup>1</sup>

This eloquent catholic scholar sees the discrepancy of the evangelist’s use of the term. Küng quotes an often-quoted comment from Alfred Loisy: “Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, and what came was the church.”<sup>2</sup> The discussion on the relationship (if there is) between the *kingdom of God* and *church* may lead to another direction, so, that will be laid aside for the next segment.

For emphasis, a segment of the quote from Maring and Hudson is reiterated: “...brethren, *followers of the way*, assembly, family, household, people, body, etc...” Locating these terms in the NT and their Greek equivalents, the nuances of their original meaning can be gleaned. The following terms are synonymous and were more frequently used than the word *church*:

1. **Brothers**<sup>3</sup> or **ἀδελφος** in Greek was a description of Jesus of those who obey the will of His Father (*Abba*) such as stated in Mk. 3: 31-35, Mat. 12: 46-50, Luke 8: 19-21. This was also used by Paul in his salutation to his Epistle to believers in Colosse that reads “To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ” Col. 1:2a.
2. **Followers of The Way**<sup>4</sup> is another term used to mean the believers as in Acts 9:2; 19: 9, 23; 22:4; 24: 14, 22.
3. **Lord’s Disciples** or **μαθητης** such as in Acts 9:1, 2; 8:3. The term refers to learners and followers of a teacher (*rabbi*) or master.
4. **Saints and holy** have one Greek equivalent, **ἅγιος**. Paul often used this in addressing believer such as in Ephesus (Eph. 1:1a), Philippi (Phil. 1:1b), and Colosse (Col. 1:2a).
5. **People of God** or **λαος του θεου** is a dominant Old Testament expression referring to Israel as the chosen people of God. As used however in NT such as in 1 Pet 2:9, 10, it now refers to the people who believe and follow as the Lord. Thus, the fellowship of believers (church) is the New Israel; a chosen people called by his name; a holy nation that has a mission to do and a message to proclaim.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the following are salutation verses of the General Epistles to their addressees.

*“To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations...”* James 1:1a

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Küng, *The Church*, Burns and Oates Ltd.: USA, 1967, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> A. Loisy, *L’Evangile et l’Eglise*, Paris 1902, p. 111, in, H. Küng, 1967, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. H. Littell, 1958, p. XV. Anabaptist preferred to be called “Brethren” as how the NT believers preferred to call each other. This term is inclusive of women.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John 14:6. One of the “I AM” sayings of Jesus where he deliberately call himself “I am the Way...”

<sup>5</sup> Cf. H. Küng, 1967, p. 155-177.



*“To God’s elect, stranger in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithyna, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.” 1 Peter 1:1b-2a.*

*“To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.” 2 Peter 1:1a.*

*“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make your joy complete.” 1John1:3-4.*

*“To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love with the truth-and not only, but also all who know the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever...” John 1:1a-2.*

*“To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ.” Jude 1: 1a.*

From these NT passages one can infer how fluid was the usage of NT writers of terms, which the term *church* as used in NT writings (Matthean, Lukan-Acts, and Pauline) basically expressed. Be it *brothers* and *sisters* (to be gender sensitive), *followers* or *those who belonged to the Way*, *Disciples (Apostles)*, *people of God*, *the twelve tribes scattered among the nations*, *God’s elect*, *strangers in the world*, *receivers of faith*, *fellowship (κοινωνία - koinonia)*, *the chosen lady and her children*, *called and loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ*, are among the NT phrases used in referring to the believers of Jesus Christ.

Unlike the term *church* that is erroneously understood as a place or an edifice for religious rites, its NT synonyms are precise about their united sense, that is people who have decisively responded to the call of the gospel, believed, baptized and look at Jesus Christ as Lord (**ΚΥΡΙΟΣ**); that his words are imperative of their being and future; that they wholly offer themselves to the mission of the reign (kingdom) of God; that even the gates of hell cannot stand on their way because they are built on the Rock of their salvation – Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, geopolitical boundary is not definitive of the believers’ life and mission. It is interesting to note that the preposition used, for instance in “the church of God *in* Corinth and the churches *in* Galatia” is *in* and not *of*. This means that while the church or however one may call it is *in* Corinth or Galatia; it is not *of* (does not belong to) the said localities, for their citizenship is in heaven though they are on earth; “for they are in the world” but “they are not of the world” (John 17: 11, 16). It shows further that other than *church*, the terms used for “*believers (called out)*, *followers of the Way and doers of the Word*, did not seem to have a notion of provincial or local boundaries (such as the practice of Local Autonomy in CPBC). The “inspired” authors, every time they admonish, counsel, rebuke and the like, the believers, always claim the authority of Jesus through the

Holy Spirit. The leaders of the local congregations functioned as servants of the people as they exercised the gift (charisma) of the Holy Spirit.

Having said the account of NT use of the term *church* only as one of the many terms; having cited passages that give other terms more frequently used than *church*, other NT accounts can be cited that are more descriptive of how the early congregations (Jewish and later, Gentiles) worked out their life together, transcending their geopolitical borders.

There are NT passages that have specific issues raised. They can be used as guide for modern church polity if one truthfully minds the Baptist principle of “authority of the Scripture over faith and practice.”

1. **Conflict Management.** Matthew 18: 15-20 is a straightforward and detailed imperative utterance from Jesus himself about how the church or **οἱ ἀδελφοί** (the brothers) should conduct themselves towards a brother who sinned (**ἁμαρτωλός**). This is an excellent pattern to base conflict management process. Paul in 1 Cor 6:1-8 strongly dissuade the bringing of conflict among believers to pagan and civil courts; Christians should take their disputes to the *saints* (a frequently used synonym of *church*). In a segment of the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5:23-26), Jesus taught that reconciliation is a prerequisite of true worship. He further explains the practicability of settling a disagreement “while you are still with him on the way to the court” (v. 25). Doing so spares one from serious consequences (vv. 25-26).
2. **Elections.** Acts 1: 12-26, a candid account of how the disciples (sisters and brothers) chose Matthias in place of Judas to again complete the twelve; and Acts 6: 1-7, records the situation that gave birth to, and how the first seven deacons were chosen. These passages are precise models of election in the early life of the believers. In both instances prayer for the working of the Holy Spirit played a significant role. In the first instance, the disciples (with Peter as the spokesperson) used their reason by setting a qualification<sup>1</sup> for the one to be nominated. Then they cast lots with faith that it was the working of the Holy Spirit on whom the lot would fall. This event simply echoes how individuals are chosen for a particular post in the olden times. It is Yahweh that chooses not the people. This is evident in the anointment of kings and prophets.
3. **Ministry.** The choosing of the Seven Deacons was a wise and spontaneous response of the disciples to believers’ growing number and needs. Take note that the seven were “known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (v 3). The believers appointed the seven and the disciples ordained them. Both the proposal and its outcome pleased the whole group (v 5). The first century believers’ way of selecting their leaders shows the following: (1) it was a response to the need; (2) it was a consensus of the whole community. In other words, there were no majority and minority votes; neither was there administration nor opposition blocks lobbying for position and control. Servants were appointed and ordained for service (which the term *deacon* means) of the least (widows, in this instance) and not to rule over the others. Thus, the modern slogan “leadership is servanthood” is declared void by this

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 1:21-22. “Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us<sup>2</sup>beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

event. It is the reverse that Jesus lived and taught. Public posts in the context of the early Church were always about service as modeled from Jesus lifestyle and pedagogy: “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (Mk 10:45; Mat 20:28); “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

It also shows how closely knitted is the choosing of leaders to the ministry and mission of the believers as followers of Christ. Leaders are appointed and ordained to participate in the work or mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. **Property Management.** The passages in Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-36 show how the early believers responded to the calling of the Gospel by sharing their possessions so that nobody among the believers was in need. Acts 5: 1-11 demonstrate the consequence of lying against the Holy Spirit exhibited by Ananias and Sapphira. This echoes the divine judgment of God on Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:2), on Achan (Jos 7:25), and on Uzzah (2 Sa 6:7). These are foundational passages on the issue of property management. The common use of possessions to satisfy everyone’s need and the use of individual gifts (charisma) to serve the whole body/community clearly show the egalitarian system lived by the believers. In other words there was sharing of goods and gifts among them. The act of providing for the need of the “least” did not necessarily mean giving alms, but doing justice. Equal access to a common possession means there was no “differentiating wealth<sup>1</sup>” among community members. The tragic death of Achan (OT) and Ananias and Sapphira (NT) makes plain that private property and deceit is strongly reprobated in the communion of the people of God. This is evidently supported in the collective life<sup>2</sup> exhibited by Jesus and the disciples (Mat 27:55; Mk 15:41; Lk 8: 3). Another account (found in the four gospels) openly supports this is: the “Feeding of the Multitude” (Mat 14:13-21; 15:29-39; Mk 7:31-37; 8:1-10; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13). This, for Gabriel Dietrich, is the economy of sharing<sup>3</sup>. Here the idea of sharing things in common is prevalent. Further, it implies that the resources of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Jose Porfirio Miranda, *Communism in the Bible*, (Translated from Spanish by Robert R. Barr) Orbis Books: Maryknoll, NY, USA, 1981, p. 21-48.

<sup>2</sup> Some authors, especially Miranda, used the term “communist” to describe this NT event. For him, “In fact the definition Karl Marx borrowed from Louis Blanc, ‘from each according to his capacities, to each according to his needs’, is inspired by, if not directly copied from, Luke’s formulation in Acts 2:44-45; 4: 32-35.” (J. P. Miranda, *Communism in the Bible*, 1981, p. 1-2, 18) One cannot, however, lay aside the political-ideological aspect of this issue. For extensive and reconciliatory or dialogical discussion on the Church and Communism, see W. Bühlmann, *The Coming of the Third Church*, St. Paul Publications: Makati, Metro Manila, Phil., 1974. p. 122-128. Portion of which reads: “We could share with the Communists the idea that social injustices are not to be taken for granted, that charity hand-outs are no substitute for justice, that in view of the equal dignity of men privileged classes have lost their right to exist, that the accumulation of riches in a world of poverty is criminal. We need to learn from them simplicity in standards of living, the hard work needed to transform the world, solidarity with the poor, ‘hunger and thirst after justice’ not simply in an introverted and individualistic sense but also taking account of ‘justice in the world’ . . .”

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, *Solidarity and Spirituality: A Theology of Life*, in N. D. Bunda, et. al. eds., *Journeys in Faith and Ministry*, IATS, Inc.: Iloilo City, Philippines, 2003, vo.1, 2003, p. 271-272. “The feeding of the multitude by Jesus as recorded in the Gospels informs this idea of interrelatedness. This story has been referred to as the Great meal of Sharing. Gabriel Dietrich, a German theologian claims that the miracle in the story was not the multiplication of the five loaves and two fishes such that thousands were able to eat, plus having twelve baskets of leftovers. The miracle was how everyone shared food with another such that all were fed... Only when people live in solidarity with one another, concretized in sharing, can the whole inhabited earth be sustained.

community are not exchanged or sold for profit such as in an entrepreneurial scheme.<sup>1</sup>

5. The Gospel of John is quite different compared with the first three (synoptic gospels). John the apostle presents Jesus who refers to himself as "I am"<sup>2</sup> in many accounts; unlike in the synoptic gospels when Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone of his true identity (Mat 16:20; Mk 8:30; Lk 9:21). There are many explicit Johannine passages that deal with the relationship of Jesus with the believers, such as "The Vine and the Branches (15:5)", and "The Good Shepherd and the Sheep (10:11, 14)". But the researcher prefers to underline chapter 17:1-26, the often-quoted intercessory prayer of Jesus, for himself (vv 1-5), his disciples (vv 6-19), and all believers (vv 20-26). This is one Johannine description of the ecumenicity and unity of the "Believers of Christ" as fervently prayed for by Jesus himself before his arrest. This is a substantial basis for the ecumenical<sup>3</sup> movement, which people who claim to be part of the church should join; a movement that struggles to create an egalitarian community where "unity in diversity" is a working paradox, again, as prayed for by Jesus and illustrated by Paul using the human body (I Cor 12:12-30; Eph 1:22-23).

The next segment will delve into the theological perspective, and from time to time, refer to NT passages cited above and others.

## 2. Theological Perspective

*I believe therefore I seek to understand.*

St. Anselm

The problem of Local Autonomy is a challenge of faith – an issue of ecclesiology to be specific. By ecclesiology we mean the understanding of the nature, being and mission of the church. What we believe about the church (People of God/Body of Christ) determines our perception, attitude and action towards it. Thus, the past, present and future of the church should be understood adequately, if not fully, if one seeks to be faithful as part of the worldwide (or maybe cosmic) **Communion (κοινωνία)**<sup>4</sup> of the people of God, living as **Herald (κρηγμα)** of the Good News of the Reign (kingdom) of God, struggling as **Servant (διακονία)** of the world (humanity and creation) by ushering in justice, righteousness and peace.

While one should invest his intellectual prowess in in-depth historical and theological research to look for answers, it should be admitted that, in due time,

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<sup>1</sup> The earth's bounty should be shared to satisfy the needs of the consuming creatures without the manipulation of capitalist or monopolist. Sadly, there seem to be a "profit driven" atmosphere sweeping among CPBC members and institutions. It seems to show that the style of leadership being perpetuated is profit driven instead of mission and service (*diakonia*). This is without prejudice to honest Christian-business people and small-scale entrepreneurs who should "eat from the sweat of their brow".

<sup>2</sup> The Bread of Life (6:35, 51), The Good Shepherd (10:14), The Resurrection and the life (11:25), The Way and the Truth and the Life (14:6), The Vine (15:5). The definite claims of Jesus to himself are one of the distinct features of John's gospel.

<sup>3</sup> *Ecumenics* is derived from the Gk word *oikoumene*. Its root word is *oikos* which means "one inhabited world", and "one household" (as in economics). Thus, one can reflect that ecumenical movement is an endeavor that seeks to live in a world that people can call home, where sharing of goods and gifts is motivated by the love (peace and justice and righteousness) of One Lord, Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. Bühlmann, 1974. p. 383.

our discoveries, beliefs, and practices will be weighed in and judged by God who alone has the penultimate claim to all the truth there is. This, however, should not make us idle in studying and “leave everything to God’s hand alone”. Our being called is both a privilege and responsibility. The latter includes earnest attempt to know that which we believe, as the quote from a Bishop of Canterbury, in the outset explicates.

The term *church* is probably one among the distorted and misused words in the modern world. When one says church, most likely he means that building in the corner across the street, a sect, a denomination, and the like. In the Philippine setting, a plaza for instance situates different “churches”. Taking Jaro, Iloilo City, as an example, we can enumerate churches located in the vicinity: Jaro Cathedral, Jaro Evangelical Church, Iglesia ni Kristo, Seventh Day Adventists, Full Gospel Church, the Church of the Latter Day Saints, Iloilo Baptist Church, Legacy Baptist Church, and many others. On Sundays (except SDA that gather on Saturdays) we can see the parade of families, lovers and people going to their respective churches. Early in the morning parents would say, “Children, wake up, we will go to church.” In the church people would look at you indifferently if you were not dressed properly in well-pressed “church attire”. One has to behave properly (lots of don’ts) because you are “in the church”. This is a mocking picture of religiosity. There seem to be a boundary or separation between one’s personal life and church life. In other words, most people inadequately understand religion or church, to stay on tract, that these odd realities happen.

To avoid confusion, it is important to underline that the term *church* as used here is “never a building”<sup>1</sup>, but the *People of God*, *Body of Christ*, and other NT terms, as laid in the preceding section. Also, it should not be equated to the *Hiligaynon* word *simbahan*<sup>2</sup>, as a typical Philippine Baptist often does. The author prefers to use *church* interchangeably with *iglesia*<sup>3</sup>, as the latter denotes a similar sense. The CPBC context is the focus of the following discussion.

The Philippine Baptist mission is more than a hundred years old now. Like other denominations, it has strengths and weaknesses, problems and solutions, assets and liabilities. More than all these CPBC faces a challenge of ecclesiology. Before going further, a paragraph from Avery Dulles would be of great help.

In the course of history, there had been many Christian communities known as “churches,” not all of them equally faithful to Christ and to the Spirit. This evident fact has made it necessary to distinguish between the Church as a sociological and as theological entity. From the point of view of sociology, the term “church” would designate any group of men who consider themselves to be, and are considered to be, followers of Christ. Theologically the term “church” refers to the mystery of Christ as realized in the community of those who believe in him and are assembled in his name. To the Christian believer, the church is not purely a human thing; it is not simply of this creation or of this world; rather, it is the work of God, who is present and operative in the Church through the Holy Spirit, in whom Christ continues his saving presence. Sociologically, the Church is a fact of observation, accessible to persons

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<sup>1</sup> See J. D. Douglas et. al. eds., 1962, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> The word *Simbahan* – a place of worship and of sacrificial rites for nature spirits. See N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 40. It appears that it is a misnomer to use *simbahan* to mean *church* in the NT sense; *iglesia* is nearer for the reason that resounds the etymology of the church (ekkleisia).

<sup>3</sup> *Iglesia* is a *Hiligaynon* word transliterated from Spanish.

who do not have faith. Theologically, the Church is a mystery of grace, not knowable independently of faith.<sup>1</sup>

Empirically, most Baptists figure out the Church both sociologically and theologically, but the former is more emphasized than the latter. Though sociological knowledge is important, Avery Dulles states that theological understanding is more vital. The latter would lead one to understand the true essence of the subject at hand.

The task of this paper is to rediscover the Baptist understanding of the Church within the historical development of this faith and its relationship to the New Testament idea of the same. While this attempt is ecclesiological, it is given that it will also seek to find Christological relationship in the process. This is due to the fact that the Church in its strictest sense is understood as a people of God or the Body of Christ. This will be underscored in the light of Philippine Baptist history and New Testament exegesis.

Further, this study also attempts to find a Baptists polity that is faithful to the biblical mandate for the church. To guide us on the meaning of polity, the author adheres to William Roy McNutt's definition:

Polity... that body of the more basic, habitual ways and procedures – all of which are under the guidance of a given creative principle – by means of and in accordance with which a living church (*community of God's people*) manifest its life and projects its ministry.<sup>2</sup>

In a broader sense, polity is to be understood as organization. It is the way we order our resources to enable the church to be and do what God commands. It involves a pattern of relationships: ways of believing and acting, ways of marshalling our forces to fulfill God's mission. It answers the question: How can we best accomplish God's purpose for the church, for CPBC as composed of "churches"? Maring & Hudson candidly explains this:

Many feel that organizational structures conflict with the work of the Holy Spirit, but they need not do so. Organization is essential to the viability of the church and its ministry. God's grace is not bound by human forms; rather, God has condescended to use human instruments to work out divine purposes. The Christian gospel must be incarnated both in individual lives and in corporate forms.

To develop forms consistent with the church's nature and mission, we must have a vision of its purpose. Although it is a social institution, it is more than that by virtue of its divine calling and unique purpose. Created by the Holy Spirit, it is a fellowship which exists for the formation of a people who live by faith in God under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Through its message of reconciliation individuals are transformed and drawn into a nurturing community that witnesses to God's redeeming love and concern for justice, righteousness and peace. The church thus exists as a constant reminder that all human lives are accountable to the sovereign God whose kingdom Jesus came to announce.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church: A Critical Assessment of the Church in All Its Aspects*, Gill and McMillan Ltd, Ireland, 1988, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> William Roy McNutt, *Polity and Practice in Baptist Churches*, Judson Press: Philadelphia, 1935 p. 2. Italics in parenthesis mine.

<sup>3</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 1.

The truth that this passage gives should also be manifest in the life of CPBC as a church. Meaning, CPBC should live what it believes and preaches; its faith should permeate its polity or organizational structure. Thus, it is imperative for CPBC, if it claims to be a church that its structure or communion provides life for the heralding of the Good News and the serving of the world's needs in the name of Jesus as its Savior and Lord. This polity need not be a verbatim copy of American or European polity, as it should respect the Philippine context. Problems arise from a polity that locates authority from the congregation, as the experience of CPBC and other Baptist bodies in the world proved. But this is not enough reason that we should go back to a hierarchical or monolithic structure that this polity was developed against. The Roman church polity had its deleterious outcome in the past that one who knows history should not desire to repeat. "Congregational polity may be more vulnerable to fragmentation, as Baptists history shows, than some others, and it is sometimes less efficient in making decisions and acting of them. On the other hand, it provides a large measure of freedom and flexibility, which allows for adopting new forms to meet changing needs."<sup>1</sup> In other words, cultural considerations should be given importance in formulating a polity for a church to best serve the purpose it is called for. "Particular forms may vary, but basic principles persist"<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the challenge for CPBC is how to reconstruct a polity that is culturally fitting and would best serve the being and mission of the church, while faithful to the imperative of the Gospel. This may sound difficult but not impossible. In this quest, the researcher shares St. Paul's faith when he wrote: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13). Because Baptists are congregational, we could state this in the collective: "We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength."

In the newly built fountain in the front yard of the CPBC headquarters, an inscription is written: *Preaching, Teaching, and Healing*. Sometime in the first quarter of the year 2006, the researcher inquired about this from a CPBC staff, who requested anonymity. The person said that CPBC-related institutions (CPU, IMH, CEH) initiated the project for CPBC. It is intended to improve the area. Why fountain? It is because moving water is a symbol of dynamism, beauty, hope, power and life. No doubt about that. The inscription, however, caught the researcher's attention.

Preaching, Teaching and Healing is a traditional Baptist's conception of the ministry of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> According to the staff inquired from, the proponents of the project see the three terms specialized in the services of the Baptist churches and institutions. Preaching is in the church, Teaching in schools and Healing in the hospitals. This is the very idea behind the existence of three-dimensional ministries located particularly in Iloilo and Capiz. In Iloilo, churches (Jaro Evangelical Church, Baptist Center Church, University Church, and others), schools (Central Philippine University and Learning Centers) and hospital (Iloilo Mission Hospital) are founded. Similarly, Church (Capiz Evangelical Church and others), School (Filamer Christian College and church-based Learning Centers) and hospital (Capiz Emmanuel Hospital) are established in Capiz.

This phenomenon is an offshoot of the schism in America (and also reached the Philippines) that divided the Baptists into two factions. This is the "pure

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<sup>1</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> N. H. Maring, W. S. Hudson, 1991, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. D. J. Diel, Jr., 1975, p. 12, in, N. D. Bunda, 1999, p. 103.

gospel” and “social gospel” controversy.<sup>1</sup> The proponents of the former assert that mission should only save the soul by preaching the “pure gospel” alone; social actions were considered secular. While the latter adheres to the proclamation of the Word, social justice and services are also tasks that true Christians should undertake. This gave birth to “holistic ministry”, as the Gospel is both for the salvation of the soul and the liberation or well being of the body.<sup>2</sup>

Through time, however, the three-dimensional approach seems to have gone away from the idea of “holistic ministry”. This is due to the fact that both the local churches and institutions assert local autonomy at the expense of the whole. The CPBC situation seems to have been fragmented, as if preaching is solely in the local church, teaching exclusively in school and healing only in hospital. This is evident because most of the institutions and “big” churches operate on their legal identity, which is to understand the Church only sociologically and not theologically; the latter is often secondary, worse, forgotten at times. Ideally, the reverse should be the case. The Church must be theologically understood so that its sociological and legal aspects would be fundamentally founded. In other words, preaching, teaching and healing, as conception of the ministry of Jesus is inadequately bearing the nature of the Church as the body of Christ. Added to the error may be varied interpretations of some local leaders whose perspectives are motivated not by biblical imperatives but by personal interests.

There seems to be an overload of discussions about ecclesiology among Protestants and Catholic writers. But the researcher opted to pick three Greek terms for the church, which are deemed needed by CPBC for the time being. This is to understand the Church as a **κοινωνία** (communion), **κηρυγμα** (herald/proclamation), **διακονία** (service). The nuances of these Greek terms may not be fully represented by their English equivalents. But we will try our best to explain them in the process. Unlike “preaching, teaching, healing” which are seemingly interpreted independent from each other, the former will be discussed how they relate to each other as the whole of the act of God in Jesus Christ. They are only terms for the sake of naming them; in essence they are one because Jesus Christ is one. Wherever he went, communion, proclamation and service were one with him and in his community of followers.

Before discussing these three attributes of the church, it is deemed fitting to devote a segment on the organic relationship between the Church and Jesus Christ. Because “the Reign<sup>3</sup> (kingdom) of God” is the central theme of Jesus’ message, this will also be discussed. Because the Holy Spirit plays a vital role in the formation of this community, she would also be given due importance.

## 2. 1. Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Reign Of God And The Church

Much has been written about Jesus Christ and the Church. In fact, there is an overload of literature about this subject both by Catholic and Protestant authors. One cannot set aside cultic and sectarian writers who also have scholarly attempts on the subject. But the researcher finds substance and precision in the work of Hans Küng. In preceding segments few quotes have

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in chapter I, it was on this issue that CPBC and Doane Baptist had schism and parted ways.

<sup>2</sup> See N. D. Bunda, 1999. p. 102-103.

<sup>3</sup> “The *basileia* (meaning ‘kingdom’ or better, because of the misleading associations, ‘reign’) of God...” See H. Küng, 1967, p. 71. To accommodate the “feminist” readers, the author also prefers “reign” than “kingdom” due to the mannish connotation of the latter.



been taken from his book, *The Church*<sup>1</sup>. On the relationship of Christ and the Church, from the same, he eloquently wrote:

Christ is present in the church. The crucified Jesus is present in the Church as the risen Lord. Christ does not exist without the Church; the Church does not exist without the Christ. Christ is for the Church not only an event in a constantly receding past, nor only an event in the future, whether near or distant. He who is the *Kyrios* (Lord) over all humankind, whether they know it or not, is present in his Church. The Church does not derive its life only from the work which Christ did and finished in the past, nor only from the expected future consummation of his work, but from the living and efficacious presence of Christ in the present. The preaching of the Gospel is not merely an account of the historical saving act of God in Christ; Christ himself is at work in the word which is preached. Where two or three are gathered in his name, there he is in the midst of them (Mat 18:20); he is with us all until the end of the world (28:20). It is not the fruits of his life on earth, not the significance of his historical existence which is at work in the Church; he himself in person works in and through the church, and all its existence is based upon and directed towards him.<sup>2</sup>

This is very disturbing, one must admit. Most of the time, we hear some Baptist preachers say, "The church continues the work of Jesus Christ" or "We should continue what Jesus and the early believers started". For Küng, that is not the case; instead, "Christ is present in the entire life of the Church".<sup>3</sup> This means there is continuity between then and now. There is no break or gap between the experiences of the first century and the modern day believers. Apparently, the two Matthean accounts in the quote above are made lucid in the verse, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and forever" (Heb 13:8). A Swedish Baptist minister, in a sermon deduces:

He is no longer only the innocent suffering Lamb... He is not anymore the vulnerable baby laying in a manger in the stable of sheep. He is the Lion of Judah. He is the King, He is the Lord of Lords. He is still a servant but also the King of Kings. This is our Jesus in the future and of tomorrow. He will be the one who already for our daily life promised us: "I will be with you always to the end of the ages".<sup>4</sup>

Again, this is disturbing. Imagine Christ is really present in the church! This is breathtaking! Whatever that means must be reckoned with by those who claim being part of the church. Now, the question of the organic relationship between local communities that are scattered in terms of geopolitical location is an inevitable puzzle. About this, Dr. Küng jots down a clear-cut explanation:

Since Christ is entirely present in every congregation of worship, every congregation of worship held by the community is in the fullest sense God's ecclesia, Christ's body. The individual local community is of course not simply *the ecclesia*, *the* body of Christ, since there are other communities which are just as much God's ecclesia and Christ body.

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<sup>1</sup> This is Küng's doctoral dissertation on Karl Barth.

<sup>2</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 305.

<sup>4</sup> Olof Lindström, *Jesus is the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever*, in, Rudy Bernal, Olof Lindström eds., *FROM MY PULPIT: Messages For Our Time by Filipino and Swedish Preachers*, Iloilo People's Forum: Iloilo City, Philippines, 2003. p. 56.

But each is truly God's *ecclesia* and Christ body because the Lord is present in each, truly, wholly and undivided. And because it is the same Lord present in each community, these communities do not exist side by side in isolation, nor even in a loose federation, but they are all together in the same Spirit the one *ecclesia* of God, the one body of Christ, and through *koinonia*, *communio*, fellowship with him they are *koinonia*, *communio* and fellowship with one another.<sup>1</sup>

It is surprising how accurate this paragraph is to the CPBC situation. Seemingly, we have inadequately understood the encompassing scope of God's *ecclesia* and body of Christ. Yes, we are a Convention, but after almost seventy years, this is still a loose federation of churches, which, in some extreme cases, have isolationist tendency. Further, CPBC insufficiently grasped the inseparable link between union with Christ and communion with one another<sup>2</sup> that transcends geopolitical limits.

While the Christ, for Küng is entirely present in the church, also Christ is not wholly contained in the church.<sup>3</sup> This seems contradictory, but Küng's justification is convincing.

The New Testament statements about the body of Christ which refer to body *and* head are concerned not so much with the Church as the body, but with Christ as the head of the Church. In Colossians and Ephesians the accent falls not only on the church as the body which represent Christ, but on Christ as the living and active head of the church; any reflection on the Church as the body is made only to stress the unity of the body, given by the head through the Spirit.

True, there is an inner unity between Christ and the Church, but the relationship can never be reconstructed to make the Church the head of the body, its own head. In this sense there can never be autocephalous or autonomous Churches. Christ gives himself to the Church, but he is never wholly contained in it. Christ is the head. The concept of the head always carries overtones of the ruler. The body can only exist total dependence on him. It is of vital importance for the Church that it allows Christ to be its head; otherwise it cannot be his body.

Despite his continuing presence in the Church Christ is and remains the Lord of the Church. To develop the idea simply from organic images (head – body; vine – branches, etc.) will give a one-sided view and overlooks the fact that any biblical image, if taken in isolation and made autonomous, becomes false. The organic images of the relationship between Christ and the Church must always be complemented and corrected by the personal images (bridegroom – bride; man – wife) for the living relationship involved includes a personal encounter. The Church receives from Christ its life and at the same time his promises and his direction, and *therefore* its life. The Church is and remains bound to Christ as its norm. Its whole autonomy consists in this heteronomy.<sup>4</sup>

What is given utmost importance here is the headship or Lordship of Christ over the Church. Rev. Elmo D. Familiaran affirms this in his essay cited in chapter 2. His view of consensus is to seek the "mind of Christ", in so doing the Church

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<sup>1</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 1 John 4:7-12. This passage plainly sees the organic connection between the love for God and brother (neighbor in Gospels). Separating the two or emphasizing one over the other corrupts the whole.

<sup>3</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 306.

<sup>4</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 306-307.

and Churches find a common ground. This is also implicit in the quote from Dr. Diel in the beginning of this section. The NT, being the inspired record of the concrete event should be the foundation and substance to which the Church must be faithful. The affirmation “Christ is the Lord of the Church” means the latter should submit thoroughly to the will of the former. The Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians admonishes:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. Eph. 5:21-30

Here, the organic relationship is illustrated in personal manner (wife-husband). The idea of personal encounter and fidelity of both parties to each other is symbiotic. The wife should submit to a loving husband, not to a battering and philandering one. Thus, the idea of submission should not be seen as subordination or inferiority (as some women openly oppose) but unity. This notion of symbiosis, for Fray Carlos Mesters echoes the sixth commandment (Ex 20:14) of Moses in the OT: “Thou shalt not commit adultery”.

This commandment wants that the liberating relationship of the egalitarian society penetrate the most intimate nucleus of human relationships: marriage. Discrimination in all forms ought to be eliminated from marriage. For as long as relationship of equality is not established in the man-woman relationship, God’s design will have a long way before being achieved on earth.<sup>1</sup>

This is leading us to put in focus the reign of God in relation to Jesus and the Church. Again, for Alfred Loisy: “Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, and what came was the church.”<sup>2</sup> It is also interesting to note that Jesus the preacher, after Easter, became Jesus the preached, the bearer of the message becomes the central substance of the message.<sup>3</sup> This may look complicated, so it will be discussed systematically.

The central theme in the proclamation of Jesus is the reign of God. His parables, individual and crowd encounter and others were all geared towards one thing – the reign of God. As to what this is, Dr. Küng elaborates in a detailed explanation:

The “reign of God” means (a) the eschatological, that is the fully realized, *final and absolute reign of God at the end of time, which as an even is now “at hand”* (Mk 1:15): it “has come upon you” (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20), it

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<sup>1</sup> Fray Carlos Mesters, *God’s Design: God’s Presence Amidst an oppressed People*, St. Paul Publications: Makati, Philippines, 1989. p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> A. Loisy, *L’Evangile et l’Eglise*, Paris 1902, p. 111, in, H. Küng, 1967, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 115.

will “come” (Lk 22:18; cf. Mk 14:25, Mt. 26:29), “come with power” (Mk 9:1). The concept is nowhere defined by Jesus; he assumes a knowledge and understanding of it and interprets it in his own way. ... (b) it could not be brought about or achieved by faithful adherence to the law; it appears as a powerful *sovereign act of God himself*. There is no one who can invite himself to the eschatological banquet. The Father issues the invitation. It is he who makes the seed grow, by his power and his grace. It is *his reign*. “Thy kingdom come”: in these words man may pray (Mt. 6:10; Lk 11:2). He may cry to God day and night (Lk 18:7); he may seek God’s kingdom (Mt 6:33; Lk 12:31), he may seek to enter it (Lk 13:24; cf. Mt. 7:13); she may prepare herself in readiness like the wise virgins (Mt 25:1-13) and the wakeful servants (Lk 12:35-37; cf. Mt 24:44). But it is not man, it is God who gives the kingdom (Lk 12:31). He “appoints” it (Lk 22:29 f.) and decides whose it shall be (Mt. 5:3, 10; cf. Lk 6:20; Mk 10:14). He is unshakable and unfathomable, sovereign and free, the God who acts like a king, acting in fulfilment of his unconditional free will. It is not man but God himself who administers his rule in this way. Man cannot storm himself into the kingdom of God, he can only receive it like a child (cf. Mk 10:15). ... (d) ... is a *saving event for sinners*. Jesus’ call to repentance does not invoke, as John the Baptist did, God’s anger, but God’s mercy. The message of the reign of God is not one of threats and coming disaster, but of salvation, peace, joy. It is positive, not a negative message, an εὐ-αγγέλιον (**good news**) (Mk 1:15), not a δὺς-αγγέλιον (**bad news**).<sup>1</sup>

Another NT scholar illustrates the continuity of the theme of the reign of God from the OT to the NT, from Israel to the Church. R. Schnackenburg writes:

The purely religious character of the reign of God is not in dispute. It is based on the most firmly authenticated sources of Old Testament belief: “These texts show us that Israel experienced Yahweh’s kingship in the historical action of its God. This is no ‘kingdom’ and no ‘sphere of dominion’ but a kingly leadership which develop from Yahweh as King actively “rules”, must be kept in mind through the whole growth in the *basileia* theme. God’s kingship in the Bible is characterized not by latent authority but by the exercise of power, not by an office but a function.”<sup>2</sup>

Having ventured on the meaning of the reign of God, we can now go back on track: what is the relationship of the reign of God to the Church? Definitely, the Church is not the reign of God. For Dr. Küng, “The identification of God’s reign with the Church can very easily lead to *dissociation*.”<sup>3</sup> For Küng, “*Ecclesia* is the work of man; but *basileia* is the work of God.”<sup>4</sup> Here, the writer begs to disagree with him. Of course, the role of man in the formation of the Church is indispensable, but that is only secondary to the work of the Holy Spirit which enabled women and men since time to respond and do the will of God. Thus, both the Church (*ecclesia*) and the reign of God (*basileia*) are work of God through the Holy Spirit, while making use of people for God’s purpose. This bridges us to the role of the Holy Spirit as the manifest presence of Jesus Christ in and through the Church as it seeks to serve or herald God’s reign.

<sup>1</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 75-79. Bold in parenthesis mine.

<sup>2</sup> R. Schnackenburg, in, H. Küng, 1967, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> See H. Küng, 1967, p. 131 ff.

<sup>4</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 92. Cf. A. Dulles, 1988, p. 103.

The theology of the Holy Spirit, or *pneumatology* is not so much one specific chapter of Christian theology as an essential dimension of every theological view of the church.<sup>1</sup> The researcher shares the opinion of Rev. Samuel Fabila: "Writing about the Holy Spirit is not an easy task. It may drive you to fall into the trap of being too doctrinal or highly experiential".<sup>2</sup> Though pneumatology is not given specific attention in theological literatures, it is interesting to note that it is inseparably linked with almost all topics in theology. Thus, the Holy Spirit "blows where it pleases" independent of writers' rational and systematic focus.

In the figures of the OT, the link between *dabhar* (word) and *ruach* (wind, breath, spirit);<sup>3</sup> this is *pneuma* in Greek. Both terms could mean *wind, breath, spirit*. It was the "Spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2). In Gen 2:7 "the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." The same wind that blew and made a vast army out of the valley of dry bones in the vision of prophet Ezekiel (37); David prays "take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Ps 51:11). Israel "vexed God's Holy Spirit," though He had "put His Holy Spirit within" Moses, Israel's leader, and "the Spirit of Jehovah" had "caused Israel to rest" in the promised land after his wilderness wanderings (Isa 63:11-12,14); is the same ever-present Spirit that the prophet Joel prophesied to be poured out on all people, making sons and daughters prophesy, old men dream dreams, and young men see visions (2:28ff).<sup>4</sup>

In the NT it is the same *pneuma* that made Mary conceive (Lk 1:35); the same Spirit that Jesus claimed to be upon him as he read Isaiah's scroll (Lk 4:18-19; cf. Isa 61:1-2); the same wind that "blows where it pleases" (Jn 3: 8a); the same wind that rushed and rested on the heads of the believers like tongues of fire during the Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4); the same wind that gave gifts to the Church (1Cor 12, Rom 12:3-7); the same wind that sweeps through sharing community the Jerusalem believers had (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-36); the same eternal breath, wind and Spirit that sweeps through the life and service of the church then, now and in the future. Thus the Church is the work of the Spirit of God. Everything we have happens and is taking place because of the Spirit of God. On the relationship of the Holy Spirit and the Church, Boris Bobrinsky wrote:

Christian worship is worship in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:23-24), both through the strength of the Spirit, who works in the church, and through the purpose of this worship, which is to make us bearers of the Spirit (*pneumatophoro*), transformed by and in the Spirit into new people till we attain "the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13), who both humbled himself in the form he took and was exalted (Phil 2:6-11).<sup>5</sup>

Stated simply, the Holy Spirit takes a central role in the works of God: creation, redemption, sanctification, and finally the consummation of the reign of God. Viewed as negative, this too, is very alarming. Using the "Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-26)" as basis for judgment, many of the churches and individuals would

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Lossky, et. al. eds., *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, WCC Publications: Geneva, Switzerland, 1991, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Fabila, *The Holy Spirit in the Church and the World*, N. D. Bunda, et. al. Eds., *Journeys in Faith and Ministry*, IATS, Inc.: Iloilo City, Philippines, 2003, vo.1, 2003, p. 212

<sup>3</sup> N. Lossky, et. al. eds., 1991, p. 470.

<sup>4</sup> The use of Spirit in the OT is abundant, but the researcher preferred to highlight brief accounts that would serve the desired purpose.

<sup>5</sup> Boris Bobrinsky, *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, in, N. Lossky, et. al. eds., 1991, p. 472.

be found wanting. Jesus himself taught, “By their fruit you will recognize them” (Mat 7:20). Apparently, it is not enough that an individual calls oneself Christian or a group calls themselves church. But “their spirit should be tested to see whether they are from God (1Jn 4:1-3)”. For the true Spirit this is vindication; for the true Church, a fountain of joy and hope despite the turmoil that Church and the world are in.

Time now to highlight respectively these three and their relationship with each other as they describe the nature of Jesus Christ as a people of God or Body of Christ. The researcher also attempts to find “contextual expressions”<sup>1</sup> that a “*conscientized* Christian”<sup>2</sup> could utilize in communicating a truly liberating message, deeply rooted in the NT while adaptive to the Philippine situation.

As explained in the outset of these segment, the problem of Local Autonomy is a challenge of ecclesiology. The notion of the *church* has been reconstructed. The relationship between the Church and Jesus Christ (reign of God, Holy Spirit) was also discussed. The discussions, however, are too broad to meet the desired end – a Baptist ecclesiology that would resolve the issue of Local Autonomy. Unless a specific ecclesiology that is rooted in the Word of God is found and fitting to the context it is intended, this endeavor becomes meaningless. In the following lines the writer attempts to glean ecclesiological models or paradigms that are deemed fitting to CPBC’s situation as it seeks to be faithful to be a church of Jesus Christ: celebrating a communion, heralding the Gospel of the reign of God, and serving the needs of the least.

As laid out earlier, *preaching, teaching, healing*, are quite inadequate in expressing the ministry of Jesus. Historically, this theory has proven itself wanting and unfit in the Philippine Baptist context. It is so because CPBC as *churches* has somehow become fragmented when in the first place it should have been united. Looking into CPBC, one cannot miss this discrepancy given the “fruit” of its ministry. It is an alarming fact and scandalous scenario that many of the “big churches”, for instance in the provinces of Iloilo, Negros, Capiz, Aklan and Romblon, have undergone splits.<sup>3</sup> Some of these churches, against the counsel of some CPBC officers, brought their cases to civil courts. Few of them were divided not only once but several times. Somehow this has become a chronic problem and a vicious cycle – a scandal on the true nature and purpose of the Church as People of God and Body of Christ.

Upon careful research and analysis of the CPBC situation, given the symptoms that its deep-seated problem manifest, the researcher came up with an alternative ecclesiology. As stated earlier, this ecclesiology is defined using three Greek terms: **κοινωνια** (Communion), **κηρυγμα** (Herald), **διακονια** (Servant). Again, their English equivalent might not fully express their original nuance, but

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<sup>1</sup> See Genaro D. Diesto, Jr., *Contextualization: An Agenda for the Churches*, in N. D. Bunda, et. al. Eds., 2003, vo.1, 2003, p. 84-149.

<sup>2</sup> See Jose M. de Mesa, Lode L. Wostyn, *Doing Christology: The Re-Appropriation of a Tradition*, Claretian Publications: Quezon City, Philippines, 1990. p. 60-62

<sup>3</sup> In a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted in December 13, 2005, with the CPBC Executive Staff, the following came up. Local churches that have been into conflict and ended up splitting are the following. 1. Negros. (Bacolod Evangelical Church, Bacolod Baptist Church, Bacolod Christian Church); (Cosmopolitan Evangelical Church, Bacolod Christian Center); Cadiz, Bethany, Canlaon, (Dangkalan First Baptist Church, Dangkalan, Inc.) Escalante, Sagay, La Carlota, Hinigaran, Bago); 2. Iloilo. (Carles, Estancia, Batad, Ajuy, Banate, Btc. Viejo, Potolan (Rizal Baptist Church, Rizal Fundasyon), Calinog, Lambunao (RGMBC, Rocky Hill), Cabatuan (Ito), Leon, (San Miguel Baptist Church, Langka Baptist Church), (Highway Evangelical Church, Koinonia Baptist Church, (Baptist Center Church, New Testament Baptist Church); 3. Capiz. (Capiz Evangelical Church, Capiz Christian Church), (Pontevedra Baptist Church, Soblangon Baptist Church, Rock Baptist Church-Maprangala group); 4. Aklan. Laserna Baptist Church; 5. Romblon. Odiongan Baptist Church, Inc., Odiongan Baptist Convention, Inc.; 6. Antique. Sibalom Children’s Center, Belison Children’s Center.

that should not discourage us from looking to the Scriptures for justification. Hence, the Word (Heb. *dabhar*, Gk. *logos*) as recorded in the Scripture and witnessed to by the Spirit (Heb. *ruach*, Gk. *pneuma*) is our authority over faith and practice. Like the early Baptist who wrote down *Confessions of Faith*, this attempt also seeks to be a guide to understand the Scripture, not to replace it. The time is ripe to discuss this ecclesiology.

## 2.2. COMMUNION (κοινωνία)

Communion is frequently used to mean the Eucharist, or to be loyal to protestant terminology, the Lord's Supper. Interestingly, Jesus shared meals with his disciples, tax collectors, prostitutes, sinners, and people from different walks of life. Jesus loves to be with the people, regardless of their earthly condition, which to the religious (especially Pharisees) during his time is a ground for discrimination. Jesus was an irresistible guest. At times he didn't need to be invited, he invited himself, like in the case of Zacchaeus the tax collector (Lk 19:5). It is also astounding to note that Jesus the guest became, in most occasions, the host. He would usually lead the "breaking of bread". So for a fact, Jesus, in many occasions, shared meal with different people. Interestingly, the meal shared by Jesus, was not an end in itself (just how the gluttons practiced) but a beginning of a new life. The meal shared with Zacchaeus resulted into the salvation of his whole household as Jesus proclaimed, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (19:9-10). This account clearly convey that the meal Jesus and Zacchaeus partook was more than food and wine, though they are important for physical nourishment. Jesus did not only feed the body but the whole being. In the process the squat publican stood tall because he became Jesus' recipient of recreation; making the sinner, by God's grace, part of the New Creation (2Cor 5:17). Thus, the Lord Supper is not just a meal, as most people erroneously interpret. This does not mean that the importance of the meal is set aside, but to underline the danger of missing that which is elemental. To see this clearly let us move into Gospel accounts when Jesus instituted the Supper.

The four Evangelists have their respective accounts of the Meal (Matt 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-22; John 13:21-30). A close reading of these accounts reveals that Jesus was not at all taking about the bread and the fruit of the vine. These elements were only referred to as metaphors of what Jesus intended to convey: the cup – new covenant in his blood, the bread – his body. The notion of *Incarnation* is given substance here. The phrase "do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19b) exemplifies this. This means Jesus is now entrusting the work, he pioneered with his body for people to come into a new covenant relationship with God, to his disciples. Thus "do this in remembrance of me" is not only about dining with each other, but an imperative for the disciples to pursue that which Jesus taught, practiced and about to die for – the reign of the God offered to all people to come. The parable of the banquet (Mat 22:1-14; Lk 14:16-23) is a picturesque description of how this communion is offered freely to all. Those who were on the list did not wish to come because they had other matters to attend. So the Master extended the invitation to anybody: "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" (Lk14:21b) to share the feast of the Master. Consequently, the Meal instituted by Jesus is the consummation of all other meals he shared with various people, a feast freely inviting anybody to be friends

of Risen Lord (Jn 15:13-15; 21:5). Thus, the Church is a communion openly offered to anybody to share the new covenant relationship with the Lord.

At the outset of this segment was stated the frequency of equating Communion with the Lord's Supper. It is true as long as the latter is understood as a metaphor of Jesus command to do the task he taught, lived and died for. To take the Lord's Supper as a mere meal is to miss the essence of the form. Further, it becomes clear that the Lord's Supper is more of a pre-Easter Commissioning encounter that later Jesus announced explicitly in the Great Commission (Mat 28:18-20) after the resurrection.

This *communion* is made manifest in the life together of the Jerusalem believers. For clarity let us state in verbatim the two Lukan parallel accounts.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. Acts 4:32-37

The writer finds it disturbing how Commentaries have done injustice<sup>1</sup> to this passage. Adam Clarke's Commentary, for instance interprets:

[And had all things common] Perhaps this has not been well understood. At all the public religious feasts in Jerusalem, there was a sort of community of goods. No man at such times hired houses or beds in Jerusalem; all were lent gratis by the owners: Yoma, fol. 12. Megill. fol. 26. The same may be well supposed of their ovens, cauldrons, tables, spits, and other utensils. Also, provisions of water were made for them at the public expense. Shekalim, cap. 9. See Lightfoot here. Therefore a sort of community of goods was no strange thing at Jerusalem, at such times as these. It appears, however, that this community of goods was carried further; for we are informed, Acts 2:45, that they sold their possessions and their goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need. But this probably means that, as in consequence of this remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God; and their conversion, they were detained longer at Jerusalem than they had originally intended, they formed a kind of community for the time being, that none might suffer want on the present occasion; as no doubt the unbelieving Jews,

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<sup>1</sup> See H. C. Vedder, 1891, p. 14-15.



who were mockers, Acts 2:13, would treat these new converts with the most marked disapprobation.

That an absolute community of goods never obtained in the church at Jerusalem unless for a very short time, is evident from the apostolical precept, 1 Cor 16:1, etc., by which collections were ordered to be made for the poor; but, if there had been a community of goods in the church there could have been no ground for such recommendations as these, as there could have been no such distinction as rich and poor, if everyone, on entering the church, gave up all his goods to a common stock. Besides, while this sort of community lasted at Jerusalem, it does not appear to have been imperious upon any; persons might or might not thus dispose of their goods, as we learn from the case of Ananias, Acts 5:4. Nor does it appear that what was done at Jerusalem at this time obtained in any other branch of the Christian church; and in this, and in Acts 5, where it is mentioned, it is neither praised nor blamed. We may therefore safely infer, it was something that was done at this time, on this occasion, through some local necessity, which the circumstances of the infant church at Jerusalem might render expedient for that place and on that occasion only.<sup>1</sup>

It seems to appear that this interpretation is telling us that community life of Jerusalem believers was interim and was not sustained. Implied, it should not be followed. I beg to disagree with the above-mentioned comment that "where it is mentioned, such community of goods is neither praised nor blamed". First, it was a spontaneous response of the faithful converts. Second, it is absurd to make as basis latter developments of Christianity. It is noteworthy that as Christianity became institutionalized in the latter period, the church became more corrupt. Those who wanted to reform or purify the church would always go back to early NT events especially Acts for guidance and authority. "If we look at such event as mere coincidence, it is as if we told ourselves we are eliminating the Ten Commandments because they failed in history. The Sermon on the Mount failed too, but this does not deprive both of their normative character"<sup>2</sup> over our life together as Body of Christ and/or People of God. "So that none of them would be in need", J. P. Miranda justifies:

Of course, the first Christians were also influenced by Jesus' example and personal conduct... As can be seen in John 12:6, 13:29, and Luke 8:1-3, Judas "carried the purse," so they had everything in common and each received according to his need.<sup>3</sup>

The notion of the communion however is not only limited in the economic life of the Church, it is very important aspect of peoples' lives. This communion is not an isolationist community like how the Jewish sect of Essenes and medieval Monastics lived. The Church, let us take note, is "called out" in order to be "sent out". Stated simply, this communion is not an end but a means of something, of a mission that the Church is called for. This design is deeply rooted in the OT tradition when Yahweh called the children of Israel out of Egypt to be a light among the nations. Therefore, the Church as a communion should live not for

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by BibleSoft.com

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. P. Miranda, 1981, p. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> J. P. Miranda, 1981, p. 18.

itself, but for Jesus Christ who has the message to proclaim, a mission to fulfill. What could this mean to CPBC as churches?

This mission is a mandate of God who had become incarnate in Jesus Christ. As laid earlier, Jesus Christ is present in the Church “whenever there are two or three gathered in His name” “until the end of the world. This mission is imperative for the Church that “even the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Mat 16:18b). Thus, in the light of God’s mission, the Church is mandated to properly address its conflict so that it would not be “a house divided against itself” (Lk 11:17) that could not stand. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, teaches to settle matters quickly (Mat 5:23-26); and Paul strongly admonishes “for believers to bring their disputes among the saints for judgment and never to the ‘ungodly judges’” (1 Cor 6:1-8). If we are to draw the connecting line among these NT imperatives, we will see that they all go back to the ultimate purpose of the Church – God’s mission. While the Church is a human entity, it lives because of the mission of God. This is the basis of our judgment. A group that confesses to be a Church but does not endeavor to do God’s mission is not a Church at all, but guilty of what Jesus said: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven (Mat 7:21).” These are biblical facts that CPBC has to reckon with if it truly seeks to be faithful Churches.

This is bringing us to the second aspect of this proposed ecclesiology – to see the Church as messenger of the Gospel, to employ a preferred term, a Herald.

### 2.3. HERALD (κηρυγμα)

The Church as we have discussed, is the community of the people of God, the body in which Jesus Christ dwells by the Holy Spirit. The church is not the reign of God, but the latter it seeks to proclaim. This for H. Küng,

The Church is not a preliminary stage, but an *anticipatory sign* of the definitive reign of God: a sign of the reality of the reign of God already present in Jesus Christ, a sign of the coming completion of the reign of God. The meaning of the Church does not reside in itself, in what it is, but in what it is moving towards. It is the reign of God which the Church hopes for, bears witness to, proclaims. It is the not bringer or bearer of the reign of God which is to come and is at the same time already present, but its voice, its announcer, its *herald*...<sup>1</sup>

This notion is witnessed to both in the OT and NT. The idea of the “missionary people” was already evident in Israel, and to this the great prophets; especially Isaiah directed their appeal.

Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.  
See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the LORD rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you. (Isa 60:1-2)

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<sup>1</sup> H. Küng, 1967, p. 135.

So, later on Jesus commandingly proclaimed:

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matt 5:14-16

Both these passages are addressed to the people of God or to the disciples and believers of Jesus. These denote enormous responsibility for the Church. Again, the Church as a communion is not an end unto itself, but commanded by the Lord to be light to illuminate the darkened world. *Light* is a very meaningful and relevant analogy for the purpose of the Church as a Herald.

Numerous theologians have a great deal of expositions about this. Avery Dulles has a notable research of several positions. As introduction, the Cardinal declares:

The Church as a Herald – The mission of the Church is to proclaim that which it has heard, believed, and been commissioned to proclaim... This model is *kerygmatic*, for it looks upon the Church as a herald – one who receives an official message with the commission to pass it on. The basic image is that of the herald of a king who comes to proclaim a royal decree in a public square.<sup>1</sup>

This type of ecclesiology is radically centered upon Jesus Christ and on the Bible as the primary witness to him. It sees the task of the Church primarily in terms of proclamation. In the words of Richard McBrien, who splendidly summarizes the outlook of this ecclesiology:

The mission of the Church is one of proclamation of the Word of God to the whole world. The Church cannot hold itself responsible for the failure of men to accept God's Word; it has only to proclaim it with integrity and persistence. All else is secondary. The Church is essentially a kerygmatic community which holds aloft, through the preached Word, the wonderful deeds of God in past history, particularly his mighty act in Jesus Christ. The community itself happens wherever the Spirit breathes, wherever the Word is proclaimed and accepted in faith. The Church is event, a point of encounter with God.<sup>2</sup>

The chief proponent of this type of ecclesiology in the twentieth century is Karl Barth, who draws abundantly on Paul, Luther, and others. In his *Church Dogmatics* Barth has a long discussion of the word of God and its relationship to the Church. He warns the Church against the domesticating of the Bible that it would cease to be ruled by the Bible. The relative distance between the Bible and the Church, he says, makes it possible for the Bible to testify against the Church. For the Church to be a place in which the word of God is truly heard, it is necessary that the word should never be imprisoned or bracketed by the Church. The word of God is not a substance immanent in the Church, but rather an event that takes place as often as God addresses his people and is believed. The Church therefore is actually constituted by the word being proclaimed and

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<sup>1</sup> A. Dulles, 1988, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> R. P. McBrien, *Church: The Continuing Quest*, Newman: New York, 1970, p. 11.

faithfully heard. The Church is the congregation that is gathered together by the word – a word that ceaselessly summons it to repentance and reform.<sup>1</sup>

In Barth's address to the first assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948, he powerfully combined the notions of witness and event:

In the final period the congregation is the event which consist in gathering together (*congregatio*) of those men and women (*fidelium*) whom the living Lord Jesus Christ chooses and calls to be witnesses of the victory He has already won, and heralds of its future manifestation.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, R. Bultmann, a distinguished protestant theologian and NT scholar, insists that the word of God is not a set of timeless ideas but a concrete event, an encounter. Further, the word is eschatological occurrence – that is to say, it makes God present here and now, giving life to those who accept it and death to those who refuse. Human propositions can become the word of God, he says only in proclamation. In the preaching of the kerygma, the word is authoritative, it becomes event, and the event is Jesus Christ.

The Word of God and the Church are inseparable. The Church is constituted by the Word of God as the congregation of the elect, and the proclamation of the Word is not a statement of abstract truths, but a proclamation that is duly authorized and therefore needs bearers with proper credentials (2 Cor 5:18 f.). Just as the Word of God becomes His Word only in event, so the Church is really the church when it too becomes an event...<sup>3</sup>

The common denominator, despite the slight differences in nuances of these quotations from famous theologians and scholars, is that the Church is completely local, Jesus Christ is totally present in the Church, and the Church is commanded to proclaim the Gospel of the reign of God.

True, the Church itself is only an instrument, and behind and within the Church is the living presence of Christ. "But the point here is that we find it almost impossible to distinguish in our lives the influence of the Church and the influence of Christ. The two, in fact, are one; the Church is the Body that needs Christ for its divine life, Christ the divine life that needs the Church for His medium of manifestation."<sup>4</sup>

Having said the biblical and theological foundations of this model, we can now infer on how could this mean into the life of CPBC claiming as Churches. First, "Church in the NT renders Gk. *ekklēsia*, which mostly means a local congregation of Christians and never a building".<sup>5</sup> So the widespread notion among CPBC constituents of Church as building should be reconstructed. The modern connotation of Church as a mere edifice (people is secondary) completely betrays the NT provisions. Second, because Church is never a building, our local members extravagant focus on constructions and maintenance of a "comfortable structure"<sup>6</sup> and procurement of appliances must be challenged

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<sup>1</sup> See K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III, T. and T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1936, p. 298-300.

<sup>2</sup> K. Barth's Amsterdam Address, in, *The Universal Church in God's Design*, Vol. 1 of *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, Harper & Brothers: New York, 1949, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> R. Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Methodology*, SCM: London, 1958, p. 82-83.

<sup>4</sup> H. Cook, 1958, p. 42-43.

<sup>5</sup> J. D. Douglas et. al. eds., 1962, p. 228.

<sup>6</sup> "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." (Mat 8:20; Lk 9:58). As a reflection, this saying as uttered by Jesus could mean two things: (1) Kenosis – he totally emptied himself of any

and reconsidered in the light of the NT as authority. Third, in the light of what has been laid that the Church is a herald, there should be a shift from “playing safe” and “escapist” tendencies to active involvement in the proclamation of the reign of God, characterized by active love: justice, peace and righteousness.

This ecclesiology, like others, however, cannot stand alone. Its emphasis on proclaiming the word of God is extremely important, but it runs the risk of substituting words for action.<sup>1</sup> To help this model stand, let us proceed with the third ecclesiology – the Church as Servant.

## 2.4. SERVANT (διακονία)

The third aspect of this proposed ecclesiology is to venture on the vocation of the Church as a servant. The Greek term *διακονία*, as used in Acts 6:1-5 originally refers to the task of waiting on the table. This was a sensible and spontaneous response of the apostles to the growing need of the communion. The disciples heed the call of the gentile widows to be given just treatment in the distribution of goods, especially food. Basically, the essential point here is not only the goods but also justice. This event echoes the call of the prophet Isaiah to “Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (1:17). Thus the Church since taking the image of the people of God in the OT, and Body of Christ in the NT, was always a servant. This is so because Yahweh in the OT and Jesus Christ in the NT were both servants of the people.

Per-Axel Sverker wrote an interesting exegesis entitled “Woman and the Bible.” In one segment he stated: “The Hebrew word for *helper* is *ezer*. In Genesis alone, the word is used three hundred plus times. More than two hundred of these usages referred to Yahweh as the helper (*ezer*) of Israel. Later on Yahweh commissioned Israel. In the lyrical pronouncement of Isaiah, it says:

This is what God the LORD says – he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Isa 42:5-7

In the NT Jesus was very explicit about this when his disciples were pushing each other aside, selfishly wanting to be great in the kingdom. For clarity an account by Mark is needed.

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whomever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of

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form of attachment; (2) Urgency and Priority – The proclamation of God’s reign is far more important than staying at home comfortably away from the strains and toils mission might entail. It seems to appear, that for one who earnestly seek to follow Jesus, a house is “a prison” cell that would hinder mobility in going and heralding the Gospel. Lest we forget, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Mat 6:33).”

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Anthony Marinelli, *The Word Made Flesh: An Overview of the Catholic Faith*, St. Pauls Phil.: Makati, Philippines, 1999, p. 146.

Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mk 10:41-45

This teaching must have stunned the power-hungry disciples. This is a complete reversal of the standard of the world.<sup>1</sup> In an interview, Rev. Jerson Narciso said, "The measure of greatness for the world is the number of persons that serve you. The measure of greatness for the Church is the number of persons that you serve."<sup>2</sup> Being a servant here is not a mere option, but an imperative. A true follower of Jesus, or a true Church (to be collective) "cannot not serve"! And service here is genuinely offered to the least or the poor<sup>3</sup>; unlike the attitude of the "*sipsip*"<sup>4</sup> who would tail the rich and powerful like dogs for their selfish ends.

Service for the poor should not be confused with alms or dole-out giving, as usually thought of and practiced by, perhaps, many. It should also be distinguished from "humanitarian activities" such as cooperative, livelihood project, philanthropic endeavor, and the like. Efforts like these are reactionary but not developmental. On the fundamental meaning of service, J. P. Miranda wrote a radical exegesis. After giving ample evidences through word study that *rich* (*resha'im*), in Hebrew, basically means "wicked" or "unjust", he proceeds to draw the chasm between the common notion of service as almsgiving from justice – which was the authentic meaning of the word.

To confirm this, very briefly and in passing, we might take note of a literary fact which theology is at pains to pass over... As can be seen from Tobit 12:9 ("Turn not your gaze from anyone poor"), Tobit 4:10 ("Alms indeed preserve one from death,... late Judaism arrived at the notion that giving money to the poor preserves a person from death. But the brutal fact that theology refuses to look at is that the original Hebrew Bible calls that act of giving money to the poor not "almsgiving," but "justice" (*sedakah*).

Proverbs 10:2: "Justice delivers from death." Psalm 112:9: "With generosity he gives to the poor, his justice abides forever." Tobit 14:11: "Behold what almsgiving does, and what is it that justice preserves from." This is a fundamental datum, and is taken up in Matthew 6:1-4: "Be careful not to practice your justice before men, in order to be seen by them. ... Therefore when you give alms. ..." Clearly, the acts which we think of as an act of almsgiving is, according to the Bible, an act of justice – restitution of what has been stolen. This is why Jesus calls money the money of injustice or iniquity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, OMF Literature, Inc.: Manila, Phil. 1995. For journalistic presentation of the revolutionary teaching of Jesus on "The Sermon on the Mount" see p. 103-145.

<sup>2</sup> Jerson Narciso, 2006, February 01, Interview.

<sup>3</sup> A collective term that means the marginalized, deprived, discriminated against, and the like.

<sup>4</sup> Ms. Excelyn Landero's daughter made an interesting meaning for this. SIPSIP – Severely Insecure Person Seeking Instant Position.

<sup>5</sup> J. P. Miranda, 1981, p. 50-51. To augment this position, Miranda further quoted some church fathers. [And hence it is that Augustine says, "To succor the needy is justice" (PL 52:1046). And Ambrose, "You are not giving the poor person the gift of a part of what is yours; you are returning to him something of what is his" (PL 14:747). Chrysostom: "Do not say, 'I am spending what is mine, I am enjoying what is mine.' It is not actually yours, it is someone else's" (PG 61:86). Basil: "It is the hungry one's bread you keep, the naked one's covering you have locked in your closet, the barefoot one's footwear putrifying in your power, the needy one's money that you have buried" (PG 31:277). Jerome: "All riches derive from injustice." The fathers understood very well what the Bible tells: All differentiating wealth is acquired by exploiting and despoiling the rest of the population. Hence they see almsgiving as restitution in strict justice.]

So, service is basically an issue of justice (or in popular Bible translations, righteousness). Going back to the first type of ecclesiology, communion is defined by justice. This is what this egalitarian community is all about. So when we serve, we herald to people and the world the beauty and lasting benefit of living justly in a communion. It appears that “humanitarian endeavors” are not enough definition of service because they do not address the fundamental justice issues of the poor. These endeavors only ask, “Where are the poor?” and they help them. This is good but not developmental neither sustainable. True service is to ask, “Why are the poor?” and address the systemic issues so that their being poor is not perpetuated but ended when justice is served.<sup>1</sup>

This means that a servant Church must be a prophetic Church. In the light of the Gospel of the reign of God the servant Church analyzes the modern situation, enlighten its people, and provide alternative to the world by reminding them of the covenant of God. This had always been the theme of all the prophets. “I will be your God and you will be my people” is a covenant of egalitarian relationship. Whatever and whoever comes between that that disrupts the loving relationship of the Father (*Abba*) and his children, is confronted and denounced by the prophets; thus, by a servant Church.

Jesus seems to have this in mind when he taught: “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men” (Matt 5:13). This is a parabolic statement, but some literal interpretation of salt, as vital compound will help. The use of salt in cooking is very important. More than the common notion that it only makes the food saline, it subtly works by blending flavors of different ingredients. And that only happens when salt melts, losing its identity in the process. But it manifest itself in a way that it makes the cuisine tastes good.

This is a good picture of a servant Church. Integration is of prime importance; selflessness or self-denial comes next. Meaning the Church offers a sacrificial service, like Jesus did, even to the point of death. It is in dying that a new life or “new taste” comes to those whom the Church serves. Refusing to be a servant (salt of the earth) is not without deleterious consequence for the Church. As the pedagogy of Jesus concludes, if the salt loses its saltiness it becomes useless as rubbish “thrown out and trampled”. Thus, the Church to be true to its nature and vocation is to become a servant community.

Moreover, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a remarkable theologian, developed the notion of the Church as an interpersonal community. In his first major theological work, *The Communion of Saints*, he wrote: “The community is constituted by the complete self-forgetfulness of love. The relationship between I and thou is no longer essentially a demanding but a giving one.”<sup>2</sup> He places a heavy emphasis on the nature of the church as communion of persons drawn together by Christ. Subsequently, in his *Ethics*, he moved toward a more kerygmatic position corresponding to the Church as herald. He writes: “The intention of the preacher is not to improve the world but to summon it to belief in Jesus Christ and to bear witness to the reconciliation which has been accomplished through him and in his dominion.”<sup>3</sup> Finally, in his posthumously published *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Bonhoeffer, calls for a humble and servant Church:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz Duremdes, 2005, November 11, Interview.

<sup>2</sup> D. Bonhoeffer, *The Communion of Saints*, Harper & Row: New York, 1963, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> D. Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, Macmillan Paperbacks: New York, 1965, p. 350. Personally, I think the theologian needed not to contrast “the summoning of the world” to “improvement of the world”. The latter should be the spontaneous effect of the

The Church is the Church only when it exists for others. To make a start, it should give away all its property to those in need. The clergy must live solely on the free-will offerings of their congregation, or possibly engage in some secular calling. The Church must share in the secular problems of the ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, for Bonhoeffer, Christ was the “beyond in the midst,” and in his universal Lordship, Lord even of those who had no religion. In his humanity, for Bonhoeffer, Christ appears as the man without selfishness and without defenses, the man for others. In order to be a credible witness to him, the church must adopt his style of life.

Since the early sixties, nearly all the ecclesialogists who have emerged into prominence have been representative of this new style of “secular-dialogic theology<sup>2</sup>”. In the English-speaking Protestantism and Anglicanism, the best-known representative of this ecclesiology are Gibson Winter, Harvey Cox, and John A. T. Robinson. Gibson Winter, in his *The New Creation as Metropolis*, calls for a “servant Church”:

One that is “no longer an institutional structure of salvation along side with the worldly structure of restraint” but one that is “that community within the worldly structures of historical responsibility which recognizes and acknowledges God’s gracious work for all mankind. The servant Church is the community who confirm mankind in its freedom to fashion its future, protesting the ultimacy in any human structures and suffering with men in the struggle against the powers of evil.<sup>3</sup>

Winter proposes that the apostolate of the servant Church should not be primarily one of the confessional proclamation or of cultic celebration, but rather discerning reflection on God’s promise and presence in the midst of our own history.<sup>4</sup>

Building on the work of Gibson Winter and others, Harvey Cox, included in his *The Secular City* a characteristic chapter, “The Church as God’s Avant-garde.” A segment reads: “The church’s task in the secular city is to be the *diakonos* of the city, the servant who bends himself to struggle for its wholeness and healing.”<sup>5</sup>

Following up on Harvey Cox and upon his own previous work on the notion of the Kingdom of God, the Anglican bishop John A. T. Robinson, in *The New Reformation?* argued that

The Church is in drastic need of a stripping down of its structure, which can be obstacle to its mission. To be of service the Church must work within the structure of the world rather than build parallel structures. The house of God is not the Church but the world. The Church is the servant and the first characteristic of a servant is that he lives in someone else’s house, not his own.<sup>6</sup>

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former, which the metaphor of the salt implies, and the disciples’ prayer “Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” expresses sharply.

<sup>1</sup> D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, rev. ed. Macmillan: New York, 1967, p. 203-204

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Dulles, 1988, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> G. Winter, *The New Creation as Metropolis*, Macmillan: New York, 1963, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> G. Winter, 1963, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> H. Cox, *The Secular City*, Macmillan: New York, 1965, p. 134.

<sup>6</sup> J. A. T. Robinson, *The New Reformation?* (Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1965, p. 92.



A parallel development, not influence by the authors just mentioned, is Robert Adolfs. In *The Grave of God*, he uses as key concept the Pauline notion of kenosis. Jesus “emptied himself (*heauton ekenosen*),” writes Paul in (Phil 2:7), “taking the form of a servant.” For Adolfs this means:

Jesus divested himself of all craving for power and dignity. The Church if it is to be like Christ, must similarly renounce all claims to power, honors and the like; it must not rule by power but love.<sup>1</sup>

Eugene Bianchi, in his *Reconciliation: The Function of the Church*, maintains that the most fundamental mission of the Church is that of reconciliation, the overcoming of various alienations that vex humanity today. This calls for “a humble and servant approach to the world already touched by redemption.”<sup>2</sup>

Richard P. McBrien, another ecclesialogist, has strongly developed the theme of the servant Church. He wrote:

The Church must not look upon itself as “a humanitarian social agency, or a group of like-minded individuals sharing a common perspective and moving here and there, wherever ‘the action is’.” If the theological reality of the Church goes no deeper than that, there seems little reason to perpetuate this community in history or to continue one’s personal affiliation with it. ... The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation and the Body of Christ; but just because it is all this, it has a mandate to serve.<sup>3</sup>

The Church must offer itself as one of the principal agents whereby the human community is made to stand under the judgment of the enduring values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: freedom, justice, peace, charity, compassion, reconciliation.<sup>4</sup>

All these are poetically summarized in the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi; one of the most lyrical and dramatic prayers one has ever read:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy;  
O Divine Master, grant that we may not seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
To be loved as to love; to be understood as to understand.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.<sup>5</sup>

Let us end this section with a brief exposition on a parable of Jesus that he uttered as reply to the question of “Who is my neighbor?” – the Good Samaritan

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<sup>1</sup> R. Adolfs, *The Grave of God: Has the Church a Future?*, Burns & Oates: London, 1967, p. 109-117.

<sup>2</sup> E. Bianchi, *Reconciliation: The Function of the Church*, Sheed & Ward: New York, 1969, p. x, 168.

<sup>3</sup> R. P. McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?*, Harper & Row: New York, 1969, p. 98-99.

<sup>4</sup> R. P. McBrien, *Church: The Continuing Quest*, Harper & Row: New York, 1969, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Prudencio Bañas et. al. eds., *Minister's Manual*, CBMA-CPBC: Iloilo City, 1997, p. 73. Paraphrased.

(Lk 10:30-37). The use of a Samaritan as a “good guy” in the story was revolutionary in the time of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Against the common notion that a neighbor is someone who is in need (regardless of his race, gender, or class), it seems to appear that Jesus refers to the neighbor as someone who heeds and acts voluntarily and wholeheartedly to help and serve the needy (wounded). He doesn't have to be traditionally religious (as the role of the priest and the Levite represented). It shows that the Good Samaritan was the neighbor, who walked the extra mile by giving first aid, ensuring the safety, and finally seeking professional care to restore the well being of the victim. Like the priest and the Levite, he could have been bound to some important task, yet he willingly forgoes his personal affair, seeing the urgency of the need. Apparently, this was also evident in *diakonia* of Jesus, even making a crippled man stand and walk on Sabbath day.

Thus, servant Church means the Church should be a Good Samaritan (a good neighbor) unconditionally helping the world. The Church must be a light of the world on the stand, so that it gives light to everyone in the house. The Church must be a salt of the earth that blends all life's flavor into a sumptuous dish. The perfect Church is a ministering Church<sup>2</sup>, a Church that in all its members is the Incarnation of Christ.

#### IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research paper has revisited the history of Local Autonomy, as one of Baptist emphases, locating itself along the course of Baptist development. Traced from sixteenth century onwards, the Baptist birth was inextricably linked with the Reformation, highlighted by Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, Anglican Church, Anabaptists, and others. But it has historically originated in England. Though John Smyth and his congregation fled to Holland (1610) to avoid persecution and sought religious freedom, it is a fact that they were all English people. It is in Holland that they had association with the Mennonites, a latter branch of Anabaptists. Later, the group with their new leader, Thomas Helwys, came back to London to form the first Baptist Church (1612). There are other complimentary accounts about the development of Baptist faith and the varying theological positions undergirding them.<sup>3</sup>

In Europe, during the early stage of Baptist life as a church, local congregations were autonomous. They had their own leaders, which served as pastor and teacher. When Baptist churches grew in number they spontaneously formed regional and national associations. These associations were created for purposes of collaboration in ministry and mission, without trying to infringe on the autonomy of the local church. Baptists in the old world crafted numerous Confessions of faith. Autonomy and Associations are evident on many of those. Confessions, however, were not used as binding authority for churches and individuals, but as guide in searching the Scripture, peculiarly the New Testament, for it alone was considered sole authority for faith and practice. Ample

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<sup>1</sup> Samaritans were half-breed Jews who returned from Babylonian exile. They were the children of those who married non-Israelites in their stay at Babylon. They were ostracized by making them dwell in a secluded village, Samaria. They were among the second-class citizens in the temple, being equal with women and gentiles, limited to the court of gentiles for worship. Jews considered them impure both physically and spiritually.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. Cook, 1958, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter I, number 1. Sixteenth Century Reformation.

historical evidences vivify the fact that Baptist churches, in its early stage, were interdependent than totally independent. It seems paradoxical how they maintained associational authority without being hierarchical in their relationship towards the local congregations.<sup>1</sup>

Seeking religious freedom and having missionary aims in mind, continental Baptists sought haven in the New World (USA)<sup>2</sup>. The hand of the English monarchs still reached them. But they, along with other later Protestant groups, pioneered and relentlessly pursued the struggle for religious freedom, which, later they painstakingly won.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the age of Great Awakening or Revivalism began and flourished, freely allowing to religious expression. It also became the naissance of the notion and practice of "Separation of Church and State".

In America, the interdependent spirit continued to live. The first Association founded was the Philadelphia Baptist Association (PBA) (1707). Other associations were organized later on. This association helped the local churches in dealing with doctrinal problems, ministry and missions. In its early years, the Association played its role by ear, so to speak, but some feared it might assume some church prerogatives. In 1749, the Association adopted a formal *Essay*<sup>4</sup>, written by Benjamin Griffith, which defined the powers of the association as compared to the rights reserved to the churches. It is in America that Baptist grew enormously as one of the world's largest Protestant groups up to the present. It was in the new world that Baptists, along with other Protestant groups, started international mission work, which, in the nineteenth century, reached a third world country, the Philippines.

1898 is the exact year of the outset of Philippine Baptist mission. The baptism of Braulio Manikan and his uttered interest to do mission work in his homeland, which his mentor Eric Lund heeded and later worked with, marked this significant instance. By 1900, the American Baptist mission started in Iloilo, Philippines with Manikan and Lund as their first missionaries. The American Baptist supported them. The coming of the Protestant missions to the Philippines including the Baptist missionaries was consequence of the victory of the United States over Spain. The efforts of these two pioneers paved the way for the spreading of the Baptist faith and organization of Baptist churches, beginning in Jaro, Iloilo, in nearby provinces, and in many areas of the country. Baptist "Distinctives", which include Local Autonomy or Independence of the Local church, was significant part of message or teaching of the American missionaries, to which the Filipino converts adhered.<sup>5</sup>

However, it is evident that early Filipino Baptists lived out their faith interdependently as individuals and as churches. The adversities accompanying World War II were withstood by spontaneous collaborative struggle of the early Baptist converts. They even helped the revolutionary movement in many ways. In the height of the war, Philippine Baptist ministry reached even other religious groups such as Aglipayans, and even Roman Catholic.<sup>6</sup> Baptist women played

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I, number 2. In the Old World (Europe)

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter I, number 3. In the New World (USA)

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter I, number 3. The Struggle for Religious Liberty

<sup>4</sup> A. D. Gillette, ed., *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association from A. D. 1707 to A. D. 1807*, American Baptist Publication Society, 1851. p. 60-63, in, H. L. McBeth, 1990, p. 145-147.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter I, number 4. In the Philippines (CPBC)

<sup>6</sup> For detailed discussion, see N. D. Bunda, 1999. p. 200.

an indispensable role in the propagation of the faith in these perilous times.<sup>1</sup> Somehow, the native culture of *Bayanihan (Pagbinuligay)* made its way through their collective endeavor. Apparently, this is essential in the teaching of the New Testament that the Baptists uphold as exclusive “authority over faith and practice”.

In 1935, the *Kasapulanang sang Bautista nga Pilipinhon* (Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches Incorporated – CPBC) was organized. This led to the national organization of Philippine Baptist churches and the *Filipinization* of leadership, which the American missionaries used to dominate. Despite the lack of confidence of some missionaries on the Filipinos, the “struggle for self-hood”, after much lobbying and debate, succeeded. Later on, after many intricacies and technicalities, the Filipinization of CPBC became complete. This means the complete turnover not only of leadership but also of properties that the Philippine Baptist has acquired through the years. This came to the “cutting of the umbilical cord” point.<sup>2</sup>

The growing Philippine Baptist churches since the formation of CPBC in 1935 are facing problems in leadership, finance, mission, education, political as well as *Associational* problems. However, Philippine Baptist leaders are optimistic about these setbacks, citing principles and planning to resolve the substantial issues.

The present, being fraction of history, is considered. So, Chapter II is allotted to gather information and perception from some Baptist clergy and lay leaders on the issue of local autonomy.<sup>3</sup> The interview showed that problem of Local Autonomy is just a “trick issue”; a tip of the iceberg, so to speak, when the condition of CPBC is examined closely. The problem is not what it seems; it is something else. Symptoms are manifest, but the main problem is covert. It takes focus and serious examination to diagnose correctly. After thorough investigation and analysis, it becomes obvious that the problem of local autonomy in CPBC boils down to the challenge of faith, particularly of ecclesiology.<sup>4</sup>

The perceptions of many CPBC constituents are clouded with different shades of many things. They believe in the Church and other faith substances, but they have become obscure to what they are, in the light of history, tradition and, ultimately, of Scriptures. Thus, this study attempts to trace in history and tradition the background of the issue. And finally, it takes an honest appeal to the Scriptures for substantial and foundational imperatives, which should be deemed as authority over faith and practice.

We seem to have become so engrossed with different ideologies, poetics, and other secular dynamics. The overload of imported stuff, music, thoughts, interpretations, lifestyle and the like, calls us to find a counter action that we might prevent uncoupling from the basic. The Bible is the Baptists historic foundation of faith. This is what this study seeks to recover. The Scripture is the rock where our faith should be anchored. We may sail wherever we want assured that, when storms of uncertainties come, we can always go back.

Chapter III is both an appeal to the Scriptures and to different interpreters whose historical, theological and biblical insights are useful to the task at hand.

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<sup>1</sup> Missionaries, men and pastors, were seized, captured, imprisoned, in some cases murdered during this time. Church buildings burned. This left the women the initiative to go from house to house, teaching the *Eskuela Dominical* (Sunday School) to people. This is instrumental in the preservation and propagation of Baptist faith even in wartime.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter I, number 4.1. 1935-1971 and number 4.2. 1972-1998

<sup>3</sup> See chapter II, number 1. Views.

<sup>4</sup> See chapter II. Local Autonomy In The CPBC Context.

The first segment is a reconstruction of the *church*.<sup>1</sup> It showed the infrequency of use of the term *church* (ecclesia) in the New Testament. However, it is interchangeably used with terms such as *brethren*, *disciples*, *believers*, *followers of the Way*, *saints*, *holy*, and the like. Paul used the anthropomorphic imagery – body of Christ, which typifies the notion of the people of God in the Old Testament. It is interesting that these others terms are much more frequently used than *church*. Whatever ulterior motive behind the standardization of the use of the term, the researcher does not know. One can only surmise.<sup>2</sup> The thing is, out of the numerous nuances of *church* and its synonymous terms, neither one of them meant a building. So church, in the firmest sense, is the body of Christ or people God; it is never to be confused with edifice or any structure. Doing so entirely destroys its authentic meaning. This segment ventured on reconstructing the meaning of the church. The process does not end only in proving what the Church is not; it should go on searching for what the Church is. This endeavor is incomplete unless we make an attempt to explain the nature of the Church in the light of history and Scriptures.

The traditional Baptist idea of the ministry of Jesus, as embodied in the Church, includes preaching, teaching and healing. Careful investigation and reflection led the author to conclude that these are deficient ecclesiologies. This is so, because such notion has the dangerous tendency to render the Church as a fragmented entity instead of one body, where “unity in diversity” is paradoxically operating.

A segment in Chapter III is given to discuss the relationship of the Church to Jesus Christ, reign of God and the Holy Spirit. Jesus instituted the Church.<sup>3</sup> But the Church does not derive its life only from the work which Christ did and finished in the past, nor only from the expected future consummation of his work, but from the living and efficacious presence of Christ in the present. As Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, so the Church also should. It is important to note that the Church is not the reign of God, but its herald. Like the prophets of the olden times, the Church should serve as the mouthpiece of God to proclaim the future consummation of this glorious reign.

The Church as a community of the Spirit is not bound within geopolitical boundaries. It is preposterous to equate this egalitarian community with some “institutions” or sects, which find their being on their legal identity. The Church is communion where relation is no longer demanding but a giving one. It is a communion that is inclusive and decisive: inclusive because it is open to everyone, decisive because anybody who desires to be part of this communion has to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Finally, chapter III commenced with a proposed ecclesiology. Since the author diagnosed the issue of local autonomy to be a challenge of faith, this ecclesiological attempt is to reconstruct the meaning of the Church. The author admits that the Church is a mystical reality that cannot be fully boxed and explained; but at least one can extract gems of truth from the Scriptures and from some scholarly works to capture aspects of this mystery for the desired end, which is to reconstruct an understanding for CPBC of the Church. Like the intention of early Baptists in writing Confessions of Faith, this attempt wishes to be a guide for deeper study of the Scriptures, not to replace them.

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter III. Number 1. New Testament Perspective.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, the notion of equating *church* with a building was during medieval age, particularly in the Constantinian era, when Christianity became the “imperial religion”.

<sup>3</sup> See chapter III, number 2.1. Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Reign of God And The Church.

This attempt understands the Church as a *Communion* (koinonia)<sup>1</sup>, Herald (kerygma)<sup>2</sup>, Servant (diakonia)<sup>3</sup>. As a Communion, the Church is a spiritual community that transcends geopolitical boundaries. Meaning, it is not confined within its locality because, while the Church is locally manifest, its spiritual identity is outstretching to others who also claim and obey the Lordship of Jesus Christ. As a Communion, the Church becomes an egalitarian community, serving one another with gifts from the Spirit, and providing one another with their temporal needs. As a communion, the Church becomes a community of gifts and goods. But the Church is not an isolationist or an exclusivist community. This communion is only a means towards a greater end – Mission of God. This communal experience ought to be extended to others, to the world, because the Church is a Herald of the Gospel of the reign of God.

As a Herald, the Church, like Jesus, proclaims the Good News of salvation; the Gospel of the reign of God. This proclamation is not a threatening one, but an invitation of hope, joy and liberation. This is an invitation to receive God's favor, an invitation to join a feast or a banquet. As a Herald, the Church is commissioned to become "light of the world", that through her the world in darkness might be illumined with the light of Christ and share in the glory of the future consummation of the reign of God.

As a Servant, the Church is not only a messenger but also a worker of God for the world. Like the Good Samaritan, the Church is commanded to become a good neighbor to the world. The Church performs this task with no ulterior motive other than to fulfill its mission as agent of God's healing for the world. As a servant, the Church becomes "the salt of the earth", reconciling differences and "blending various tastes". In doing service, the Church integrates with the world even to point of death or losing its manifest identity in the process. It is in denying itself that the Church becomes faithful to the death sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sake of the world.

## Recommendations

After rigorous research and analysis, it is found out that faith or theology and governance should be intimately connected. Theology should be the basis or the foundation and substance of governance. This study found out the historic Baptist emphasis on the supremacy of the Scripture over faith and practice; all other principles are derivatives of such. It is on this background that this study recommends the following:

**1. Name.** The term *convention* is a secular term that has meager, if not totally devoid of biblical-theological significance. Since name is very important to the image of the organization, it is recommended that the term *convention* be reconsidered. Further, **Communion of Philippine Baptist Churches** or **Philippine Baptist Communion** is suggested. Given the NT nature of the Church as *koinonia*, the term is deemed appropriate; if Philippine Baptist wishes to be true to her claim as a Church whose historic identity accents the Scripture as authority over faith and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter III, 2.2. Communion (κοινωνία).

<sup>2</sup> See chapter III, 2.3. Herald (κηρυγμα)

<sup>3</sup> See chapter III, 2.4. Servant (διακονία)

**2. Constitution and By-Laws.** This term and its content also bear secular meaning. Like convention, it should also be reevaluated. Neither early Baptist history nor biblical account supports the use of the term to mean a document of Church polity. After careful brainstorming of terms, *Confession of Faith or Covenant* came to mind, thus, suggested. A change of label does not guarantee anything, except it is a sign of realization of the essential; therefore, a step towards progress.

**3. Elections.** At present, CPBC both in local and national elections employs popular voting in electing its officers. This method has proven to be more divisive than unifying. CPBC history shows how susceptible this system is to abuse and corruption. Apparently, this electoral format finds no equivalent in the Scripture<sup>1</sup>, particularly New Testament. What is explicit in the New Testament especially in Acts 1:21-26 is consensus building. It will be recalled that the disciples see to it that the man who would take the place of Judas, was he who was with them since John's baptism until the ascension of Jesus. He should also be a witness of the resurrection. After this, they prayed asking for the guidance of the Lord. Then they cast lots, believing that it will reveal the will of God. It is recommended that CPBC extract an election system from this event. In so doing CPBC may become faithful to the historic Baptist principle of the Authority of the Bible over faith and practice.

**4. Calling of Pastors.** Since pastors are holding vital position in the local churches, it is recommended that CPBC construct a guideline or covenant for Churches and pastors to observe. This is not to control but to guide our people to a dignified ministry (Phil 4:8), one that is marked by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

**5. Property Management.** The economic issue is one major contention in the life of CPBC. The common notion is "CPBC is poor". But looking at the organization intently tells otherwise. CPBC is not poor, however its resources are not equally or justly shared. Its situation resembles the state of the country, where fundamental problems are not overpopulation, poverty and unemployment, but injustice or unequal distribution of wealth and property. Again, highlighting the Bible as authority over faith and practice, this study recommends the in-depth study of Acts 2:42-45; 4:32-35 as substantial accounts on how the early believers celebrated their life together in a sharing community. The Jerusalem believers did not originate such lifestyle. It was Jesus Himself who lived out such, as these verses (Mat 27:55; Mk 15:41; Lk 8: 3) signify.

**6. Conflict Management.** Conflict or disagreement is a normal phenomenon of life. It should not be avoided but managed. In lieu of Authority of the Bible, this study recommends that CPBC extracts a Conflict Management guideline or covenant in the light of Mat 5:23-26, 1 Cor 6:1-8 and similar accounts that gives explicit or implicit ideas in handling discords.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, *On Electing People to Office: A Theological Reflection*, in, *Voter's Guide Election 2004*, (Pamphlet) NCCP: Quezon City, Philippines, 2004.

**7. Ministry.** “Leadership as servanthood” seems to be only a slogan in the present ministry of CPBC. Many of CPBC constituents who aspire to become leaders seem to seek greatness over service. This study poses a challenge for CPBC to go back to the NT passages, especially, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (Mk 10:45; Mat 20:28), “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35). Also, Acts 6:1-7; Rom 12:1-21; 1 Cor 12:4-31; these Lukan and Pauline accounts are descriptive of the organized life of the early church. Humble service is what is manifest and admonished in these passages. Greatness is the least that a true Christian should aspire. CPBC is challenged to pattern its faith and practice on these.

**8. Ecclesiology.** Since Local Autonomy is an issue of the church, it is recommended that CPBC have an official ecclesiology. In so doing, CPBC constituents will have an institutional guide to understand important matters such as the church. The output of this study is recommended as reference.

**9. Others.** Further and in-depth study may be done on related topics, which this paper failed to present or has inadequately discussed.



# ST. PAUL'S CONCEPT OF *SKENOPOIIA* (TENTMAKING) AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO THE CHURCHES OF THE CONVENTION OF PHILIPPINE BAPTIST CHURCHES IN WESTERN VISAYAS

Rev. Dr. Armando S. Kole

## INTRODUCTION

### The Statement of the Problem

This dissertation seeks to explore the following problem: What are the implications of Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* to the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas?

### The Sub-Problems

The first sub-problem is as follows: What is Paul's concept of *skenopoiia*? The second sub-problem is as follows: What are the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas? The third sub-problem is as follows: What implications can be drawn from Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* to the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas?

### Limits of the Problem

This research sought to delineate Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* and its implications to the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of the Philippine Baptist Churches<sup>1</sup> in Western Visayas. This study was limited to the CPBC churches in the province of Negros Occidental and the four provinces of the island of Panay, namely: Aklan, Antique, Capiz, and Iloilo. The research focused on the Book of Acts and on the Pauline Epistles that have direct bearing on Paul as a preacher and tentmaker. The primary texts that were surveyed were as follows: Acts 18:1-4, 20:34-35; 1 Cor. 9:12-18; 1 Thess. 2:9; and 2 Thess. 3:3-9. In order to establish the theological foundations of the study, the research discussed the following theologies of Paul, namely: (1) theology of Church as the body of Christ; (2) theology of ministry; and (3) theology of spiritual gifts.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as CPBC.

Furthermore, the limit of this research focused on the *kasapulanans* in the Visayas only. The CPBC is composed of ten *kasapulanans*. There are three *kasapulanans* in Luzon, five *kasapulanans* in Visayas, and two *kasapulanans* in Mindanao. The perceptions gathered, therefore, were perceptions of the respondents coming from the *kasapulanans* in the Visayas referred to in this section. Additionally, the implications that were identified were only derived from the same *kasapulanans* and in no way attempt to relate them to the perceptions of the *kasapulanans* in Luzon and Mindanao.

## Definition of Terms

*Skenopoia* refers to “tent-making.” This term describes the occupation of Aquila, Pricilla, and Paul (Acts 18:3). Etymologically, it combines the two Greek words *skene* and *poia* which means “the pitching of a tent.”<sup>1</sup>

This term is taken to allude to the modern concept of “tentmaking” or bi-vocational ministry in this study. “Tent-making” refers to an activity or secular employment of a Christian worker wherein he or she derives an adequate income, but at the same time serve God voluntarily, either through a local church or other church-related institutions.

“Bi-Vocational Ministry” refers to a ministry wherein the sacred and the secular are taken together as context for Christian witness and service, and support. It is based on a theological premise that God calls some men and women to do special tasks outside of and along with their work as pastors of local churches.

“Bi-Vocational Minister” refers to a “minister who earns his or her living through two vocations, which is sacred and secular. He or she normally works thirty-five to forty hours per week with the church and about twenty to thirty hours per week in a non-church vocation. The non-church vocation is a secular vocation, though in some instances it might be a religious one but not in a local church.”<sup>2</sup>

“Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches” refers to the national organization of all Convention Baptist Churches in the Philippines based in Western Visayas with headquarters in Jaro, Iloilo City.

*Kasapulan* is taken from the Ilonggo root word *sapul* meaning “to confer,” “to meet” or “to assemble.” The term refers to an association or conference of all CPBC churches in the province. It meets annually for transacting business, for studying, and for fellowshiping.

“Church leaders” refer to the officers of local churches who are either elected or appointed by the congregation to a certain office. These include the pastor, lay members of the Board of Deacons and Trustees, and other positions which are embodied in the Constitution and by-laws of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek Lexicon and other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Walter Bauer (London, England, University of Cambridge Press, 1968), 762. The term *skenopoia*, in this paper, refers to Paul's understanding of bi-vocational ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Luther M. Dorr, *The Bi-vocational Pastor* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 3. The bi-vocational are the teachers, white-collar job workers, carpenters, and those in other occupations who are serving in a dual role as ministers while earning a portion of their income in a secular work. See Thurman W. Allred, “*The Bi-Vocational: A Rich Heritage*,” *Church Administration*, November 1980, 39.

## Basic Assumptions

This research presupposes the following assumptions:

The first basic assumption is as follows: Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* can be delineated.

The second basic assumption is as follows: The current perceptions on bivocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas can be identified.

The third basic assumption is as follows: The implications of Paul's concept of to the current perceptions on bivocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas can be formulated.

## The Importance of the Study

Many churches nowadays seem to face difficulty in providing for their pastor with adequate salary. Hence, the pastor's family is affected economically, psychologically, and socially. Under the present economic circumstances, many pastors seek for other jobs that could augment their meager income.<sup>1</sup> Rather than leaving the pastorate, many pastors feel that finding another job can help them financially and enable them to continue in the ministry. For them it is better to look for other means of income than to demand for a higher salary from the local church. H. L. Akin observes that most ministers are hesitant to ask for salary increases. Most believe they should live on whatever the congregation chooses to pay them. Usually, only extreme financial pressure will cause ministers to share their needs with their congregation.<sup>2</sup> They feel uncomfortable in talking about their needs and hurts.<sup>3</sup>

Pastors tend to hesitate to ask for material assistance from the church members for fear of being misunderstood as beggars asking for bread. Weldon Viertel observes that in countries of low per capita income, smaller churches often do not contribute enough to supply the physical needs of the pastor's family, especially in churches whose memberships are from the lower economic level of the society. The problem intensifies if the pastor has a large family.<sup>4</sup>

The significance of this study hence cannot be understated. It is important as it tried to discover the impact of bi-vocational ministry upon the ministry per se. Not all ministers serving the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas are full-time. Many ministers find time to work outside. These ministers consider their secular job as a ministry in itself and as a bridge for reaching lost souls for the Kingdom of God. As bi-vocational ministers, they have been a vital part of the total number of pastors in the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches. However, for years they served with little recognition and were

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<sup>1</sup> Ethel McIndoo and June Holland, "Can You Do Two Jobs at the Same Time?" *Aware*, January-March 1993, 13.

<sup>2</sup> H. L. Akin, *The Pastor's Complete Guide to Personal Financial Planning* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Michael D. Miller, *Honoring the Ministry: Honoring the Leaders God Gives Your Church* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 1998), 58.

<sup>4</sup> Welson E. Viertel, *The Pastor's Personal Life and Duties* (El Paso, TX: Carib Baptist Publications, n.d.), 53. When the economy declines and unemployment rises, the tendency of small and struggling churches that cannot pay for a full-time salary of a pastor is to seek someone who is willing to serve on a part-time salary. For an elaboration of this, see Deena W. Newman, "You Have Two Jobs?" *Accent*, January 1993, 2-7. The stipend of the pastor is frequently a source of tension within his family. Many clergy find that however hard they try, they cannot manage on their stipend. See Graham Patrick, "The Pastor and His Family," in *The Pastor's Problem*, ed. Cyril Rodd (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark Limited, 1995), 170.

thought to have little impact on the life of the denomination. In many instances, their work is being overlooked or merely taken for granted. In this regard, it is essential that an assessment on bi-vocational ministry be done so that the local church in particular and the denomination in general, may have a clearer view of *skenopoiia* in relation to ministry.

Further, this study is significant as it attempted to evaluate the extent of approval or disapproval of church members on pastors with jobs other than pastoring. Some church members seem to possess an ideal view of the pastorate. They sometimes see no reason why pastors do not devote all their time to the local church ministry, since the Lord has promised that he will take care of all their needs (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19). There is also the notion prevalent among church members that pastors, no matter what the circumstances, should be content with their present income level.<sup>1</sup> They are not expected to enter into secular work for fear that the dignity as well as the sacredness of their calling might be put into question, thus, creating a stumbling block to the local church.

This perception on the pastoral ministry, however, does not seem to reflect the official position and theology of the local church. Often, a contrary view arises whenever the local church is discussing the needs of the pastor and his family. Against the messianic as well as docetic attitude toward the ministers (i.e., ministers are ready to suffer and have no interest in fact about material things), other lay leaders insist that ministers deserve the support of the local church both spiritually and materially.<sup>2</sup> Further, a dichotomy between the sacred and the secular in ministry seems common among the members of the CPBC churches in Western Visayas.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is important that the members' perception on bi-vocational ministry be discovered so the churches can address the problem.

On the basis of what has been stated above, this study was conducted in order to establish a relationship between Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* and the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas. This research would serve as a biblical discourse or biblical corrective to the excesses or deficiencies of understanding bi-vocational ministry among the CPBC churches in Western Visayas. Paul, as a pioneering tentmaker-minister, serves as a model of study in this dissertation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Samuel Cetuk writes: "If the goal of the clergy is to lead their congregations to heaven, it follows that they could not and would not, therefore, be very adept at the ways of the world, especially on money matters. If a pastor asks for a raise on salary, that is proof that the pastor's heart is not in the ministry." (*What to Expect in Seminary: Theological Education as Spiritual Formation* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998]), 171.

<sup>2</sup> J. William Bargiol. "Don't Have a Preaching contest," *Church Administration*, December 1996, 12.

<sup>3</sup> The researcher has served as president of the Convention Baptist Ministers Association (CBMA) from 1996-1998. In one of his stints with the Association, he attended a circuit conference of churches in northern Iloilo wherein a heated debate ensued between local church leaders and ministers on the issue of "sidelines" or extra income of ministers outside of church work. He observed that local church leaders ideally want the ministers to remain single-minded about the ministry. He also observed that bi-vocational ministers actually prefer to serve fulltime in the church, except that the salary given by the local church is not enough to meet the needs of their family.

<sup>4</sup> Luther Dorr sees Paul as a great evangelist, missionary, church planter, theologian, and writer of some books of the New Testament. He was also a bi-vocational preacher. See Dorr, 7. As a preacher his obsession was the proclamation of the gospel (Rom. 15:1), and his tentmaking played a significant role to reach his goal.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PAUL'S CONCEPT OF *SKENOPOIIA* (tentmaking)

*Skenopoiia* (tentmaking) has its roots in Scripture (Acts 18:3; 20:34; Amos 7:14). It is not a new concept but rather an old form of ministry that has been practiced in the Bible long before pastoral support has been institutionalized by the Christian church. In the Bible, men and women from various background and occupations were called into various offices to do certain tasks of ministering to people. They were in essence, tentmakers i.e., they ministered to God along with their secular vocation.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter will delineate the biblical and historical background of *skenopoiia*. First, it will discuss *skenopoiia* from a general Jewish perspective. Second, it will discuss *skenopoiia* from the perspective of the apostle Paul, the most famous tentmaker-missionary in the Bible.

#### ***Skenopoiia* from a General Jewish Perspective**

Historically, the early servants of God were financially independent. They supported themselves through the labor of their own hands.<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament, Amos and Melchizedek were said to be engaged in tentmaking ministry, as both had secular and religious functions. Amos was a farmer and a prophet while Melchizedek was a king and a priest (Amos 1:1; 7:14; 8:2; Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:1). Except for the Levites who were said to have been supported by their functions in the Temple,<sup>3</sup> the prophets were predominantly self-supporting in their ministries to the nation of Israel. J. Christy Wilson, Jr. said the same on the subject when he wrote:

Many of the godly men and women in the Old Testament were self-supporting witness. Adam was a cultivator, Abel was a sheep farmer, Abraham was a cattle raiser, Hagar was a domestic worker, Rebekah was water carrier, Jacob was a roving rancher, Rachel was a shepherd, Joseph was Premier, Miriam was a baby sitter, Moses was a flock-grazer, Bezaleel was a skilled artificer, Joshua was a military commander, Rahab was an innkeeper, Deborah was a national deliverer, Gideon was a military leader, Samson was a champion fighter, Ruth was a gleaner, Boaz was a grain grower, David was a ruler, the Queen of Sheba was an administrator, Job was a gentleman farmer, Amos was a sharecropper, Baruch was a writer, Daniel was a Prime Minister, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were provincial administrators, Queen Esther was a ruler, and Nehemiah was a governor.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One who searches the Scripture will note that there is no single reference in the Bible disproving or criticizing God's servants for having secular jobs along with their call to ministry. See Dorr, 53.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 18. For John Y. Elliot, tentmaking was the approved and effective part of the Christian church from the beginning. (*Our Pastor Has an Outside Job* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1980)), 20.

<sup>3</sup> The Levites were well supported from the tithes and offerings of the other tribes of Israel (Num. 18:8-24; 35:1-8). "Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours," Yahweh declared (Num. 18:14). They were given their own cities and pasture lands out of the inheritance of the twelve tribes (Num. 35:2-4). In setting the priests apart for the tabernacle and temple service, the responsibility of supporting them fell on the shoulders of those who were not called. They had to be fully supportive of them. Hence, the Levitical priests in the Old Testament do not appear as a model on tentmaking ministry. See David V. Feliciano, "Enterprising Pastors" to be or not to be?" *Palms* 12, no. 3 (June 1997), 21.

<sup>4</sup> J. Christy Wilson, Jr., *Today's Tentmakers* (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1991), 20.

These men and women in the Old Testament supported themselves as they served God through their various occupations. They were busy with their own lives but had time to minister to God's people.

## The Value of Learning a Trade for the Jews

Learning a trade was a common characteristic for the Jews. It was customary for the Jewish parents, especially the father, to teach his son not only the law, which was written in the Torah, but to teach him a trade as well.<sup>1</sup> Jesus was said to have inherited his father's trade as a carpenter, a lowly trade at that time, which he used to support his loved ones, especially after the death of Joseph (Mk. 6:1-3). Jesus was called carpenter-craftsman or a *tekton* "who could build a wall or a house, construct a boat, or make a table or a chair, or throw a bridge across a little stream."<sup>2</sup>

The first century *tekton* normally goes out to the forest, cuts down a tree and carries it to his shop on his shoulder. Through manual labor a *tekton* possesses a strong physical body. Luke alludes to Jesus as a *tekton* when he says, "And Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). A *tekton* also makes door, doorframes, and lattices for windows. In short, a *tekton*, like Jesus, was not just a carpenter, but someone who was engaged in a wide-ranging type of woodcrafts.<sup>3</sup> Although some argue that Christ's work at Nazareth was unskilled, Charles de Santo believes that Christ was a highly skilled carpenter.<sup>4</sup> Isaac Landman describes the importance of a skill for a Jew. He compares a skilled and unskilled person with these words:

A person with a skill resembles a fenced vineyard and a walled ditch, while the untrained person is like an unfenced vineyard and an unwallled ditch, trampled by animals and exposed to the prying of those who pass by. A person without a calling is likened also to a woman without a husband. Although famine lasts for seven years, it enters not the door of the craftsman.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, every Jewish boy in the Old Testament times was required to learn a trade. A trade discourages idleness, and abundance is assured for a young man who practices his trade in some employment no matter how strange it may be. Thus, a trade gives not only a feeling of security but also discourages truancy and dependency on others. Rabbi Judah said, "He who does not teach his son a trade, doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Jewish Talmud has three important commands for every father, namely: to circumcise his son, to teach him the law, to teach him a trade. See Samuel Cox, *An Expositor's Notebook* (Philadelphia, PA: Smith English and Company, n.d.), 425.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas J. Elwood and Patricia L. Magdamo, *Christ in the Philippine Context* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1971), 79.

<sup>3</sup> Charles De Santo, Calvin Redekop, and William Smith-Hinds, eds., *A Reader in Sociology: Christian Perspectives* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980), 602.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., s.v. "labor," by Isaac Landman.

<sup>6</sup> Dorr, 7. The biblical passages that disapprove of idleness can be found in Prov. 6:6-11; 10:4-5, 26; 12:11, 24; 13:4, 13; 19:13, 24; 21:5, 25; 22:13; Eccl. 5:11, and 10:18. See also, Frank Gaebelin, ed., *John-Acts: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 480.

## The Value of Religious Services for the Rabbis

In the Old Testament, religious services which were performed by the Rabbis took a different form compared to that of the Levitical priests.<sup>1</sup> While the latter receives institutional support from the Temple, the former does not.

The Rabbis have to work with their own hands to earn a living but at the same time serve the people. As servants they fulfill their places in God's plans for Israel by engaging in secular trade or vocations. The injunction of Christ which says, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8) characteristically portrays a kind of service that is neither colored with selfish interest nor motivated by personal desires for riches or prominence in society.

The Rabbis appear to be the ideal model on self-supporting ministry. The Greek term *Rabbi*, meaning "my master," "my teacher" first came into general use at the end of the first century B.C.<sup>2</sup> As the recognized title given to teachers of the law in the Jewish community, the Rabbis of the Talmudic period did not accept any salary from the community but engaged in various labors, trades, and profession.<sup>3</sup> They had to support themselves. To receive money as payment for their religious services not only makes them open and vulnerable to public suspicion in regard to the authenticity of their calling, but also places them in a situation where people would inevitably ridicule and undermine their persons, calling them greedy.

Such happened to some priests who took advantage of their positions during the time of Christ.<sup>4</sup> As learned men of Scriptures who are expected to perform their religious and legal functions without demanding a fee, it was necessary for the Rabbis to have another source of income.

## The Difference Between the Greek and the Hebrew Concept of Labor

The concept of labor is wide-ranging. Depending on how it is understood, the term 'labor' has evolved into a synonym for paid employment<sup>5</sup> or careers, without any direct religious meaning. In the Old Testament, labor is depicted as an effort to describe the creative work of Yahweh (Gen. 1:1). It takes meaning first of all from the example of God, who acted and by His action brought the universe

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion* (1986), s.v. "Rabbi," by William Gentz. This Greek word is derived from a Hebrew title used to honor the Jewish religious teachers. The title is passed on from teacher to pupil by ordination, and qualifies one who has the proper training to function as preacher, teacher, and pastor in the Jewish synagogue. See *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1978), s.v. "Rabbi."

<sup>3</sup> Being engaged in respectable trade gave the Rabbis the advantage to know the life of the working class. William Barclay says, "they were never detached from the people." (*The Acts of the Apostles: Daily Bible Series* [Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1956], 147).

<sup>4</sup> Dorr, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Ringma, "A Theology of Work," *Phronesis* 1 (August 1994): 13. "Work is one of the simplest words in our vocabulary," says Paul Minear, "but often it is the simple word that causes the greatest confusion in passing from ancient to the modern world. It is used in both worlds, but its meaning shifts imperceptibly as we pass from one to the other. Work is more than what we do regularly for pay, though this is its immediate meaning." (See Paul S. Minear, "Work and Vocation in Scripture," in *Work and Vocation: A Christian Discussion*, ed. Oliver Nelson [New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1954], 33). Lambert sees it as a natural part of a language development, often referred by linguists as 'semantic drift,' i.e., a word interpreted apart from its immediate context. See Lake Lambert, "Called to Do Business: Corporate Management as Vocation and Ministry," *Interface: A Forum for Theology in the World* 3, no. 2 (October 2000): 70.

into being. As a worker, God continues to work in the universe that He created (Ps. 104:22-24), and intends that man and woman should also work (Exo. 20:9).<sup>1</sup> Work, contrary to current opinion that it is evil and a curse after the fall, is humankind's natural occupation in the world.<sup>2</sup> Work is not held to be evil but something God gave to people as part of their existence. Before the fall, Adam and Eve were already given the divine injunction to cultivate and care for the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15ff.). The Old Testament attached dignity to labor, whether mental or physical. Thus, all honest work is honorable and to be performed as a divinely given commission to God's glory. This requires the worker to be faithful at all times. The Psalmist has made a particular reference towards work. Although he believes God is a builder of houses and cities (Ps. 127:1) (Gen. 127:1), from his standpoint, it is not the type of work but the person who works is most important. By implication, then, what matters is not whether a mason is capable of building a house but whether in building it his energies will be properly related to God's purpose.

John Calvin says, "Every individual's line of life is a post assigned to him by the Lord, and anyone who disregards good conduct in his work will never keep the right way in the duties of his station."<sup>3</sup> This means that work can never be separated from the whole concept of stewardship. This seems to be the prevailing thought of the Jews as a chosen nation. Generally, for the Jews, every work is important to God. There are no preferred works or trades assigned to others that one should look up, neither one has the right to cast aspersion and associate indignities on anyone simply because the person is doing a lowly and seemingly insignificant job. The Bible generally encourages the leveling of occupations, either white-collar or however repetitious and mundane a job may be.<sup>4</sup>

The dignity of the worker is always paramount in the Scriptures. It is not measured by the degree of power or influence a worker is holding on, or depends on the prestige accorded to one's profession, but by the way a person helps fulfill the purpose of God in the world.<sup>5</sup> The dignity of the worker therefore seemed to be always contingent on the motive of the laborer more than the mode of his or

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<sup>1</sup> To explore further the meaning of work, see the following references where man is enjoined to do physical labor in the Bible: Gen. 2:15; 3:19; Eccl. 9:10; Eph. 4:28; and 2 Thess. 3:12.

<sup>2</sup> *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (1996), s.v. "Work," by W. S. Reid. Walter C. Kaiser holds the same view: "Work was not meant to be a strain or a curse. A curse was connected with labor after the fall in Gen. 3:17-19, but it was not put on work itself. God's intention from the very beginning was that people would find joy, fulfillment, and blessing in the fact and constancy of work." (*Toward Old Testament Ethics* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989], 150).

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser, 150. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "We labor for the sake of Christ and this embraces the whole range of work which extends from agriculture by way of industry and commerce to science and art." For Carl F. H. Henry, while work is necessary to live and to develop one's character, it is also the vehicle for divine service. Viewing work as a sacred stewardship, Henry adds that the way Christians do their work will either accredit or undermine their witness; and if they do not develop a sense of meaning for work they will exercise little social power. Karl Barth, like Calvin, also understands one's line of life fundamentally as an actualization of a person's creatureliness for the good order of society. See Ringma, 19-20.

<sup>4</sup> Every work of each member of God's covenant community, whether specialized or non-specialized, is essential to the one calling of God in fulfilling His mission to the world. See Minear, 42. Michell highlights one of the ironies of Christian history in what he calls the 'Catholic distortion,' which elevated the spiritual role at the expense of the secular in creating a Christian elite out of the priests, monks and nuns. On the other hand, he identifies the 'Protestant distortion,' which elevated the secular at the expense of the spiritual in the so-called "Protestant work ethic." See Brian Michell, "A Higher Call, in *Impact* 24, no. 2 (April-May 2000): 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* The following passages point to the equality of all trades before God: Deut. 4-8; Neh. 3-7; Amos 5; and Isa. 53. One example of a clergyman with a layman's task was Abraham Kuyper. As a clergyman, parliamentarian, and later as Prime Minister of Holland, Kuyper never contemplated the idea that he should cease to be a clergyman or that one task was more "Christian" than another. See Ringma, 33.



her work, and does not put premium on the work even of the religious as better than that of the one engaged in other vocation.

During the time of the apostle Paul, the Greeks had a different concept of manual labor and of preaching for money than the Hebrews did. The Greeks looked down on manual labor per se.<sup>1</sup> Proud of their culture and rhetoric, not to mention Athens as the cultural and intellectual center of the world at that time, and where all competing philosophies interplay, generally the Greeks preferred mental rather than physical labor. One prevailing notion for such skepticism towards manual labor is grounded on their belief that those who work by their hands become mentally dull.<sup>2</sup> William Barclay said that no free Greek would willingly work with his hands.<sup>3</sup> Further, the Greeks had no problems with earning a living through public speaking. They were good lecturers who derived their best income from it.<sup>4</sup> Paul encountered them in Athens. In the marketplace he met a group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, which resulted in his being brought before “the Areopagus.” (Acts 17:18-19). Situated on the famous Hill of Ares (the Greek name of the war god) whom the Romans call Mars, this court in Athens commanded great respect of the people.

Paul was brought to this court, not so much to be tried in a judicial sense, but, as a strange lecturer, to give an account of his teachings and claims.<sup>5</sup> Here Paul perceived that the philosophers and other false teachers of religion were taking advantage of the ordinary people. In contrast, Paul as a Jew, resolved not to make use of his intellect to mislead the people, and to be mistaken as one of them. As a Hebrew of Hebrews Paul understood the honor and dignity attached to manual labor, and as he himself said, “We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit.”<sup>6</sup>

In Greek society, which often regarded leisure as the ideal life, like the Epicureans do, the Jews greatly contributed much in elevating the status of manual labor. They believed that God Himself is a manual worker (Isa. 40:28), the originator and teacher of agriculture, and the techniques of farming (Isa. 28:26-29). In stressing the significance and dignity of manual labor, the writer of Proverbs said, “Diligent hands will rule . . . and serve before kings” (Prov. 12:24;

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<sup>1</sup> Dorr, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Influenced by Platonic philosophy, the Greeks, especially those belonging to the upper class, held the view that the minds of manual workers are stunted by their work, mentally as well as physically. Aristotle also said that a man who worked for his livelihood would never attain virtue, since he had no time and disposition to attain it. He will never be self-sufficient, because he must depend on the patronage of others to buy the goods or services he offers. See John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, ed. Walter A. Meeks (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1986), 116.

<sup>3</sup> William Barclay, *The Letter to the Corinthians: Daily Study Bible*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1956), 85.

<sup>4</sup> Dorr, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis Vaughan, *Acts: A Study Guide Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 119. In verse 21 Luke comments that the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking and listening to the latest ideas. Cleon, an Athenian politician and general in fifth-century B.C., expresses the same evaluation of his fellow Athenians with these words: “You are the best people at being deceived by something new that is said.” The Athenian orator Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.) also reproached his people for continually asking for new ideas in a day when Philip II of Macedon’s rise to power presented the city with a threat calling for actions, not words.” See Gaebelstein, 474.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 4:12-13, 2 Cor. 2:17. Cf. 2 Thess. 3:8. An example of how the Hebrews valued manual labor is found in the teachings of Moses. Before Israel entered the Promised Land, Moses commanded: “Every one of you take a hoe upon his shoulder and go and till the soil” (Lev. 25:5). The Midrash also says, “Though you find the land filled with good, say not, ‘I will sit down and do no planting.’ Plant for the sake of your children.” See *The Universal Bible Encyclopedia*, 499.

22:29). Generally, the Hebrews are aware that a person merits the divine blessing only if he performs some labor. In order to obtain that blessing, one must work with both hands.<sup>1</sup>

### **Skenopoiia from the Pauline Perspective**

The practice of tentmaking is common in the Bible, specially with Paul (Acts 18:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:12-18; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:3-9; Acts 20:34-35). At the beginning of the Christian era, nowhere could anyone find God's servant being fully paid by the church. God's servants were self-supporting, a practice familiar and acceptable to the early church.<sup>2</sup> Jesus was a carpenter, and several of his disciples, other than being chosen to spread the good news, were commercial fishermen (Mk. 1:17-19). Some of the names mentioned in the New Testament whose secular vocations became a blessing to the church were Priscilla and Aquila. As tentmakers by profession the couple became instrumental in helping Apollos, an eloquent preacher from Alexandria with a thorough knowledge of Scripture but had never heard of Jesus' baptism (See (Acts 18:24-26).

Another was Dorcas, a Christian woman from Joppa. As a woman full of good works, her acts of charity have touched many widows. Among Dorcas' charitable deeds was the clothing of the poor with garments she herself made (Acts. 9:39). S. F. Hunter says, "By following her example, numerous 'Dorcas Societies' in the Christian church perpetuate her memory."<sup>3</sup>

Lydia, a purple dealer from the city of Thyatira, in many ways became a blessing to the church at Philippi. As the first convert of Paul in Europe (Acts 16:14ff), Lydia ministered to Paul and his companions by offering her home to them. Her hospitality had resulted in the conversion of many who were at her household—employees, children or both followed her in baptism (Acts 16:14-15).

Further, Luke the evangelist was a physician, serving as an asset to Paul in their missionary journeys (Col 4:14). Zenas was a Christian lawyer and a friend of Paul (Titus 3:13). Barnabas was a landowner and Paul's partner in mission. Nicodemus and Joseph were members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish highest court. Erastus was a city treasurer. Cornelius was an officer and Zacchaeus was a tax collector.<sup>4</sup> God has led His church and extended His work through the examples of godly persons above who had to support themselves financially in order to serve Him.

However, the greatest example of a self-supporting witness was the apostle Paul. He was by trade a tentmaker. Through his tentmaking he was able to reach heathen lands for Christ. Paul's call to service, which happened simultaneously with his call to salvation at Damascus Road, was in a sense unique because his example as a bi-vocational missionary-preacher dismisses the common perception in mission that without monetary support from the sending church or mission agencies, mission will be hindered or stifled. As one who could be

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<sup>1</sup> *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, 448. John Hargreaves says, "If we today find that people who 'work with their own hands' receive less honor than those who do not, it is because the teachers in our schools have been trained to follow the tradition of the Greeks in this matter." (*A Guide to First Corinthians* [Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1995], 47).

<sup>2</sup> This was the norm during the first four centuries of church history. Any preacher who received a salary from the church in those times was perceived to be a hireling. Hence, the preacher's influence and authority remain questionable. See Dorr, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1979), s.v. "Dorcas," by S. F. Hunter.

<sup>4</sup> For a list of more self-supporting people in the New Testament, see Wilson, Jr., 21.

classified as the greatest prototype of a self-supporting witness,<sup>1</sup> Paul has inspired countless tentmaker-missionaries today. Dorr considers him as the "Father of Bivocationalism."<sup>2</sup>

Apparently, of all the apostles of Christ, Paul's accomplishments stand without equal (although he did not originally belong to the twelve disciples). As a man of distinction he seemed to have been willing to make himself uncomfortable in order to remain true to God. It seems like he spared no time propagating and defending the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16; 15:16; 1 Cor. 9:16; Gal. 1:6-9). With his impressive credential in scholarship, in religion, in citizenship, and his cosmopolitan upbringing in Tarsus,<sup>3</sup> God prepared Paul to go out into the entire world and to meet any man for the sake of the gospel.

Several reasons have been proposed as to why Paul was a tentmaker. First, his parents taught him how to make a tent. The Jewish oral tradition strictly commands every Jewish parent to teach his son a trade.<sup>4</sup> It is certain that Paul learned tentmaking, which he later practiced as a missionary preacher. Second, following the tradition of the rabbis who earned their livelihood through secular occupations, Paul believed that as a Rabbi he must take no money for preaching and teaching. He must support his living through his own work and efforts.<sup>5</sup> Third, as a Cilician it was practical for Paul to be engaged in tentmaking. The work with *celice* (the name for the wool produced in Cilicia) offers a promising job for a young man like him. Thus it was natural for him to be engaged in such an occupation.<sup>6</sup> Barclay explained:

Tarsus was in Cilicia. In that province there were herds of a certain kind of goat with a special kind of fleece. Out of that fleece a cloth called *celicum* was made which was much used for making tents and curtains and hangings. Doubtless Paul worked at that trade, although the word means more than a tent-maker; it means a leather-worker and Paul must have been a skilled craftsman.<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, Paul held a strong conviction that labor is honor; that it is dignified for a man to provide his own livelihood rather than to depend on others (2 Thess. 3:10-12; Eph. 4:28). Fifth, because of the negative examples of the priests, who turned many people against them, Paul did not want "to be classified with institutionally supported religious workers."<sup>8</sup> He thought that by being independent financially, he could restore the confidence of the people he was ministering to, and that he was not after their money and other favors. These were some of the significant factors why Paul supported himself by tentmaking. In some of his letters to the churches like the one in Corinth, in Thessalonica, and in

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<sup>1</sup> Dale Holloway, "Consider Bi-vocational Ministry," *Church Administration*, April 1996, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Dorr, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Paul had been a respected Pharisee (Acts 23:6); (Phil. 3:5), a Jew of the purest blood, and a rabbi with the highest possible academic attainment. See William Barclay, *Ambassador for Christ: The Life and Teaching of Paul* (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Church of Scotland Youth Committee, 1960), 17, 20.

<sup>4</sup> The Talmud (Jewish oral tradition), next to the Hebrew Bible (the "Old Testament" as Christians call it), is one of the most important writings for the Jews. See James Limburg, ed. and trans., *Judaism: An Introduction for Christians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 137.

<sup>5</sup> Barclay, 147.

<sup>6</sup> George W. Redding, "Paul: Staking His Ministry in Tentmaking." *The Tentmakers' Journal* 3, no. 2 (July/August 1980): 3.

<sup>7</sup> William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1955), 147.

<sup>8</sup> Dorr, 9. The aristocratic priesthood had lost the confidence of the people because of laxity and avarice. Their title as "priests" was tainted morally and became a negative word for many. Barclay observed: "Whereas the average family ate meat only once a week, the priest ate meat daily and suffered from so rich a diet." See Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 89.

Ephesus, Paul gave specific reasons why he had been a bi-vocational servant of Christ.

### **Paul's Tentmaking Ministry in Relation to His Task as a Missionary (Acts 18:1-4)**

As God's servant, Paul makes use of his trade as a means to expand his mission. After his *apologia* (defense) of Christ as the resurrected Lord with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, with boldness Paul then came to Corinth (*helthen eis ton Korinthon*). Upon his arrival in the city, he found Priscilla and Aquila, a Jewish Christian couple who, like him, were also tentmakers (*skenopoioi*).

Priscilla's name always comes before her husband (Acts 18:18-19,26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19), and some New Testament scholars believed that she came from a higher social class than her husband or was in some way more important.<sup>1</sup> Presumably, the couple had a tentmaking business in Rome before they came to Corinth. Whether or not they were Christians when Paul met them is not known. All that is stated in Acts 18:3 is that a common trade brought them together, which was tentmaking. A review of the Greek word *omoteknon* in verse 3 will shed light why Priscilla, Aquila, and Paul were drawn to each other. The word *omoteknon* means "same trade,"<sup>2</sup> and it refers to the tentmaking or awning activities of the couple and Paul. They were *skenopoioi* (tentmakers) or leather, tent-cloth workers. Perhaps Paul and Aquila used one of the small shops in Corinth to contact people with the gospel.

Etymologically, *skenopoios* (singular) is derived from the words *skene* and it means, "tent" and *poiia*, "a pitcher, maker or doer especially of a tent."<sup>3</sup> In those times tents were used for soldiers, for those attending the Isthmian Games, for passengers with a stopover; awnings were used to cover the Forum in Rome, to cover walk ways, as protection from the sun in private houses or at the beach and in the theater, while leather was used for coats, curtains, and tents.<sup>4</sup> In the Greek usage *skene*, consistently means "tent," gives the idea of transitoriness, although later it was used in a general sense to mean "dwelling or lodging."<sup>5</sup>

The use of tents is common in Israel (Gen. 12:8, Ex. 18:7; Num. 16:26-27, Josh 7:21ff, Judg. 6:5, 2 Kgs. 7:7-8). In the Septuagint *skene* occurs some 435 times. About two-thirds of the references are to the tent of meeting. Originally, it is the place where one meets God rather than the place where he resides, and *skene* (or *skenoma*) is chosen as the rendering, not because it bears the general

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<sup>1</sup> Gaebelein, 481. Willimon says that Priscilla, consistent with Luke's emphasis upon the role of women in the early Christian community, had become a leader of the Corinthian Christians. See William Willimon, *Interpretation-Acts: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988. B. H. Carroll remarks, "Priscilla had a more decided character than her husband." (*The Acts*, ed. J. B. Cranfill, [Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1947], 328).

<sup>2</sup> Kurt Aland, et al, eds. *The Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies), 488. *Skenopoioi* (tentmakers) means "goat-hair cloth, used for tents." It was a notable export from Paul's native province of Cilicia. Lake and Cadbury, however, argue that the word at this time meant a "leatherworker." See Nolan B. Harmon, ed. *The Interpreter's Bible: Acts of the Apostles and Romans Vol 9* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1954), 241.

<sup>3</sup> Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol 3 (Band 3, Lieberungen Verlag W. Kohlhammer GmbH, Stuttgart, Germany 1982); reprint, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 251. The verb form *skenopoieo* refers to the "pitching of tent." See also Isaiah 13:20; 22:15.

<sup>4</sup> *The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary* (1991), s.v. "skene," by Thoralf Gilbrant and Tor Inge. See also Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 276.

<sup>5</sup> Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 1040.

sense of dwelling, but because it represents the original sense of tent. In time the Hebrews regarded the tabernacle as the place of God's dwelling. Similarly, apocalyptic literature maintains that God dwells in a tent (Rev. 21:3, Zech 2:14-15 and even Ezek. 37:27). In addition, some poetic statements in the Bible refer to God living in *skene* (Ps. 18:11; Job 36:29), giving His people protection. The psalmist, for instance, says, "For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling" (27:5). Corollary to this, while Ex. 26:30 presupposes a prototype for a heavenly tabernacle, Kittel and Friedrich say, "this does not imply that in heaven God lives in a *skene*,"<sup>1</sup>

In nonbiblical Judaism Philo and Josephus were said to have used the word *skene* from two different hermeneutical perspectives. Allegorically, for Philo, wisdom is a tent in which the wise dwell, and the tent of meeting symbolizes virtue. Josephus on the other hand, literally interprets the word *skene* to refer to ordinary tents, in connection with tabernacles, and as a specific term for the tent of meeting. This is the *prote skene* compared to Solomon's temple.<sup>2</sup> *Skene* occurs 20 times in the New Testament, 10 of those in Hebrews. The term refers especially to the tent and booth, and designates for the tabernacle of levitical sacrificial worship (Heb. 13:10). Luke also speaks of the eternal habitations or dwelling in *skenai* of the righteous (Luke 16:9).

Despite the full meaning or theological nuances of *skene* both in the Old and New Testaments, the Bible simply and literally describes Paul as a tentmaker. Although at times Paul uses *skenos* metaphorically by equating the body to a tent<sup>3</sup> (designating the corruptibility of earthly existence), nowhere does the apostle convey the idea that it has apparent connection to the cultic Tabernacle in the Old Testament or the Temple (*skenoma*) in Jerusalem. On the contrary, Paul's emphasis on *skeno* as God's tent or dwelling place is centered on house churches (Rom. 16:3-5, 23; I Cor. 16:19). It is important to note that Paul's trade as a *skenopoiios* also links with his view of *skene* as a tent of meeting or place for worship, i.e., in a house. The church in Corinth met in Aquila and Priscilla's house, and while Paul stayed with the couple, they became associates not only in making tents, but also in spreading the good news to the city and elsewhere. Verse 4 says,

"Every Sabbath Paul reasoned (*dielegeito*, the imperfect indicative of *dialegomai*, which means, "to discuss," "to dispute," "to argue") in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks" (*epeithen loudaious kai Hellenas*).

Making Christ known in the entire world was Paul's ultimate motive for service. Apparently, his tentmaking activity or job was the means to help him advance God's mission and evangelization in the world. Against the backdrop of a materialistic and gain-oriented society of Corinth, "the apostle Paul did not go down in history as the first century textile magnate, but as the pioneer church planter to the unreached Gentiles."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 1041.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See 2 Cor. 5:1,4 NIV.

<sup>4</sup> Robertson McQuilkin, "Six Inflammatory Questions," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (July 1994): 262. The temptation to be sidetracked by materialism is common among bi-vocational ministers. This, however, was not the case for Paul because of his firm commitment to Christ. For a full discussion on certain fallacies and assumptions on bi-vocational ministry, see Dorr, 53-55.

## Paul's Tentmaking Ministry as a Form of Self-Sacrifice (1 Cor. 9:12-18)

Discipleship often entails self-sacrifice. This seemed to be Paul's experience with Christ who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. The apostle's crucial encounter with the risen Lord at Damascus unveils two significant truths about the whole gamut of Christian discipleship. On the one hand, God revealed to Paul the requisite of conversion before he could become an authentic witness for Him. Second, concomitant to conversion and the call to witness, God showed to Paul how much he was going to suffer for His name's sake (Acts. 9: 3-9, 16). True to what God had said to Ananias, Paul's experience in Corinth was difficult. The condition of his labors in the city was hard. B. H. Carroll points out,

He was afflicted in body very much. He was very weak, and the physical condition caused his mind to despond. The opposition to his ministry was baneful and deadly, and He knew that those Jews had the spirit to assault him on the streets, anywhere they met him. His hunger and poverty were such that he broke down under it. It is the only place in the Bible where it looked like Paul was going to be whipped.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the above limitations, the primacy of God's work stood paramount to Paul. Jesus Christ passionately gripped him, and this led him to do anything to ensure that in everything Christ might be preeminent (Col. 1:18).

There are several reasons why Paul earned a living, instead of accepting support from the church, when he was in Corinth. First, Paul did not want to hinder (Gk. *enkopto*) the spread of the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 9:12-13). Literally, as a verb *enkopto* (*en*, in, *kopto*, to cut) was used of impeding persons by breaking up the road, or by placing an obstacle sharply in the path; hence, metaphorically, of hindrances in the way of reaching others, Rom. 15:22; of hindering progress in the Christian life. In some manuscripts the words used are *anakopto* (Gal. 5:7) and *ekopto* (1 Pet. 3:7), meaning, "to cut out or repulse."<sup>2</sup> There has been a considerable speculation on what Paul meant by the word "hindrance" (*enkope*) in this passage. He himself does not specify, but a closer look of vv. 15-18 gives the reader a clue of what he meant here, i.e., he does not want to be associated or linked with some itinerant philosophers and teachers of the law who peddle their "wisdom" or religious instruction for a fee. By preaching the gospel freely, that is, without accepting pay, the apostle believes that the *enkope to euangelio to Christou* will be removed. Paul is a man committed to the gospel, and here he does not want anything to obstruct his evangelizing in any way. As an apostle, he had everything to claim his rights.

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<sup>1</sup> See Carroll, 330. Part of Paul's problem, says Calvin, was the presence of false apostles who had crept into the church. They not only looked upon Paul's simplicity and then despised his authority, and even the Gospel itself with contempt, but, driven by their selfish ambition, they also split the church into various parties, and made it their aim to promote their honor, rather than Christ's kingdom and the people's welfare. For Friedrich Christian Baur, the disputes in the church of Corinth was the result of the long standing disagreement between the two types of early Christianity that existed in Paul's time: (1) the law-obedient, particularistic Jewish Christians led by Peter (Judaizers) and (2) the law-free, universalist Gentile Christians led by Paul (Paulinists). See Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul* (Edinburgh, UK: T and T Clark Ltd., 1987), 1-2. Leon Morris sees the opposition against Paul as coming from both the Jews and the Gentiles in the city. (*The International Commentary on the New Testament, I & II Epistles to the Thessalonians* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing House, 1959], 22.

<sup>2</sup> W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, with introductions by W. Graham Scroggie and F.F. Bruce (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company 1966), 221.

The word “right” (Gk. *exousia*) has several shades of meaning. It could mean “authority” or “power to decide.”<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament, *exousia* primarily denotes the absolute possibility of action that is proper to God alone as the source of all power and legality, while in the Septuagint it expresses the concept of “God’s unrestricted sovereignty.”<sup>2</sup> In I Cor. 9:12, *exousias*, a genitive singular of *exousia* (right), means “authority which can either be asserted or not, depending on the circumstances.”<sup>3</sup> In the case of Paul, he chose not to assert his prerogative of demanding his right. He says, “But we have not used this right” (*all’ ouk ekresametha te exousia taute*). This phrase literally hints a denial of Paul to exercise his rights as an apostle. He declines to use his freedom, and here the apostle understands *exousia* “not as an intrinsic autonomy” to be exercised, but freedom in God’s kingdom by faith,<sup>4</sup> i.e., one that is fitting or edifying in a given situation. Richards explains:

As an apostle, Paul had a “right” to be supported by those he served, but he did not use this “right.” Paul’s point is that the existence of a “right”—or an area in which a person has freedom to choose—does not mean that he or she must exercise that right. Paul said, rather, that though himself was free, he had chosen to make himself “a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. That is, Paul chose to let the convictions of others restrain him in the exercise of his freedom whenever this would help him to influence them and so carry out his ministry. Rather he chose to labor to support himself. And there were other rights he chose not to use.<sup>5</sup>

Verse 13 starts with *ouk oidate* (know ye not), a negative statement introducing a question, which expects a positive answer. To stress his point, Paul defended his right to material support from the churches by asserting his equality with the other apostles and with the brothers of the Lord, whose custom was to receive maintenance from those to whom they ministered (vv.1-6). To support his argument, he drew illustrations from experiences that were common to people of his day. He cited the example of the “soldier” (*stratiotes*) who went into the battle while someone else raised the money to support the fight (v. 7a). He also reminded the church at Corinth that the man who planted a vineyard certainly had the right to eat its fruit (v. 7b). Finally, he wrote that the “shepherd” (*poimen*) who fed the flock had the privilege of drinking the milk produced (v. 7c).

An analysis of his illustrations above apparently point to a hired servant, and Paul seemed to have not ruled out every right of a hired worker. In fact, he appealed to God’s law in verse 8 which could imply that the minister deserved the church’s support like the hired servants in verse 7 as church support is believed to be legitimate for those who preach the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14). Here he alludes to the past command of Jesus concerning support for those who preach the gospel (Luke 10:7; Matt. 10:10). The term he uses for “order” or “command” is *diataxen* (an aorist indicative, from active *diatasso*). But in his case, however, he preferred to foreground his right. All that he wanted was to preach the gospel “free of charge” (*adapanon*, means “without expense”, v. 18).<sup>6</sup> One could see this as a sacrifice

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers Jr. and Rogers III, 368.

<sup>2</sup> Kittel and Friedrich, 229.

<sup>3</sup> Rogers Jr. and Rogers III, 368.

<sup>4</sup> Kittel and Friedrich, 230.

<sup>5</sup> *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (1985), s.v. “right” (*exousia*), by Laurence Richards.

<sup>6</sup> Dungan says that Paul can be charged for duplicity by deliberately setting aside the Lord’s command. But Gordon Fee says, “Paul’s explanation of his action does not relativize the Lord’s command, but only reflects his own attitude toward

on the part of the apostle. Prior aptly says that preachers who insist on their rights cannot fitly present the gospel. They are only looking for profit out of the work of evangelism.<sup>1</sup>

The second reason proposed why Paul remained as a tentmaker-missionary is he did not want to be a burden to the church (2 Cor.11:9). In the Greek text Paul used the word *baros* for burden. *Baros* as a noun denotes a “weight, or a demand on one’s resources, whether material (1 Thess. 2:6) or spiritual (Gal 6:2). The other term is *katanarkao*. As a verb it means, “to be chargeable to others.”<sup>2</sup> Thus the phrase, “*kai en panti abare humin emauton eteresa kai tereso* expresses Paul’s resolve not to be a financial problem or burden to the local church in Corinth. The tone of phrase expresses both a present and future wish of Paul not to press for any monetary reward from the brethren.

The Corinthian church was newly founded and had some internal problems at that time. Vernon Davis comments: “While the Corinthian fellowship had great potential, its history was marked by dissension, confusion in theology, distortion in worship, and apathy in moral concerns.”<sup>3</sup> If Paul had accepted money from the churches in Macedonia, it was because he did not want to become a burden to the Corinthians. Right from the beginning, Paul explained to the church that he did not want to avail of his right for support. It was already a settled policy for him, and for this in fact, he was strongly criticized by his opponents.<sup>4</sup> This appears to contrast with the practice of the false apostles who took advantage of the poor and ignorant people. Ernest Best wrote that in Paul’s time there were many traveling philosophers and teachers who accepted money for their instruction and sometimes exacted higher fees. Some of them appeared to be not scrupulous in the value they gave for those fees. Like any commodity up for sale in the market, so was the teaching of religion in Paul’s time. False teachers made exorbitant profits from anyone interested in understanding religion.<sup>5</sup> Had Paul accepted the

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his rights and has nothing to do with what the Corinthians should have done.” (*The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987], 411.

<sup>1</sup> David Prior, *The Message of I Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, ed. John R. W. Stott (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1985), 157. Paul had enough sufferings in Corinth and he endured all things in order to ensure that the gospel will not be hindered. “A man who is ready to endure anything for the gospel,” says, Prior, “is not interested in his rights” (Ibid.). John Hargreaves notes that Paul was able to give up his right to be rewarded because he earned enough money by making tents. Carroll refutes the argument by emphasizing that Paul’s own labor as a tentmaker was a cheap labor; that he did not make enough to live on, and part of the time he was half starved, literally. See Hargreaves, 113. Also see B. H. Carroll, 329.

<sup>2</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), 157-58.

<sup>3</sup> Vernon Davis, *Study Guide to II Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians*, (Nashville: TN: The Sunday School Board of Southern Baptist Convention, 1974), 5.

<sup>4</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The New Century Bible Commentary, I & II Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 238. By living from the strength of his own hands, Paul was beholden to no one; he kept his dignity intact and so he could conduct his work with much freedom (Acts 20:34-35). As an independent man, relying on his skills to live, Paul could say to the believers in Corinth, “I am free from all men,” yet he chose to be a slave of all (1 Cor. 9:19). One interpretation on the charge against Paul’s refusal to accept fees from the church is linked to the teaching of Jesus that “they who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). Gerd Theissen describes this as a deliberate attempt of the apostle to evade the requirement of charismatic poverty, a poverty which renounces regular begging but—in reliance on one’s own religious and social status as an “apostle,” a “prophet, and so forth—makes one dependent on other’s generosity.” For the itinerant preachers Paul displays a lack of trust in the grace of God, who will supply the material needs of His missionaries. Hence, he is not a real apostle (1 Cor. 9:1), for he has offended against the norm of the primitive Christian ideal of itinerant charismatics set down by Jesus himself. (*The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, ed. and trans. and with an introduction by John Riches [Edinburgh, Great Britain: T & T Clark Limited, 1975], 43).

<sup>5</sup> Ernest Best, *II Corinthians*, ed. James L. Mays (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1987), 105.



support of the Corinthian brethren, it would be easy for his critics to misrepresent him, and some of the Corinthian Christians would have listened to their malicious misrepresentation.

For Paul he would rather deprive himself (1 Cor. 9:15) than have his converts think he was taking advantage of them. Although the people in Corinth did not seem to appreciate the extent of Paul's sacrifice for them, he ended his defense for self-support and for refusing local church support at Corinth with these famous words: "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you" (2 Cor. 12:15).

### **Paul's Tentmaking Ministry as a Form of Modeling (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:3-9; Acts 20:34-35)**

The letters of Paul to the Thessalonians and his subsequent work in Ephesus provide another reason why tentmaking has always been a part of his method in doing ministry. Encouraged by the report of Timothy upon his mission trip to the Thessalonian church, about how they grew in their faith, and how they desired to see him again, Paul's discouraging ministry in Corinth got a new boost and inspiration. Consequently, from Corinth the encouraged Apostle preached the word with great liberty in the city, and almost simultaneously sat down to write the Epistle to the Thessalonians, thanking them for their faith in Christ.

Paul wrote to the church of Thessalonica with three goals in mind: (1) that his message would be without error, (2) that he himself as messenger would be without impurity, and (3) that his motivation would be without deceit.<sup>1</sup>

There are four possible reasons why Paul abstained from receiving financial support: (1) because of his affectionate love for his converts (1 Thess. 2:7 and 2 Cor. 12:14f); cf. 2 Thess. 11:11; (2) he wants to be an example to the Thessalonians by working with his own hands (2 Thess. 3:7-9); (3) he did not want to be misunderstood as a sophist, who peddles his teaching and miracles, cf. 1 Thess 2:5 and 2 Cor. 2:17, 11:20, 12:14b, 17 and also that he did not want to deter poor people from becoming Christians; and (4) he considers himself a slave for the Gospel of Christ, and as such he cannot lay claim to being paid for working.<sup>2</sup>

In Paul's time Thessalonica was a heathen city and the natural center of commerce in Macedonia. It is said that the name of the city in earlier days was Therma (from its hot springs) but Cassander renamed it after his wife, the half-sister of Alexander the Great. In 167 BC the Romans took over the country, and the city became the capital of one of the four areas into which it was divided. When the whole country was organized as a single province in 146 BC, Thessalonica became the capital city.<sup>3</sup>

Paul's decision to support himself financially in Thessalonica seems to have been influenced by the problems of covetousness (*pleonexias*), the fear of being burdensome (*en barei*), and idleness or disorderly walk (*ataktos peripatountos*) among some church members (1 Thess. 2:3-4,9; 2 Thess. 3:6). The word *ataktos* is related to *argos*, a term used for idle or being unfruitful. The term is also applied

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<sup>1</sup> Paul had no ulterior motive for preaching, such as the desire for money and popularity. Rather, he preached because of his personal conviction that God had entrusted him the gospel (1 Thess. 2:3-4).

<sup>2</sup> Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power* (Philadelphia: PA: Fortress Press, 1978), 89-93.

<sup>3</sup> Howard I. Marshall, *The New Testament Century Bible: I & II Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 2.

metaphorically in the sense of being ineffective or worthless.<sup>1</sup> This must have been foremost in the mind of Paul when he addressed the idle in the church. In spite of his previous instructions against them (1 Thess. 4:11; 5:14), the trouble continued to bother the brethren. Paul, therefore, exhorted the lazy to work hard and to do good; he also urged the members of the church to withdraw fellowship from these vagrants so they might change their ways.

Some brethren in Thessalonica had misinterpreted Paul's doctrine of the *parousia* or the second advent of Christ. Their unwillingness to work could have been encouraged by the belief that the *parousia* was at hand, so there was no need to provide for the future. Howard I. Marshall notes, "It was their heightened sense of belief in the second advent of Christ that led them to this continuing attitude of indiscipline and laziness."<sup>2</sup> To prove their complete economic independence on others, Paul said, "*ouk etaktesamen en umin, oude dorean arton ephagomen para tinon*" (we behaved not disorderly among you; nor for nought did we eat bread from anyone without paying, 1 Thess. 3:7).

The phrase "to eat bread" is a semitism and it means "to get a living." In the following verse, Paul uses the word *poros*. In Greek it means, "toil until one is weary."<sup>3</sup> Here Paul repeats the point he had spoken earlier in the First Epistle (1 Thess. 2:9) because some continued to act like parasites. He seemed to prove to them that he, together with his fellow apostles, worked for their living not only to avoid causing hardship (*epibaresai*, aorist active infinitive, meaning, "to be heavy") on others, but also to set themselves as examples. The Greek rendering is *mimeisthai*, from infinitive *mimeomai*, which means, "to imitate." It implies the setting of oneself as a pattern or type (*typos*), or example."<sup>4</sup>

New Testament scholars differ in their interpretation of Paul's letter in 1 Thess. 2:1-12. Ernst von Dubschutz calls it the apostle's apologetics as a result of his unjustified fear that the believers in Thessalonica thought ill of him for leaving them so quickly.<sup>5</sup> Like von Dubschutz, Martin Dibelius claims that Paul just wanted to refute the charges of false teachers against him saying that his message is tinged with selfish motives, hence a charlatan.<sup>6</sup> Contrary to the position of von Dubschutz and Dibelius, Abraham Malherbe expresses a view that Paul's letter in 1 Thess. 2:1-12 was not apologetic but paranetic. Malherbe argues that Paul was not defending himself against actual accusations, but was only presenting himself and his companions as a *paranesis*, i.e., as a model for the Thessalonians to follow.<sup>7</sup> In ancient rhetoric and epistolography, one of the most persuasive proofs of an argument is an appeal to the speaker's ethos, that is, his character, which provides the audience with examples of moral behavior.<sup>8</sup> Apparently, Paul used his tentmaking as a form of modeling so others may imitate him, while fulfilling a ministry to God.

In Ephesus, the self-giving quality of love, which Paul had learned from Christ, and the burden to help the weak motivated him to remain as a tentmaker.

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<sup>1</sup> Vine, 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 218. See also the *Dictionary of Paul's and His Letters*, (1993) s.v. "Letters to the Thessalonians" by W. W. Simpson, Jr.

<sup>3</sup> Rogers Jr. and Rogers III, 486.

<sup>4</sup> Paul frequently sets himself as an illustration or example of that which he enjoins others. See Nolan Harmon, ed. *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1955), 336.

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "An Apology for the Apocalyptic Function of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 68 (December 1997): 75.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

The apostle stayed in Ephesus for three years—his longest tenure of service so far in a single church.<sup>1</sup> Here Paul taught and preached publicly and privately (Acts 20:20), and during his ministry in the city, “all the people who lived in the province of Asia, both Jews and Gentiles, heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:10). With his dynamism and leadership in ministry, together with the help of some faithful witnesses throughout the province, the preaching of the word spread with great result. He was apparently an indefatigable preacher whose sermons focused mainly on ‘repentance to God and faith in Jesus Christ’ (Acts 20:21).

Barclay wrote:

One of the chief industries of Ephesus was the making of little replicas of the temple. Pilgrims, who came from all over, took this home, as souvenirs of their visit to Ephesus. The manufacturers of these models suddenly found that their trade was drying up. Christ had so triumphed that Diana was being swept from the field. Two things were touched—the pride of the people in their temple and their pockets. The result was an infuriated mass meeting in the city theatre. It was only with difficulty that Paul was stopped from addressing that meeting which would assuredly have lynched him.<sup>2</sup>

The Book of Acts showed that Paul had to go so he will be spared from the mob, but before leaving on his fateful trip to Jerusalem, he met with the elders of the church (Acts 20:17) for a final farewell. While reviewing his ministry in Ephesus, he revealed to them how he had supported himself and those who labored with him (Acts 20:34). He met them purposely to (1) encourage the brethren to be faithful in their care of the church which he was now leaving to their guidance and direction; (2) to convince them that despite the risk or imprisonment and affliction that awaits him in Jerusalem, it is his duty to press on in order to testify the gospel of the grace of God; and (3) to appeal to the supreme motive of unselfish love by humbly telling them of his own life in Ephesus as an example.<sup>3</sup>

In Ephesus, Paul’s motivation for self-support was anchored on two reasons: (1) to help the weak (adj. *asthenes*), and (2) to experience the fact that giving is more blessed than receiving (“*Makarion estin didonai mallon e lambanein*,” Acts 20:35a). The weak (*hasthenes*) he mentioned in the text referred to those “without strength” or the poor (*penichros*) members of the church. Self-support relieved them of the financial burden of supporting a team of missionaries.<sup>4</sup> Paul was determined that no one should ever say he earned his living by the preaching of the truth. In his speech (v. 35b) he quoted a saying from Jesus, which was not found in the gospels (See John 21:25). Interestingly, this

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<sup>1</sup> Dorr, 13.

<sup>2</sup> William Barclay, *Ambassador for Christ*, 11. The greatest of the glories of Ephesus was the Temple of Diana, which was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was 425 feet long by 220 feet wide by 60 feet high. Barclay provides a graphic and detailed description of the Temple of Diana and how the people worshipped it. *ibid.*, 108-109. James Moorhead stresses that the trouble in Ephesus was related to the previous story in that the preaching of Paul was viewed as a threat to the trade in magic and religion that centered in Ephesus. Although Paul had not preached this to the people but in the story of the seven sons of Sceva, the believers recognized it for themselves. Burning the massive amount of magical artifacts would have been traumatic to these who traded in the same. (*The Reign of Christ and the Early Church: Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles and the Ten Letters of Paul* [Makati, Philippines: Church Strengthening Ministry 1994], 860).

<sup>3</sup> Charles R. Erdman, *An Exposition of the Book of Acts* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1969), 140-41.

<sup>4</sup> Dorr, 13-14. Additional information regarding the advantages of tentmaking ministry is found in *Tentmaking Missionaries: Principles and Employment for our Lord Jesus Christ* (United Kingdom: The Missionary Training Service, 1998), 7-8. See also, Gary E. Farley and Dale Holloway, “Bivocationalism and Bold Mission Thrust,” available from <http://www.pickens.net/~pbale-document; Internet; accessed 28 October 2001>.

teaching of Jesus concerning Christian liberality, which is nowhere else recorded by the gospel writers, came out as Paul's explanation of why he was a bi-vocational missionary in Ephesus.

## **Paul's Theology of the Church, Ministry and Spiritual Gifts**

Theology played a significant part on Paul as a missionary. Specifically, his theology of the church, theology of the ministry, and theology of spiritual gifts had some bearing and relevance to his work as a tentmaker-missionary. His theology of the above defined not only his views on issues relative to mission, but also served as his philosophical foundation for ministry.

## **Paul's Theology of the Church as the Body of Christ**

The theology of Paul about the church presents a solid foundation why it was essential for him to remain as a tentmaker-missionary. Despite the criticisms hurled against him by those who think that refusing aid from the local churches was uncharacteristic of an apostle, Paul unrelentingly remained unperturbed. His theology apparently gave him the basis for defending his position as a tentmaker.

Millard J. Erickson says, "Theology is necessary because truth and experience are related."<sup>1</sup> This seemed to be the case of Paul. For him tentmaking was neither unethical nor degrading for people who earn a living while serving God. In his view tentmaking was a helpful tool in presenting the gospel to as many people as possible.

Paul's theology of the church as the body of Christ appeared to have originated from his belief that all members, whether clergy or laity, are interdependent, not independent of each other in ministry. Using the image of the human body, with its interconnected parts, the apostle believes that every member of the church is valuable in the ministry (1 Cor. 12:21-22). He views the clergy as equippers of the laity (Eph. 4:12); he also believes that the responsibility for doing ministry belongs to the whole people of God, who comprise His body (1 Cor. 12:5-7). In addition, he is convinced that in Christ's body no one is above the other irrespective of a person's status or nature of work—either religious or secular, for all are equal with God, who has called them to bear witness (1 Cor. 12:25b).

By calling the church as the body of Christ with its inherent inter-relational function, Paul believed that much can be accomplished in Christ if and only when His body unites together in mutual relationship, cooperating with each other in ministry (1 Cor. 12:24-27). Taking some cues from Paul's analogy of the church in 1 Cor. 12:14-20, Rick Warren notes that one of the missing components in the contemporary church is the need to understand the concept of interdependence. Warren believes that a culture of individualism and independence must be replaced with the biblical concepts of interdependence and mutuality.<sup>2</sup> In view of

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<sup>1</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1983; reprint, (Manila, Philippines: Church Growth Ministries, 1995), 29. This is where Nacpil's "Asian Critical Thinking" makes theology and ministry becomes relevant to the church in Asia. The critical Asian principle not only helps Asian churches identify Asian realities peculiar to them, but also makes them the catalysts for changing and contextualizing Western theology and of doing ministry that is most appropriate to them. See Emerito P. Nacpil, "The Critical Asian Principle," in *What Asian Christians Are Thinking*, ed., Douglas Elwood (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1976), 3-6. Asian missionaries, ministers, and other Christian tentmakers may find Paul's tentmaking trade quite pragmatic and relevant to their own experience.

<sup>2</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995; reprint, Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature Inc., 1998), 369. See P.T. O'Brien, *Dictionary of Paul's and His Letters*, s.v., "Church," 128.

the various functions of each part within Christ's body, Paul hints further that one's particular type of work is not special or more significant than the others in the church.

Following Paul's theology of equality in ministry, Cirilo Rigos stresses that even the ordination of a minister does not put one superior than the laity. He adds that the minister's ordination is only an assignment to a specific function within the body of Christ, so that the priesthood of the entire body may be exercised more efficiently.<sup>1</sup> Roy Fish and J. E. Conant also maintain that the segregation of the laity from the clergy, historically, has hindered the ministry of the church to the world. Both observed that this distinction has led the laity to withdraw from their witnessing ministry until it was finally regarded as the exclusive right of the clergy.<sup>2</sup> Following Paul's high view of the laity, and in protest against the elitist and clergy-dominated ministry, Fenhagen, citing Kraemer, implies that everything in the Church should revolve around the so-called 'ordinary member of the Body of Christ.' Therefore, its apparatus has to be directed towards that end, not towards the maintenance of the clergy in the local church.<sup>3</sup>

### **Paul's Theology of the Ministry**

A theological premise that undergirds and defines Paul's understanding of the Christian ministry seems to have been influenced by his extensive understanding of the world and mankind. As an apostle who has traveled extensively, propagating the good news to both Jews and Gentiles, there is no doubt Paul possessed a superior knowledge of the predicament of the world in general and of humankind in particular.

In his letter to the Romans, he describes the groaning of the whole creation as in the pains of childbirth, and the hope that someday it will be liberated from its bondage and decay through the mediation of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:22ff). Paul views the whole creation as the act of God, and "since God as Creator is the explanation for the existence of the world and for human existence,"<sup>4</sup> this God, Paul underscores, must be worshipped alone, and no one else (Acts 17:23-24). It is likely that Paul's view of humankind as a fallen creature has some bearing on his belief that, fundamentally, sin distorts humankind's attitude towards the Creator. He says:

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Fenhagen discusses the concept of mutuality in ministry by emphasizing the importance of collegiality in church. In his view, mutuality requires a certain degree of commitment to a goal in which the gifts of both clergy and laity can be affirmed and developed in an atmosphere of common trust and love for one another. See James C. Fenhagen, *Mutual Ministry: New Vitality for the Local Church* (New York, NY: The Seabury Press, 1977), 30-31

<sup>1</sup> Cirilo A. Rigos, *Rebuilding Our Broken Faith*, with a foreword by Jovito R. Salonga (Manila, Philippines: Cosmopolitan Church, United Church of Christ in the Philippines 1998), 59. In emphasizing the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, Luther's words, says Donald G. Bloesch, are relevant: "All Christians are priests, and all priests are Christians. Worthy of anathema is any assertion that a priest is anything else than a Christian. All Christians have the power and must fulfill the commandment to preach and to come before God with our intercessions for one another and to sacrifice ourselves to God." (*Essentials for Evangelical Theology: Life Ministry and Hope*, vol. 2 (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978), 112. Father Bel San Luis, SVD, also affirms the ministry of the laity to Christ. In his article "God Calls Not Only Priests," he quotes the *Decree of the Laity of Vatican II* which states, "Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, the laity are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself" *Manila Bulletin*, 3 February 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Roy Fish and J.E. Conant, *Every Member Evangelism for Today* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976), 26. Harry Goodykoontz calls the sharp division of Christian people into two classes, clergy and laity, "as a colossal error in the history of the church." (*The Minister in the Reformed Tradition* [Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963], 45).

<sup>3</sup> Fenhagen, 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (1984), s.v. "Doctrine of Creation," by D. K. McKim.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and served created things rather than the Creator. Because of this God gave them to shameful lusts. . . they have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity.<sup>1</sup>

Erickson enumerates the three causes of sin of humankind.<sup>2</sup> The first is ignorance. He uses the Greek *agnoia*, meaning “willful ignorance.” It refers to a person’s decision to choose the other way, instead of what could have been the right way for one to follow. The second is error or the human tendency to go astray, to make mistakes. The Hebrew term is called *shagah*. Literally, it describes of sheep that strays from the flock (Ezek. 34:6). Although the related word *mishgeh* is used of an accidental mistake in Genesis 43:12, the verb generally refers to an error in moral conduct. The third is inattention. The word used in Greek is *parakon*, which means “to hear amiss or incorrectly.” It is disobeying or hearing without heeding (Matt. 18:17; Mark 5:36) when God is speaking (Rom. 5:19).<sup>3</sup>

Despite all of these, however, God, according to Paul, continues to search for humankind. Apparently, the God whom he believed is merciful who has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus. Through the death of Jesus, His Son, Paul believes that salvation has finally been effected. In Ephesians 5:2 Paul describes the death of Christ as “a fragrant sacrifice to God.” This seems to be the heart of Paul’s gospel. Paul tends to believe that the Christian gospel and the Christian ministry are fundamentally inseparable. His understanding and emphasis of the gospel apparently shaped the theological content of his ministry.

Victor Paul Furnish summarizes,

Paul’s theological reflection and his missionary zeal were but two sides of the same coin, two equally necessary and necessary equal modes of his Christian obedience. His commitment to the Gentile mission was profoundly rooted in his understanding of the gospel—that is, in his “theology.” His “theology,” in turn, took shape within the context of his ministry. This interrelationship between theology and ministry, between the gospel and mission was undoubtedly Paul’s greatest contribution to the church.<sup>4</sup>

The word “ministry” comes from *diakonia*, a Greek term which means, “service.” Service is one of the spiritual gifts Paul mentions in Rom. 12:7. He uses the term to refer to the distribution of food to the widows and to the work or service of the word (Acts 6:1, 4). *Diakonia* for Paul is an all-inclusive term embracing both the preaching of the gospel (religious) and other secular types of occupations done by the believers.

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1:21-26, 29 NIV.

<sup>2</sup> Erickson, 564.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 567.

<sup>4</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, “Theology and Ministry in Pauline Letters,” in *A Biblical Basis for Ministry*, eds. Earl E. Sheep and Ronald Sunderland (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1981), 102.

At this juncture, Paul avoids a dichotomized or dualistic theology of ministry, for the same Lord and the same Spirit has gifted the church different kinds of service (1 Cor. 12:4-5).<sup>1</sup> When the mother church at Jerusalem, for instance, was facing difficulties, Paul pledged himself to do his best to help relieve the poverty in that congregation. He called on the church at Corinth to make a concrete expression of their love by encouraging them to give generously for the welfare of the poorer members of the brethren (2 Cor. 8:1-9). In Acts 24:17, in his defense before Felix, Paul also made a reference to the trip which he had made from Corinth to Jerusalem (Acts 24:21) to bring an offering to his needy brethren. Apparently, to him there is no dichotomy in Christ's ministry between touching the soul with the word and feeding the hungry. He talks of bearing one another's burden (Gal. 6:2), of racial and gender equality before God (Gal. 3:28), and of social service (Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Cor. 12:7).

Paul's theology of *diakonia*, which in truth was unlimited in scope, upholds his firm conviction that the gospel, which is inclusive in its concerns for humankind (e.g., social, economic, spiritual, physical, mental) should be proclaimed by the church as an expression of her obedience to Christ's total ministry to persons. Donald G. Bloesch believes that "social action is in reality the fruit and evidence of the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

One who reads most of Paul's letters to the churches will discover that Paul did not intend to preach a reductionist type of gospel. Following Christ's concern for the lost, he affirmed that the temporal and eternal tasks of the Church must go hand in hand. They cannot be separated from each other. Frank Stagg holds a similar view: "Christian ministry is highly aspective, but it does its violence to divide it up into 'secular and sacred.' Wholeness, the concern for the total person and for all persons, belongs properly to the gospel."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ringma notes that the evangelical and charismatic churches continue to operate on this dualistic or dichotomized understanding of the nature of ministry. He also observes that many people continue to support the idea that the Christian faith and the world of business have little to do with each other. He calls this approach a "pietistic solution," which is a world-denying form of Christianity. Ringma, 15. Gwen Laurie Wright relates the separation of the sacred and the secular with Newtonian physics. In contrast to quantum physics wherein unity and interdependence characterize all of life, Newtonian physics, on the other hand, "emphasized the separation into parts of all of life." Wright proposes that an integration of the sacred (religious-spiritual) experiences is essential because it holds the key to wholeness and thus promotes the well-being of the individuals. ("Spirituality and Creative Leisure," *Pastoral Psychology* 32, no.3 [Spring 1984]: 201). The Old Testament portrays man as a living soul (Gen. 2:7). The Hebrew word for soul is *nephes*, and it implies "all the functions of man, spiritual, mental, emotional as well as physical." In contradistinction with the Greeks who viewed the soul as separate from the body, the Hebrews believed that life is a dynamic unity and God's salvific action covers all aspects of it. See Ferdinand O. Regalado, "Hebrew Thought: Its Implications for Christian Education in Asia," *Asia Journal of Theology* 15, no. 1 [April 2000]: 173. "Dualism," says Joel Matthew, "allows inconsistencies between faith and practice. It affects the way Christians live." ("Biblical Holism and Secular Thought in Christian Development," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 35, no. 3 [July 1999]: 291.)

<sup>2</sup> Bloesch says sometimes social service takes chronological priority over the preaching of the Gospel, especially if the hearers are in dire physical distress or material need. He adds that hearers would not listen to the message until their immediate needs are dealt first. (See Bloesch, 168.) For Ellul, however, the theological priority of gospel preaching should come first rather than the cultural mandate of the church. In his exposition of the Book of Jonah he says: "Here we have the answer to social sin. Not reforms first. Nineveh will not, for example, acquire new social structures or new government. Neither is it because men will individually repent and begin leading a righteous, pious, holy life. It is rather the event that seems impossible to us: the conversion of an entire population and its government. See Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing House, 1979), 69.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Stagg, "Understanding Call to Ministry," in *Formation for Christian Ministry*, eds. Anne Davis and Wade Rowatt, Jr. (Brentwood, TN: J. M. Productions, 1981), 36. The Hebrew concept of wholeness closely resembles with the Chinese' *yin-yang* philosophy. In *yin-yang* thought, the existence of two realities is divergent or contrasting opposites is recognized. However, these opposite entities or polarity of distinctive do not repel but rather attract each other and thereby build a composite whole. Unlike the Greek's dichotomy of reality, where the spiritual or mental is separate from the material or physical, *yin-yang*, on the other hand, considers the polarity of opposite as complementary entities—not hostile with each other. In *yin-yang* one cannot exist without the other, for, though each is distinct and opposite, both complement each other. This apparently agrees with Paul's holistic theology of ministry wherein both the sacred and the secular are taken

## Paul's Theology of Spiritual Gifts

Paul's theology of spiritual gifts has great relevance and application to bivocational ministry today. By comparing the church to a human body (1 Cor. 12:12-27, Paul underscores that in every church there are different kinds of gifts (v. 4). The Spirit gives this gift to each one (v. 11) and should be used for the common good of the church (1 Cor.12:7). It is not clear, though, whether Paul talks of a particular or universal church in the text, but a parallel passage in Romans 12:4-8 (with the omission of "apostles" from the list of gifts) seems to imply that Paul has the local church in mind.

Several words describe spiritual gifts in the New Testament. These are: (1) *dorea*, (2) *doma*, (3) *pneumatikos*, and (4) *charismata*. *Dorea* and *doma* are used rarely (Eph. 4:8; Acts 11:17) but *pneumatikos* and *charisma* are frequently found, with *charisma* being the most common.<sup>1</sup> The term *charismata* (spiritual gifts), with the exception of 1 Pet. 4:10, is used only by Paul. For the apostle Paul, spiritual gifts have only one purpose, i.e., to edify the believers. David Prior enumerates the four varieties of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12.<sup>2</sup> These are: First of all, gifts of grace (*charis*) that are made concrete or actual. One example of this is when Paul urged Timothy to rekindle God's gift that is in him (2 Tim. 1:6).

Second, there are gifts of service, or *diakonia*, in which the believers can serve as deacons or servants of one another, to their neighbors, and to God (1 Cor. 4:1). A positive attitude towards the things of the Spirit, for the apostle Paul, is important in the exercise of these gifts.

William McRae observes, "The person with the gift of service has an unusual capacity to serve faithfully behind the scenes, in practical ways, to assist in the work of the Lord and encourage and strengthen others spiritually."<sup>3</sup> Third, there are gifts wherein God's Spirit is working His miracles in the lives of Christians in the community. Prior uses the term *emergenata*, which means God's energy or power that enables the Christians to experience the reality and power of God at work within the community. Corollary to this, D. A. Carson explains that this gift gives prominence to the idea of divine power rather than of endowment,

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as complementary aspects of gospel proclamation. For a comprehensive understanding of *yin-yang* thought, please see Hyun Chul Paul Kim's essay on "Interpretative Modes of *Yin-Yang* Dynamics as an Asian Hermeneutics," *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches* 9, no. 3 (2001): 287-308, and Jung Yong Lee, "The *Yin-Yang* Way of Thinking: A Possible Method for Ecumenical Theology," in Elwood, 59-67.

<sup>1</sup> *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (1984), s.v. "Spiritual Gifts," by J. Thompson, and Walter Elwell. Paige Patterson makes a clear distinction between *pneumatika* and *charismata* (spiritual gifts). *Pneumatika*, emphasizes the spiritual origin and employment of such gifts and are not to be understood as natural endowments per se. Rather, they are to be viewed as gifts or abilities provided by the Holy Spirit. Its purpose is to strengthen the spiritual lives of those who are the object of these ministries. *Charismata*, on the other hand, emphasize the distribution of those gifts. These acts of God, which benefit men, are manifested in creation, in regeneration, and in edification. These gifts are given out of the kindness and mercy of God and not because the recipients deserve them. (*The Troubled Church: An Exposition of First Corinthians* [Dallas, TX: Criswell Publications, 1983], 206).

<sup>2</sup> David Prior, *The Message of I Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, ed., John Stood (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1985), 196-97. For a comprehensive study of spiritual gifts, see Leslie Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit* (Wheaton IL: Victor Books, 1980), 38-79, and John Koenig, *Charismata: God's Gift for God's People* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1978), 11-93.

<sup>3</sup> William McRae, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 47. This is characteristic of a true servant-leader. In this age where Christian celebrities and charismatic personalities are exalted and adored by people, the tendency of some members in the church is to demand so much from their pastor, not only to preach the word, but also to entertain them. What seems to be important to Paul is not how gifted a person is, but how well that person exercises the gift in the spirit of humility as a true servant of God, whether one is visible to the people or merely serves 'behind the scenes.' See Craig Blomberg, *I Corinthians: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 175. Some have mistakenly given the title of 'minister' to the pastor alone and had forgotten the fact that they, too, had a ministry to fulfill in the world. See Hargreaves, 164.



and mostly it happens when the Spirit of God comes to a person.<sup>1</sup> Fourth, the phrase used in verse 7, which also illumines the concept of variety of gifts, stresses the overall concept of the community. Apparently, Paul believes that the manifestation of the Spirit is given purposely for the good of the Christian community. In this verse, the apostle seems to imply that no person should use one's gift for personal aggrandizement or satisfaction. Rather, believers must use their gifts to edify the church, and to demonstrate that the Spirit of God works within them.<sup>2</sup>

In the succeeding verses, Paul enumerates these gifts, which vary considerably. These are as follows: (1) The Gift of Wisdom. This gift refers to one's capacity to receive the revealed truth of God and present it to people.<sup>3</sup> Paul implies that one who possesses this gift has an ability not only to receive but also to explain "the deep things of God."<sup>4</sup> (2) The Gift of Knowledge. This is closely related to the gift of wisdom, and it means the ability to understand correctly the spiritual wisdom of God as revealed in His word.<sup>5</sup> For Paul, it is more of a practical thing, i.e., knowledge, which knows what to do in any given situation.<sup>6</sup> (3) The Gift of Faith. When Paul mentions this in verse 9, he does not mean faith as a divine requirement to salvation. What he alludes in the text is a faith which manifests itself in unusual deeds of trust, or in Jesus' terms "a faith that can remove mountains."<sup>7</sup> McRae says that a person who has this gift can visualize things on the horizon, and believes that God will enable one to accomplish that vision, even though it looks impossible.<sup>8</sup> (4) The Gifts of Healing. In Paul's view, the Spirit of God bestows the gift of healing to the church. Although healing does not always take place, as in his case, Paul continues to rely on the sovereignty of God. Whether He heals or not, for him it all depends upon His ultimate purpose (2 Cor. 12:9; Rom. 8:28-29). There is one instance in Paul's ministry that this gift authenticated the power of the gospel he preached (Acts 20:7-12). (5) The Gift of Miracles. In this gift Paul is certain that God, in His wise providence and purpose, can overturn the natural law governing this world. This gift is more comprehensive than the gift of healing. Literally it has to do with the ability to do "works of power" (Acts 13:11).<sup>9</sup> (6) The Gift of Prophecy. Whether prophecy means foretelling the future or forth telling (to proclaim to the people the revelation of God), it seems ambiguous to Paul. Although prediction is not the main thrust of prophecy,<sup>10</sup> it seemed that for Paul prophecy was more of proclamation or the giving of

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of I Corinthians* (United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1995, 47.

<sup>2</sup> Prior, 198.

<sup>3</sup> McRae, 65.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 2:6-12 NIV. See Thompson and Elwell, 1045.

<sup>5</sup> The gift of knowledge was a foundational gift present in the early church when the teachers were laying the doctrinal foundation. There was no written Word of God yet in its entirety at that time. Hence, it was needful for the teacher to have such a gift. See McRae, 65-66.

<sup>6</sup> Jack W. MacGorman, *The Gifts of the Spirit* (Nashville, TN: The Broadman Press, 1974), 37. Patterson explains that this gift of knowledge is being able to take what is revealed in the word and applying it correctly to the circumstances and situation's of life in a pragmatic way. See Patterson, 211. Acts 5:3 illustrates the gift of knowledge, where the apostle Peter was able to know that Ananias was actually lying to him concerning the distribution of the former's property.

<sup>7</sup> Mark 11:22; Matt. 17:20. Paul says the same in 1 Cor. 13:2. The heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11 attest to this gift.

<sup>8</sup> McRae, 66.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 72. Like the gift of healing, the nature and the purpose of the gift of miracle suggests that it was more of a confirmatory gift, especially during the time of the apostles, that is, in them God was at work. Paul also affirmed that his own ministry had been marked "by power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:19).

<sup>10</sup> MacGorman, 39. While the author contends that prophecy is not in essence foretelling, he remains open that predicting may be present as a valid element.

exhortation for the needs of the present times, via the unraveling of the mystery (truth undiscovered by human reason) to the people. (7) The Gift of Distinguishing of Spirits. This was important to Paul, as there were pretenders or false teachers of religion in his day.<sup>1</sup>

In the gospel, Jesus also warned that there would arise people who would perform miracles and cast out demons in His name (Matt. 7:21-23). John made the same caution to his readers when he said, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1). As the appearance of false prophets became inevitable to the church, it seems proper that Paul should urge the believers to discriminate between the true and false spirits, especially for an itinerant prophet who claimed to be inspired to speak by revelation (1 Cor. 14:29). (8) The Gift of Speaking in Tongues (*Glossolalia*).

The prominence placed upon this gift of tongues in Corinth, where a *glossolalist* may “utter mysteries in the Spirit,”<sup>2</sup> especially during the worship service, has prompted the apostle to say that an interpreter is necessary, otherwise he would not have commanded the speaker to remain silent (1 Cor. 14:26-28).

For Paul, it is unwise that one will speak in tongues without somebody interpreting this Holy Spirit-inspired utterance to the congregation. This is why he urges anyone who speaks in tongues to pray so, “he, too, may be able to interpret what he says” (1 Cor. 14:13). (9) The Gift of Interpretation. The apostle considered this gift as attendant to speaking in tongues. Without it no congregation will be able to experience edification at worship.<sup>3</sup> The Greek word for “interpretation” is *hermeneia*. For Paul, this gift does not carry the idea of translation, but is similar to discerning what the spirit is saying to the *glossolalist*, so his ecstatic utterances will become intelligible.<sup>4</sup>

Paul lists other gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. Thomas C. Oden categorizes these gifts in terms of the three broad functions of the church, namely: (1) witness, (2) community, and (3) service.<sup>5</sup> In Romans 12:6-8, he adds prophecy, teaching, exhortation, liberality, service, giving aid, and acts of mercy, while in Ephesians 4:11, he enumerated the importance of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors. All these gifts are presented neither in a systematic sequence, nor an exhaustive list of New Testament gifts. Rather, they are presented in order to convey that in the body of Christ, there is diversity of gifts bestowed by the Spirit, which are fitted for the edification of the church.<sup>6</sup> This seemed to be the major concern of Paul on spiritual gifts. He stresses the concept of edification seven times<sup>7</sup> and emphasizes the importance of love as a requirement (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:1-13).

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 11:13-15. Paul’s admonition illustrates the practical necessity of every believer to distinguish the spirits. “Not only are there false teachers,” says MacGorman, “but also impostors of faith, fake healers and miracle-workers, phony *glossolalists* and interpreters. God’s people need protection against all these evil counterfeits.” See MacGorman, 42.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 14:2. For a comprehensive treatment on the subject of tongues, see Robert Glenn Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1967), 53-138, and Mark J. Cartledge, “The Nature and Function of the New Testament Glossolalia,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (April 2000): 135-50.

<sup>3</sup> MacGorman, 44.

<sup>4</sup> See Erickson, 257. See also J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 155.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology*, vol. 2. (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Collins Publishers, 1992), 189.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> See 1 Cor. 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26.

## Summary of the Chapter

This chapter showed that bi-vocational ministry had been the practice of God's servants in the Bible. With the exception of the Levitical priests who had full institutional support, the Rabbis and prophets in the Old Testament needed other sources of income. Since they were expected to perform their religious and legal functions without pay, it was necessary for them to engage in other secular vocation. They served the Lord, but at the same time, they had to work to support themselves materially. Paul experienced this also in the New Testament. Through his tentmaking he spread the good news in many towns and cities without becoming a burden to the churches. Unlike those who taught the law and made their living through exorbitant fees, Paul wanted to preach the gospel free of charge so (1) he could help the poor and struggling churches, (2) he could show to the brethren his example of working day and night in order to support his needs, (3) he could prove to them that he had no motive for preaching the gospel, such as taking advantage of their money, as alleged by his detractors, and (4) to counter the claim of the Greeks that manual labor was lowly, hence it must be avoided. For Paul, there is dignity attached to labor, whether one's work is mental or physical.

In addition, Paul considered his tentmaking as a good opportunity for mission and evangelism, and as a form of self-sacrifice. By following Christ's example, Paul's experience in tentmaking implies that, at certain times, a servant of Christ must forego one's right so as not to become a hindrance in the spread of the gospel or a burden to others. Finally, Paul also considered his tentmaking ministry as a form of modeling, so that others may imitate his example as they render service to Christ.

In his theology of the church, Paul taught that the church composed of interdependent parts within the body, needed each other; that each member had a responsibility towards the body. He also underscored that any theological attempt to understand the ministry must always be in consonance with the nature and essence of the gospel. Since both have the same goal, the redemption of humankind, for Paul, one should look at the ministry from the perspective of totality. To him, the sacred and the secular are both concerns of the ministry; therefore, they need not be dichotomized. Apparently, Paul looks at the gospel as one that defines the content and message of the ministry.

This chapter also showed Paul's theology of spiritual gifts. Whatever the Spirit had bestowed on the church, what was important to Paul was the believers' unity and cooperation. Since no gift was insignificant to him, each gift must not be used for personal self-aggrandizement or self-satisfaction. Instead, it must be used for the common edification of the church.

## CHAPTER FOUR<sup>1</sup>

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF PAUL'S CONCEPT OF *SKENOPOIIA* TO THE CURRENT PERCEPTIONS ON BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTRY AMONG THE CHURCHES OF THE CONVENTION OF PHILIPPINE BAPTIST CHURCHES IN WESTERN VISAYAS

On the basis of the data presented in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter presents the implications of Paul's concept of *skenopoia* to the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the CPBC in Western Visayas. This chapter discusses the implications from the point of view of similarities (agreement, correspondence) and differences (disagreement, divergence) extrapolated in the preceding chapters.

#### Points of Similarity and Difference

Some points of similarity and difference seem to emerge between Paul's concept of *skenopoia* and the current perceptions of CPBC churches in Western Visayas on bi-vocational ministry. These points of similarity and difference may be classified in terms of the respondent's perceptions of the questions in the four subscales indicated in the instrument. These are: (1) biblico-theological; (2) psycho-sociological; (3) ethical, and (4) practical.

#### Biblico-Theological Similarities

As referred to in Chapters One and Two, the following biblico-theological similarities are found: (1) bi-vocational ministry has a strong biblical support; (2) bi-vocational ministry is practiced by God-called servants in the Old and New Testaments, and (3) bi-vocational ministry finds a good model in the Apostle Paul.

#### Bi-vocational Ministry as a Concept Has a Strong Biblical Support

A strong biblical support on bi-vocational ministry among the respondents corresponds with the teachings of the Bible on tentmaking, particularly with St. Paul. Chapter Two illustrated how God called certain people to do His work despite their varied background and occupations. One significant factor is the Rabbis and prophets who supported themselves through various labors without charging the people of their religious services. It seemed that it was essential for them to have other sources of income.<sup>2</sup> This practice of the Rabbis and prophets had apparently influenced Paul's preference as a tentmaker missionary.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 3 is "THE CURRENT PERCEPTIONS ON BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTRY AMONG THE CHURCHES OF THE CONVENTION OF PHILIPPINE BAPTIST CHURCHES IN WESTERN VISAYAS." See original dissertation if you are interested on statistical data and tables.

<sup>2</sup> A detailed discussion is found in the section "the value of religious services for the rabbis" under "The Pauline Concept of *Skenopoia*" in Chapter Two.

<sup>3</sup> See the proposed reasons why Paul was a tentmaker under the section "*Skenopoia* from a Pauline Perspective," pages 37-39 in Chapter Two.

## **Bi-vocational Ministry Is Practiced by God-Called Servants in the Old and New Testaments**

In the survey, the respondents agreed that bi-vocational ministry was a common practice among God's servants in the Old and New Testaments. As indicated in Chapter Three, 89.7% of the pastors (62.2%, "agree; 27.5%, "strongly agree") and 74.1% of the laymen (60.2%, "agree;" 13.9%, "strongly agree") support this view. This perception was discussed also in Chapter Two. Aside from Paul, Amos, Nehemiah, Daniel, Ruth, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla and Aquila, were God-called bi-vocational servants. This similarity seems to demonstrate that bi-vocational ministry is not new to pastors and church leaders in the CPBC. The majority of pastors (71.7%) expressed their willingness to engage in another job, if given a chance. They (88.3%) believed that bi-vocational ministry is a means of ensuring the financial stability of their family (60%, "agree;" 28.3%, "strongly agree").

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Finds a Good Model in the Apostle Paul**

The respondents' awareness of and familiarity with some of the men and women in the Bible who were bi-vocational connect with their belief that Paul serves as a model or an epitome of tentmaking. In Chapter Two, the apostle is described as the greatest prototype of a self-supporting witness and the "Father of Bivocationalism."<sup>1</sup> Majority (85%) of pastors (48%, "agree; 37%, "strongly agree") and also majority (73%) of the laymen (51%, agree; 22% "strongly agree") reveal that both respondents have known Paul as a tentmaker missionary.<sup>2</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, for Paul, non-support from individuals and churches was not a hindrance to doing mission locally and cross-culturally. Wherever he went, he practiced his skill so the preaching of the gospel would not be hampered. His tentmaking refutes the belief of some Christians who think that missions today will be hindered without the financial backing of churches and individuals.<sup>3</sup>

### **Biblico-Theological Differences**

This section deals with the following biblico-theological differences: (1) Bi-vocational ministry creates an impression that there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular in God's ministry; (2) Bi-vocational ministry projects the idea that a minister violates one's ordination vow; (3) Bi-vocational ministry creates a perception that the pastor is getting materialistic, and (4) Bi-vocational ministry minimizes the spiritual gifts God has given to pastors.

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<sup>1</sup> Luther Dorr explains this fact in the same Chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Three talks about the high awareness level of the respondents. Refer to the results of the survey "On Known Bi-Vocational Ministers" on Table 8. See *original dissertation*.

<sup>3</sup> For further discussion, see the section on "Paul's Tentmaking as a Form of Modeling" in Chapter Two. The example of Paul as a missionary dismisses the myth that the money factor is a *sine qua non* to mission. For Paul, every church regardless of its size, can do missions without the requisite of money, if it is determined to do so. Missions is the work of the Holy Spirit, and as the Spirit initiates it, He will support the work from beginning to end. Kwon Soon Tae puts this in perspective, "Missions work is initiated, continued and fulfilled by the Holy Spirit as revealed in Paul's case." See Kwon Soon Tae, "An Analysis of Contemporary Models of Mission Among Selected Baptist Churches in Seoul, Korea in Light of Paul's Model of Mission" (Th.D. diss., Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, 2000), 162.

## **Bi-vocational Ministry Creates an Impression that there is No Distinction Between the Sacred and the Secular in God's Ministry**

An analysis on the first and second chapters of this research reveals a difference between Paul and the respondents' theological perception of the sacred and the secular in God's ministry. Paul emphasizes that the sacred and the secular intertwine, and both are inseparable to each other. The apostle's primary goal is the proclamation of the gospel to its fullest dimension;<sup>1</sup> and he did all he could to win the people to Christ. Paul, on the other hand, is aware that people have other needs aside from the gospel, and used this as he preached the whole gospel of Christ. This explains why, for Paul, the sacred and the secular cannot be dichotomized.

Based on the concepts presented above, the respondents' perception of the sacred and the secular does not seem to agree with Paul's understanding of the gospel and ministry.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to Paul's view, the pastors do not seem to think that the sacred and the secular should be treated the same. In fact, they share the view (73.1%) that bi-vocational ministry is a form of secularizing the ministry (54.3%, "agree," 18.8% "strongly agree"). This is also the position taken by the lay leaders (53.6%) as indicated in the survey (42.6%, "agree," 11%, "strongly agree"). The same perception can be noted in their response on whether bi-vocational ministry eliminates the distinction between the laity and the clergy. Both pastors and lay leaders have an equal response of 37% to the question. Generally, the result of the survey depicts a distinct view from Paul's theology of holistic ministry.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Projects the Idea that the Minister Violates His or Her Ordination Vow**

The tendency to project bi-vocational ministry as a violation of the minister's ordination vow is another difference expressed by the respondents. Chapter Two indicated that Paul, after having been ordained by the church together with Barnabas Acts 13:2-3), continued his mission to the Gentiles. As noted, his main motivation during his missionary journeys was the preaching of the gospel, and his being set apart neither hindered his commitment to Christ nor did it make him violate his ordination vow (Acts 13:3; 1 Thess. 2:9). The burden of Christian duty lies on his shoulder, and he merely uses his skill of making tents in order to attain his goal as an ordained minister of the gospel.<sup>3</sup> The response of the respondents

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<sup>1</sup> Like John, Paul's gospel seems to contradict also with the Gnostics who claim that the spirit alone was good and important. For him, anything that is done for Christ, either spiritual or secular, is part of Christian obedience to the demands of the gospel. In his theology of ministry he seems to convey the idea that the physical, mental, social, and spiritual do not stand in isolation, as each interacts with each other. Notice "Paul's response to the poverty-stricken congregation in Jerusalem" under "Paul's Theology of the Ministry" in Chapter Two. Teilhard de Chardin says, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience but spiritual beings having a human experience." See Margaret Z. Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Call and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 110.

<sup>2</sup> The basis for this is found in Chapter Three, especially the section on the "correlation between the pastors' practical perception with their biblico-theological perception" on Table 18. Jennifer L. Kunst considers the dualistic view of ministry as a mere variation of Gnosticism, in which the physical is denied and the spiritual is seen as the only reality. She adds that in caring for souls, too often one aspect (the spiritual) is emphasized to the tragic sacrifice of the other needs of the person. For her, an integrated approach to doing ministry is especially helpful if the local church is to incarnate Christ. ("Towards a Psychologically Liberating Pastoral Theology," *Pastoral Psychology* 40, no. 3 (1992): 163.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter Two clearly explains this. Refer to the section, "Paul's Tentmaking in Relation to His Task as a Missionary."

in Chapter Three, on the other hand, reveals that bi-vocational ministry directly violates the ordination vow of the minister. As the survey indicates, the response of the pastors (55.8%) and laymen (53.6%) seem to correspond with their dualistic view of ministry where the sacred and the secular are treated separately rather than holistically. The irony among the ministers is, while they regard bi-vocational ministry as a violation of the ordination vow, the majority (71.7%) of them are willing to work on the side, if they have a chance.<sup>1</sup> This shows that CPBC ministers in Western Visayas are ambivalent about the dual role of pastors as shepherds of the flock and as employees at secular jobs.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Creates a Perception that the Minister is Getting Materialistic**

Another theological difference in this study is the perception that bi-vocational ministry fosters the spirit of materialism among ministers. A good percentage (62.1%) of the pastors and laymen (66.1%) indicated that they “agree” to the question. Corollary to this, pastors (79.4%) and laymen (68.3%) also equate the secular job of ministers as a manifestation of distrust or lack of faith in God. Apparently, this perception does not apply to Paul. The apostle’s tentmaking as explained in Chapter Two clearly shows that he personally did not want to be a burden to the church (2 Cor. 11:9), or become a stumbling block to those whom he served by expecting payment for his services.

Paul used his skill in order to support his ministry. He was not against local church support as there were even times he accepted the help of the brethren (Phil. 4:10,14-18; 2 Cor. 11:7-9); however, Paul deemed it wise to remain as a tentmaker to help him materially. In fact, toward the end of his life, the apostle remained as a poor man. He was only contented with whatever he had (Phil. 4:11-12). Hence, Paul cannot be branded as materialistic and accused for lack of faith in God.<sup>2</sup> The example of Paul as a tentmaker points that not all who are bi-vocational are materialistic or people who have no trust in God’s providence. This simplistic equation of the matter with bi-vocational ministers needs to be reexamined by the churches.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Minimizes the Spiritual Gifts God Has Given to Pastors**

The respondents differed from Paul in their understanding of spiritual gifts vis-a-vis bi-vocational ministry. Generally, Paul considers spiritual gifts as endowments from God, and anyone who has been endowed with a gift, whether concrete or actual gift (*charis*), service-oriented (*diakonia*), or enabling power (*energenata*), must use it for the good of the church and the people in the community. As referred to in Chapter Two, Paul’s concern was centered on the need of humankind and the world for redemption (Rom. 8:22 ff). Corollary to his holistic emphasis of the gospel, he implies that the use of gifts is not meant only for the benefit of the church but also for the world. Thus for Paul, being bi-

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<sup>1</sup> See the current engagement and chance to engage in bi-vocational ministry” under “On the Significant Correlations of Pastor’s Demographics” in Chapter Three. Dr. Flip Buys says, “In countries with weaker economies like Africa, Asia, and South America, people on the average earn 14 times less in salaries than in Europe and North America.” See Flip Buys, “Manila T.O.P.I.C Report”; available from <http://www.puk.ac.2a/theology/nail.htm>; Internet; accessed 26 October 2001.

<sup>2</sup> This theme is discussed in Chapter Two of this research under the section, “Paul’s Tentmaking in Relation to His Task as a Missionary.”

vocational does not minimize the gifts of ministers. On the contrary, it maximizes and widens the ministers' influence in the world.<sup>1</sup> For Paul, bi-vocational ministry is a valid expression of true stewardship of God's gifts and a way to tap the potentials of the laity for ministry.<sup>2</sup> As seen in Chapter Three, 73.1% of the pastors (50.3%, "agree;" 22.8%, "strongly agree") and 75.7% of the laymen (54.4%, "agree;" 21.3%, "strongly agree") indicate that the CPBC pastors and lay leaders in Western Visayas have a limited understanding of spiritual gifts, for they simply consign them to church-related ministries. This deviates from the biblical concept that spiritual gifts are to be harnessed, both for the good of the church and the people in society in general.<sup>3</sup>

## **Psycho-Sociological Similarities**

Another important consideration in this section is the psycho-sociological similarities indicated in the survey, namely: (1) bi-vocational ministry enhances the dignity of the pastor in society; (2) bi-vocational ministry enhances high social acceptance of the pastor among the working class, and (3) bi-vocational ministry enhances the minister's coping mechanism with frustrations in the ministry.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Enhances the Dignity of the Pastor in the Society**

As seen in Chapters Two and Three, the survey shows a significant agreement between Paul's and the respondents' view of the pastors' dignity in the society in their dual ministry. This similarity does not only emphasize the value of labor but also enhances the dignity of the worker in society. Chapter Two explains that however mundane and lowly the work is, a laborer who does one's job faithfully deserves God's blessing. Unlike the Greeks who shun physical labor, the Hebrews emphasize honor and dignity attached to physical or manual labor. This corresponds to Paul's experience. As a Jew, he is proud to say that he worked night and day with his own hands (1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Thess. 3:8). For Paul every work was important to God.<sup>4</sup> A good percentage (73.1%) of the pastors (52.8%, "agree;" 14.9%, "strongly agree") and 58.8% of the laymen (52.2%, "agree;" 6.6%, "strongly agree") convey the need to elevate the dignity of pastors in the society. The problem is their salary.<sup>5</sup> For the respondents it can be overcome through their additional income outside of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis comments: "There is no intention to minimize the ministry of the full-time pastors, but the bi-vocational pastors are in a unique position to live out their calling in a distinct way. Their ministry can be expressed both in the secular realm as well as in church related realm." See Nodell Dennis "The Bi-vocational Pastor and Self-Esteem," *Church Administration*, June 1982, 44.

<sup>2</sup> Dale Holloway emphasizes that some people have a call from God, and yet their talents, interests and aptitudes may not likely fit in the local church. These talents, interest, and aptitudes need a second vocation wherein they can maximize their gifts. See Holloway, 10.

<sup>3</sup> See the discussion on the "Pauline Theology of Spiritual Gifts in Chapter Two.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the section, "The Difference Between the Greek and the Hebrew Concept of Labor" in Chapter Two for further discussion.

<sup>5</sup> The "Monthly Salary Bracket of Pastors and Laymen" found in Table 6 of Chapter Two establishes this fact.



## **Bi-vocational Ministry Enhances High Social Acceptance of Ministers Among the Working Class**

Chapter One discussed Paul's trade as a tentmaker. Apparently, the association he had with other laborers substantiates the notion that a minister, who is engaged in secular work, in addition to his church duty, can easily win the acceptance and sympathy of the people belonging to the working class. While Paul was in Corinth he looked for his fellow artisans with whom he might practice his trade. Shortly in that city, he found his first contacts named Priscilla and Aquila, who were also tentmakers. While working with Priscilla and Aquila, it was apparent that Paul had some contacts with the workers of the couple. At the workshop the apostle Paul perhaps not only identified himself with the laborers of Priscilla and Aquila but also persuaded them to believe in Christ.

The high degree of similarity between Paul and the respondents' perception that bi-vocational ministry enhances the social acceptance of the pastor (60.6%, pastors; 53%, laymen) reveals that bi-vocational pastors are in a unique position to live out their callings in a distinct way. They have the advantage of being able to identify with the secular employees on the job as well as those in the church. The respondents' response (67.6%, pastors; 66.1%, laymen) also agree that they relate better with people who are of their profession; that they excel in public relation as they are people who are "*marunong makisama*"<sup>1</sup> or good in public relation. They may be struggling in the area of guarding themselves from becoming complacent or preoccupied with their secular work and failing to give a positive leadership to the churches, and they may be under pressure to live out their lives and witness consistently in the community, but since they are not insulated from the "real world," their opportunities of service are greater than their colleagues who are in full-time religious work.

## **Bi-vocational Ministry Enhances the Ministers' Coping Mechanism with Frustrations in the Ministry**

One significant finding in the survey is the perception that ministers who are engaged in jobs not related to their function in the local church have better coping mechanism with frustrations (55.5%, pastors; 51.4%, laymen). The respondents believe that because of unmet needs, internal problems, and other concerns in the church, dual-role ministers are in a better position to handle their disappointments in the ministry. Their second job affords them a catharsis, or a way to temporarily but freely unload themselves emotionally from the burdens of the ministry. This seems real to Paul. Chapter Two mentions that the apostle had bouts with depression in the city of Corinth. Without achieving any great success in Athens due to the strong competition of Greek philosophers, he came to the city of Corinth a disappointed and dejected man.<sup>2</sup> Thus, when he reminded the Corinthians how he arrived among them in "weakness and in much fear and trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3), in truth he was recalling his own failure in Athens. The

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Farley, "Bi-vocational Ministry"; available from [http://www.seorf.ohio.edu/dxx042/vocation\\_ctr/html](http://www.seorf.ohio.edu/dxx042/vocation_ctr/html); Internet; accessed 2 November 2001. For a detailed understanding of the Filipino concept of *pakikisama*, see Joyce J. Abugan, "An Evaluation of the Missions Education Program of the Philippine Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Program" (S.T.D. diss., Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, 1992), 155-57.

<sup>2</sup> B. H. Carroll describes the poverty and disappointments of Paul in Chapter Two. See the section, "Paul's Tentmaking as a Form of Self-Sacrifice." The correlations between the psycho-sociological and ethical perceptions of the respondents on Table 17 in Chapter Three also make this clear. Generally, the statistical analysis yields a correlation coefficient that is significant at 0.01 level on a two-tailed test.

intellectual pride in Athens was a formidable hindrance to the gospel more than the flagrant immorality in Corinth. In such a desperate mood Paul has found his way out from depressions, mentally and spiritually, through tentmaking. His physical labor with Priscilla and Aquila gave his mind a rest. Due to the nature and demand of work in the church, perhaps it is essential for ministers to find outlet in ministry, and, for the respondents, an outside job can be a good coping mechanism to counter the ministers' bouts with depression.

### **Psycho-Sociological Difference**

This section discusses one difference between Paul and the respondents' responses to psycho-sociological question relative to bi-vocational ministry: that bi-vocational ministry leads to guilt on the part of pastors.

#### **Bi-vocational Ministry Leads to Guilt on the Part of Pastors**

The perception of the respondents concerning guilt probably was not an issue to Paul. While doing his mission, the apostle looked at his trade as a means rather than as a hindrance to his goal. There is no reservation in his mind that earning a living and preaching the gospel are both integral aspects of his vocation. For this reason, Paul did not consider himself as a second-class missionary, or guilty about his status as a tentmaker-missionary. Apparently, for Paul, the full spectrum of Christian calling consists in being able to do things right, whether one renders a secular or a sacred obligation to God. These two are not separate dimensions of a person's calling. Rather, Paul regards the sacred and the secular as one broad response to the demands of the gospel.

Conversely, the result of the survey implies that pastors who are underpaid should not feel guilty if they are earning outside to meet the needs of their families.<sup>1</sup>

### **Ethical Similarities**

Based on the survey, the following ethical perceptions correspond with Paul's understanding and practice of tentmaking: (1) bi-vocational ministry prevents ministers from conduct unbecoming of their profession, such as borrowing money and asking special favors from the members; and (2) bi-vocational ministry prevents the pastors from becoming resentful with the church members.

#### **Bi-vocational Ministry Prevents Ministers from Conduct Unbecoming of their Profession**

There is high ethical correspondence between Paul and the respondents' response to this question, especially among the ministers. The survey reveals that 81% of the pastors (53.5%, "agree;" 27.5%, "strongly agree") and 66.8% of laymen (46.3%, "agree;" 20.5%, "strongly agree") supports the view that being bi-vocational will save ministers from embarrassing or degrading situations in the local church. Both respondents are aware that a conscientious minister neither

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<sup>1</sup> See the results in Appendix T, question no. 29.

borrow money nor wants to ask a favor whenever possible from the members of the church as this will tarnish one's image and integrity.<sup>1</sup> Paul was forthright on the matter of personal privileges. As God's servant, he never took advantage of his position. He could have taken his right and privilege to receive help for the maintenance of his work, just like the other apostles,<sup>2</sup> but Paul preferred to work with his hands. He would rather die (1 Cor. 9:15) in want than have his critics think he was like any unscrupulous teacher of religion. This ethical practice of Paul and the respondents' perception on the issue convey that an outside job can augment the minister's meager income, which, in turn, will protect one's image and profession.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry will Prevent Ministers from Becoming Resentful to Church Members**

The view of CPBC ministers and lay leaders in Western Visayas on the question above interrelated with the character of Paul as a tentmaker. This convergence not only depicts the correlation between economic stability and positive attitude of the pastors, but also underscores a theological premise that human beings, no matter how godly and spiritually minded they may be, can become resentful at times, especially if their needs are not addressed properly.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, through tentmaking this feeling of resentment of ministers can be overcome.<sup>4</sup> Paul had nothing to resent with the churches he served. The fact that he refused their help implies that his tentmaking was the solution for his needs.<sup>5</sup>

### **Ethical Difference**

This section discusses a different perception of the respondents from Paul on the question of whether or not bi-vocational ministry projects a mediocre or half-hearted attitude toward the ministry. Below is the explanation.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Projects a Half-hearted Attitude toward the Ministry**

Paul was definite in relation to his task. Despite the difficulties he encountered in Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Thessalonica during his missionary journeys as described in Chapter Two, he was a man with unflagging zeal in planting churches in strategic places. There were times he was physically afflicted "by a thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12: 7), yet he never faltered or thought of

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter Three, Table 19 provides the "correlation between the ethical and biblico-theological perceptions" on bi-vocational ministry.

<sup>2</sup> See "the apostle's defense for self-support" under the section "Paul's Tentmaking as a Form of Self-Sacrifice" in Chapter Two.

<sup>3</sup> This seems to be the case of some ministers who are not paid enough by the local church. Their low salary produces tension within their families. However hard they try to manage on their income, they feel that it is still not enough. The family budget has become the battleground between their income and expenses. Their low self-esteem caused by inadequate remuneration thus breeds in them, including members of the family, resentment towards the church. Economic privation seems to be the driving force. See also the correlation between the pastors' BVM practical and psycho-sociological perceptions in Chapter Three.

<sup>4</sup> The enhanced dignity, healthy self-concept, social acceptance, and financial stability of the pastor's family through bi-vocational ministry apparently have positive bearing on the ethical behavior of ministers. See the "correlation between psycho-sociological and ethical perceptions of respondents" in Chapter Three.

<sup>5</sup> Although his income was not always adequate (1 Cor. 4:11), Paul persevered because he loved Christ and the people in Corinth. Earning a living through his trade gave him the needed equilibrium to counter some unpleasant emotions such as jealousy, hatred, and resentment.

giving up his career. Nothing seemed to deter him from doing anything for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor.9:20-23).<sup>1</sup>

The possibility for ministry to be sidetracked is a temptation common among pastors engaged in secular jobs. This was the assessment of the respondents in the survey. About 66% of pastors (50.3%, “agree;” 15.7% “strongly agree”) and 61% of laymen (44.1%, “agree;” 16.9%, “strongly agree”) shared the perception that half-heartedness or mediocrity toward the ministry would likely happen among bi-vocational pastors. This divergence with Paul forewarns those who are currently engaged in church work but are earning a good portion of their income from their secular jobs to be careful and vigilant always.<sup>2</sup>

## **Practical Similarities**

This section will show points of similarities or convergence between Paul and the respondents’ practical perceptions of bi-vocational ministry. They are: (1) Bi-vocational ministry creates better opportunities for evangelism and mission, and (2) Bi-vocational ministry is the practical solution for a church that cannot afford to call for a full-time pastor.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Creates Better Opportunities for Evangelism and Mission**

The findings of this study based on the first and second chapters point to a high degree of similarity between Paul’s evangelism and mission activities and the respondents’ perception of the same relative to bi-vocational ministry. As discussed in Chapter Two, Paul’s primary purpose was the spreading of the good news about Jesus Christ, and his tentmaking gave him that opportunity to fulfill his mission (Acts 18:4; 1 Thess. 2:9). Working with people in two settings as a missionary-preacher and tentmaker gave Paul the right exposure of bringing prospects to Christ. His experience with Priscilla and Aquila, owners of a tentmaking shop in Corinth served as a good model. The couple provided the venue for Paul to evangelize their laborers.<sup>3</sup> It was not certain whether Priscilla and Aquila were Christian converts when they first met Paul in Corinth, but what was significant about them is they became not only partners of Paul in tentmaking, but also in evangelizing the city and elsewhere.

This method used by Paul in providing “a bridge” or “entrance” to witnessing corresponds also with the response of pastors and laymen in Chapter Two. In the survey, the respondents stressed that those working in a bi-vocational relationship would do good in mission and evangelism. About 71.6% of ministers

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<sup>1</sup> For a better understanding of Paul’s condition in Corinth, see the section, “Paul’s Tentmaking as a Form of Self-Sacrifice” in Chapter Two. One could not find a hint of mediocrity or cold feeling about Paul when it comes to mission, for his only consuming passion in life was Christ. As such, he never put his work for Christ on the side, or allowed himself to be complacent with his work.

<sup>2</sup> Bi-vocational ministers must always keep their focus in clear perspective. In the case of Paul, “he is not remembered today as a great tentmaker but as a great minister of the gospel.” See Dorr, 15.

<sup>3</sup> See the section “Paul’s Tentmaking in Relation to His Task as a Missionary” in Chapter Two. One great advantage of a bi-vocational minister or missionary is the level of association with, as well as a keen grasp of, the people’s aspirations and needs, since he or she is like one of them. The status of Paul, plus his similar social background with Priscilla as coming from a higher social class, must have attracted her to work together with him in a bi-vocational relationship of winning her workers. See Neal Wyatt, “The Bi-vocational Pastor: His Unique Relationship to the Churches,” *Church Administration* 25, no. 9 1983, 20-21.

and 64.1% of laymen agreed to this perception.<sup>1</sup> This hints the need for church leaders and members to consider seriously their secular employment as a possible context for spreading the good news.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry is the Practical Solution for a Church that Cannot Afford to Call for a Full-time Pastor**

The churches Paul established were mostly young and struggling. They were not yet fully autonomous. In addition, there were internal problems and other difficulties Paul had to contend with the churches in Corinth, Thessalonica, and Ephesus.<sup>2</sup> Hence, Paul decided to work rather than become a burden to the brethren (2 Cor. 11:9; 1 Thess. 2:3-4, 9). He wanted to show he could manage without their financial assistance, through the labor of his hands. Paul really understood the situation of the churches he served, especially the “weak” at the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:35). It is possible that the weak referred to the struggling believers in the church.<sup>3</sup>

In the survey, 81.8% of the pastors (54.3%, “agree;” 27.5% “strongly agree”) and the 75% of the laymen’s (64%, “agree;” 11%, “strongly agree”) believe that bi-vocational ministry is the practical solution for a church that cannot afford to call for a full-time pastor. The result corresponds to Paul’s experience with the financially struggling churches discussed in Chapter Two. This implies that bi-vocational ministry is a viable and pragmatic approach to pastoral ministry, particularly among churches that could hardly give enough salary to pastors. In the survey, both respondents agree that the ministers’ salary has a corresponding effect on their honor and dignity.<sup>4</sup> The higher the church pays them, the more their image or dignity is enhanced.

### **Practical Difference**

Based on the survey, there is one important difference that exists between Paul and the respondents’ response on whether or not bi-vocational ministry opens the door for the minister to leave the pastoral work. Below is the explanation.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Opens the Door for the Minister to Leave the Pastoral Work**

Paul’s experience as discussed in Chapter Two is different from bi-vocational ministers who have left the ministry for material reasons. This perception is shared by majority of the respondents. In their response, almost 67% (43.3% “agree;” 23.6%, “strongly agree”) of pastors and 62.4% of laymen

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<sup>1</sup> Bi-vocational ministry offers certain advantages to the ministry. See especially its practical advantages to the minister in Chapter Three. Refer also to Appendix T, under Practical Perception, question no. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Two discusses the problems of the churches in Corinth, Thessalonica, and Ephesus under the section, “Paul’s Tentmaking as a Form of Self-Sacrifice.”

<sup>3</sup> See the section “Paul’s motivation for self-support” under “Paul’s Tentmaking as a Form of Modeling.”

<sup>4</sup> Chapter Three discusses the correlations between the practical and psycho-sociological perceptions of laymen on bi-vocational ministry. For Wayne Clark “adequate financial remuneration is more than a means of livelihood. It is a source of self-respect. See Clark, 46. McBurney says that many ministers are struggling with low self-esteem as a result of a culture that expects much from them but are not appreciated and valued in what they are doing as ministers. See Louise McBurney, “A Psychiatrist Looks at Troubled Pastors,” *Leadership*, Spring, 109, 114.

(38.2%, “agree;” “24.2%, “strongly agree”) never expressed reservation that leaving the pastoral work would not happen among ministers with two callings. They project a phenomenon that is alarming for would-be bi-vocational pastors. Perhaps this is also the reason some respondents<sup>1</sup> believe that bi-vocational ministry from a theological point of view is Satan’s strategy or instrument in order to diminish the power of the gospel. These legitimate observations of the respondents, however, differ from what Paul had actually practiced as a tentmaker.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the apostle Paul had no intention, real or imagined, of leaving the ministry. He remained faithful and fully committed to Christ and the gospel in spite of the plots of the Jews to kill him (Acts 20:19-20).

### **The Implications of Paul’s Concept of *Skenopoiia* to the Current Perceptions on Bi-vocational Ministry Among the Churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas**

The preceding section has established the points of similarity and differences between Chapters Two and Three. Based on these, the biblico-theological, psycho-sociological, ethical, and practical implications are presented. These are implications that the researcher considered to be relevant among the CPBC churches in Western Visayas.

#### **Biblico-Theological Implications**

There are two major implications under the biblico-theological perceptions. These are: (1) the need for the denomination’s theological institutions to formulate a holistic theology of spirituality, and (2) the need to break the laity-clergy syndrome in the churches.

#### **The Need for the Denomination’s Theological Institutions to Formulate a Holistic Theology of Spirituality**

The biblico-theological perception discussed in the preceding section of this chapter points to a need for the denomination’s theological institutions to formulate a holistic theology of spirituality.<sup>2</sup> The current perception of the respondents in the survey reveals that there is distinction between what is sacred (spiritual) and secular (material) in God’s ministry. This dichotomized approach to ministry assumes that pastors who are engaged in secular work are less spiritual and committed, if not out of God’s will, compared to full-time pastors. In contrast to Paul’s holistic theology of the gospel and spirituality, where the total welfare of the person is paramount, dichotomized spirituality stresses the importance of the mind (spirit) over the body (matter), situating the good life in the next world. The Hebrew Scriptures, as understood by Paul, never stressed such dualistic theology separating the mind and the body into some kind of hierarchy, wherein

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<sup>1</sup> Table 21 establishes the correlation between the practical and biblico-theological perceptions of laymen on bi-vocational ministry. Refer to Chapter Three under the section, “On the Correlation of Bi-vocational Ministry Practical Score (BVMPS). See *original dissertation*.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the section “bi-vocational ministry creates an impression that there is no distinction between the sacred and secular in God’s ministry” under “Biblico-Theological Differences” of this Chapter.

the latter gives way to the former.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, a sound holistic theology of spirituality that will emanate from the denomination's seminary and adopted by the churches, will clear doubts and will change the churches' critical attitude towards bi-vocational ministers. A healthy theology of spirituality needs to be stated clearly by looking at the person as an indivisible whole, not a part but a whole animated person with both body (personality) and soul (life).

This suggests that the kind of spirituality with which the churches should be concerned is not one which is separated from the socio-economic, and political concerns. Rather, it is a spirituality that takes into consideration the over-all direction of life towards God and His Kingdom.

### **The Need to Break the Clergy-Laity Syndrome in the Churches**

Corollary to a dichotomized theology of spirituality, against which Paul had strongly argued, is the distinction made by the respondents that the clergy is separate from the laity.<sup>2</sup> This seems alien to the Baptist heritage or teaching of the "priesthood of all believers."

One advantage of bi-vocational ministry, as seen in Paul's life, was his close association with people in the secular world. He walked in their shoes (e.g., Priscilla and Aquila, Lydia, Zenas, Erastus, Luke, Barnabas). His fellowship with them did not give the feeling that he was above or more blessed and special than the rest of his friends and associates in ministry. His two jobs made Paul understand the equality of a person's calling before God. Being a missionary, Paul did not think his task alone counted for God. He did not contemplate that his work was more Christian than those who did the ordinary. For Paul, the eternal and the temporal tasks of the church exist together, requiring the church to exercise their God-given talents and gifts for the world. This can only happen if the clergy-laity syndrome can be addressed.

The exercise of ministry is not a monopoly of full-time pastors or members of the clergy. It belongs to the people (Greek, *laos*) of God.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the teachings of the New Testament seem not to require full-time pastorates. This is evident in the early churches (Eph. 4:11-12; Acts 6:6-7). Apparently, the local church simply existed and functioned without the services of full-time pastors. The advent of full-time pastorate was a later phenomenon in the church. Practically, from the early days of the first century church, God-called servants earned their livelihood through their skilled vocation.<sup>4</sup> As bi-vocational people they were instrumental in the birth, growth, and development of Christianity. Their examples seem to demonstrate the truth that a local church can operate without a full-time pastor. The nature of bi-vocational ministry fulfills the meaning of Christian calling (i.e., every Christian is called and has a life of service to offer).<sup>5</sup> Hence, there is a need

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<sup>1</sup> Paul's understanding of "diakonia" is explained in his "Theology of Ministry," in Chapter Two. See also, Sylvia Palugod's "What Does a Filipino Mean By Being Saved" *Patmos* 14, no. 2 (February 1996): 6.

<sup>2</sup> A negative result at 36.9% (32.2%, "agree;" 4.7%, "strongly agree") from ministers clearly demonstrates the sacerdotal mood and spirit of CPBC pastors over the laity. Refer to Appendix T, question no. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Thurman Adkins, "Involving Laity in Study and Ministry as a Method for Teaching the Theology of Ministry at the Ebenezer Baptist Church" (D. Min. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980), 41-42.

<sup>4</sup> Thurman W. Allred, 39. Farley and Holloway reported that bi-vocational pastors started most of the 35,000 Southern Baptist congregations in the USA. And persons who hold secular employment as well as pastoring a church are about 30%. Gary E. Farley and Dale Holloway, "Bi-vocationalism and Bold Mission Thrust"; available from <http://www.pickens.net/~pba/c-documents>; Internet; accessed 28 October, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Nodell Dennis, "The Bi-vocational Pastor and Self-Esteem," *Church Administration*, June 1982, 43.

to break the clergy-laity syndrome so that the local church could become a fully functioning body of Christ and a leaven in the society. Scripturally, this is anchored on the premise that the members take seriously the biblical teaching of the “priesthood of all believers” (1 Pet.2:9).

### **Psycho-Sociological Implications**

This section has two psycho-sociological implications, namely: (1) the need to re-educate the CPBC churches toward the viability and appropriateness of bi-vocational ministry, and (2) the need for the CPBC ministers to be selective in the choice of non-pastoral vocation to complement their pastoral role. They are discussed below:

#### **The Need to Re-educate the CPBC Churches toward the Viability and Appropriateness of Bi-vocational Ministry**

Attitudinal ambivalence towards bi-vocational ministry seems to be the prevailing mood of the respondents in Chapter Three. As revealed in the survey, the simultaneous presence of almost equally strong but opposing motivations or perceptions of both ministers and lay leaders seem to give them the impression that bi-vocational ministry may not be of help to the churches. They tend to believe that it would weaken the power of the gospel as well as witness of the pastor to the community. This fact deters the respondents from accepting the viability and appropriateness of bi-vocational ministry as an alternative form of ministry to God.

In the survey, 73.9% of ministers (47.2%, “agree; 26.7%, “strongly agree”) perceive bi-vocational ministry (BVM) as a tool of the Enemy in order to diminish the effect of the gospel to the community. In addition, 62.1% of the laymen also equate BVM to the materialistic inclination of ministers (49.2%, “agree;” 16.9%, “strongly agree”). Theologically, both respondents have reservations for it. However, when it comes to the practical, psycho-sociological and ethical advantages of BVM, the survey shows that 91 (71.6%) out of 127 pastors are willing to engage in bi-vocational ministry, if they have a chance.<sup>1</sup>

Bi-vocational ministry does have problems and limitations. As in all other forms of ministry that have their unique problems, bi-vocational ministry is no exception; however, it is not wrong theologically and ethically. Rather, it is a way to be helpful in the ministry, specifically among churches that cannot afford to support a full-time pastor. Most of the men and women called by God for His purpose practice it as a valid and legitimate form of ministry. In fact, no reference in the Bible disapproves or criticizes Paul and Amos, to name two, for having secular jobs along with their call to ministry. The support of ministers by the local church is legitimate and biblical; however, there are certain cases that support for ministers might not be possible or available. Apparently, the need and opportunity available in the community will determine which style of ministry a minister will take. The expediency of the situation, plus the gifts and aptitudes of the pastor will determine one’s options for ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> As indicated in the survey, 94 (78.3%) of CPBC pastors in Western Visayas receive a monthly salary between P2,000-P5,000 (refer to Table 6). See Appendix H.



In this light, CPBC ministers and lay leaders in Western Visayas are encouraged and challenged to look at bi-vocational ministry as a valid form of ministry in contemporary society. It is advantageous if they do not limit their understanding of ministry to purely church work. Broadly, they need to understand the psycho-sociological interactions between the church and the need of the contemporary world.

### **The Need for CPBC Ministers to be Selective in the Choice of Non-Pastoral Vocation to Complement their Pastoral Role**

Bi-vocational ministry does not intend to replace or minimize the ministry of full-time pastors. Neither does it claim to be the primary approach to ministry and missions, or the only viable alternative to solving the problem of small churches that cannot afford to call a pastor. Rather, it is a valid form of ministry that could supplement the ministries of the local church in the world, and a helpful way to present the gospel to as many people as possible. Although it has certain limitations, the advantages can be numerous.

The mundane cares of earning a living outside of parish ministry by bi-vocational ministers, however, does not automatically give them the free hand to engage in any type of secular work. Certain types of work outside may not help them as ministers. If pastors are not careful, their second vocation may pull them down socially and spiritually. In Chapter Three, the respondents indicated that guilt follows a bi-vocational minister, and the door is wide open for him or her to leave the pastoral work. The survey implies that prudence is necessary before a minister launches out into the world of work.

Ministers need to be cautious, sensible, and selective in choosing their second job, if they really care for the local church. The general reservation of the respondents toward the secular job of ministers as revealed in the survey seems to have revolved around this issue. An approach bi-vocational ministers can take is to consider first a job that would complement and enhance their pastoral work, rather than decide on the financial aspect of the job alone. They can do this in the direction of their calling. Otherwise, the money they will earn from the job will not compensate for the damage their churches will suffer, aside from the effect and lowering of the dignity of their office as ministers.

### **Ethical Implications**

The ethical implications that follow are not only essential among the majority of CPBC ministers who receive low salaries from the churches, but also helpful in eliminating the tension that apparently exist between church members and bi-vocational pastors. These implications are: (1) the need for the denomination to establish and recommend to the churches a fair policy regarding the salary of ministers, and (2) the need for the denomination to review its stance regarding the issue of bi-vocational ministry.

## **The Need for the Denomination to Establish and Recommend to the Churches a Fair Policy Regarding the Salary of Ministers**

Without infringing on the local autonomy of every Baptist church, and in view of the low salaries received by most CPBC ministers in Western Visayas, it is essential that a fair policy regarding the minimum salary of pastors in the rural and urban areas be suggested or recommended by the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches to the churches. This will encourage the individual churches to live up to the agreed policy. Some churches might even be encouraged to give beyond the established scale. It will also give the leaders of the local church a hint on whether or not they will allow their pastor to engage in other jobs outside of the pastoral ministry.

In the survey, the average monthly income of CPBC pastors in Western Visayas is between P2,000-P2,500 monthly (see Table 6), much below compared to the present minimum salary received by an ordinary employee, either in private or public institutions. A fair policy regarding the salary of ministers will not only elevate the dignity and self-esteem of ministers, but will also prevent them from conduct unbecoming of their profession. It is a well-known fact that low salaries have personal and professional consequences that could affect the dignity, morale, and competence of ministers.

## **The Need for the Denomination to Review its Stance Regarding Bi-vocational Ministry**

Affirmation and trust between the church and bi-vocational ministers are essential toward building a strong, unified, and dynamic ministry. With this, it is necessary that denominational and local church leaders should appreciate, value, and respect the ministry of bi-vocational ministers, not only in the churches and other religious institutions, but also in the larger context of community life wherein their skills, spiritual gifts, and aptitudes are found to be most fitting and beneficial to society. It is necessary for churches from believing that bi-vocational ministers are less committed to the ministry; that they dismiss the myth that they are second-rate class of ministers. There are pastors who are part-time workers but have a full-time commitment to the church. On the other hand, there are full-time pastors but appear like part-time in their work and commitment to the local church.

By accepting and understanding bi-vocational ministry, denominational and local church leaders remove the barriers, e.g., suspicion, prejudice, and stereotyping, that most often are expressed openly or secretly against the bi-vocational pastors. In so doing, they promote a healthy atmosphere that is advantageous to both the church and the bi-vocational pastors.

## **Practical Implications**

Bi-vocational ministry offers certain advantages to the denominations, churches, and pastors. The implications derived from the preceding section of this chapter are here enumerated and explained: (1) the need for the denomination's theological institutions to incorporate bi-vocational ministry in their respective curriculum, (2) the need for the denomination to create a department of bi-vocational ministries, which will lead, oversee, and coordinate bi-vocational skills

training and development programs for ministers, (3) the need for the CPBC churches to recognize bi-vocational ministry as a tool for evangelism, mission and church planting, (4) the need for ministers to learn a trade, and pursue additional educational attainment.

### **The Need for the Denomination's Theological Institutions to Incorporate a Course on Bi-vocational Ministry in their Curriculum**

Engaging in a secular job while serving a church at the same time offers two practical advantages for ministers. These are: (1) financial security for the family to which 88.3% of pastors surveyed agree (60%, "agree;" 28.3%, "strongly agree"), and (2) an antidote to cope with the standardized salary of public and private workers to which 68.4% of pastors agree (51.1%, "agree;" 17.3%, "strongly agree").

Psychologically, bi-vocational ministry offers the following advantages to ministers: (1) it enhances their dignity to which 73.1% of pastors agree (58.2%, "agree;" 14.9%, "strongly agree"), and (2) it enhances the minister's coping mechanism with frustrations to which 53.5% of pastors agree (42.5%, "agree;" 11%, "strongly agree"). Additionally, on the ethical side, ministers who function bi-vocationally as indicated in the survey, will be spared from conduct unbecoming of their profession to which 81% of pastors agree (53.5%, "agree;" 27.5%, "strongly agree").

With these empirical data, it is important for seminaries and Bible colleges to consider seriously the inclusion of bi-vocational ministry in their curriculum. This would give theological students not only the advantage of sharpening their skills early, but also wider latitude of serving Christ outside of local church work in the event their gifts and aptitudes warrant. Churches need to understand the inflationary cycle taking place in many countries of the world today. One practical thing for them to do now is to prepare the students in theological institutions to be proactive and advanced in planning for their future ministry. God's mission is universal and inclusive.<sup>1</sup> This implies the penetration of the men and women in the work-a-day world by would-be bi-vocational ministers.

### **The Need for the Denomination to Create a Department of Bi-vocational Ministries Which Will Lead, Oversee, and Coordinate Skills Training Development Programs for Ministers**

Many pastors within the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches are bi-vocational. For years they had been instrumental in the growth and development of the CPBC, but their efforts, difficulties, needs, and problems in the field were not given proper attention by the denomination. Denominational programs like conducting seminars, scholarships, leadership training, and special projects in most cases are intended for the fulltime ministers. It seems that the bi-vocational ministers are being left out.

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<sup>1</sup> For Wayne Oates, God's universe is a big place. As a bi-vocational minister himself, he believes God's work is neither confined nor containable by any church walls, creeds or kinship system. He adds that both jobs are avenues of Christian ministry. See Dorris, 65.

Ministers who work in bi-vocational relationship, particularly those who have never been trained professionally in the seminary, are assumed to have experienced certain inadequacies in the ministry. They have difficulties, needs and problems. A sensitive and caring denomination can help them overcome their problems. The creation of a Department of Bi-vocational Ministries by the denomination under the supervision of an experienced ordained minister would help bi-vocational ministers in the field. In the survey, both respondents agree that bi-vocational ministry as a concept has a strong biblical support.<sup>1</sup> Hence, it is essential for the denomination to give priority to this matter.

### **The Need for the CPBC Churches to Recognize Bi-vocational Ministry as a Viable Tool for Evangelism, Mission and Church Planting**

One advantage open to bi-vocational ministers which could easily draw people to the gospel is their sense of identification with the working class. Almost 71% (60.6%, “agree;” 10.2%, “strongly agree”) of pastors believe that bi-vocational ministers have a high social acceptance among the laborers.<sup>2</sup> Since they are one among them, their level of understanding towards their co-laborers could elicit friendship and sympathy, which could be translated into positive action, especially if bi-vocational ministers manifest a Christ-like life. People in the workplace may not always listen to preachers, but usually they expect them to live and act like preachers should. If a self-supporting minister has a secular vocation that is marketable or is in demand, he can go to many places where there is a need for him to begin a new mission and get a local church started.<sup>3</sup> Church leaders with this kind of vision must look at this as a possible venue for evangelism, mission and church planting.

### **The Need for Ministers to Learn a Trade and Pursue Additional Educational Attainment**

In Third world countries where poverty continues to marginalize people, including ministers to a desperate level of existence, it is significant for ministers today to learn a trade or special skill, and, if possible, pursue additional educational attainment. A secular course or an advance theological education, which will supplement their present theological degree, will help them earn additional income that will augment their meager support from the churches. This may not be necessary for pastors serving in big churches. But for those assigned in rural churches where support is not enough, bi-vocational ministry might be a legitimate option to consider.

Local church support might be God's ideal plan of support for ministers. However, there are situations that adequate support may not be possible at all, as in the case of most CPBC pastors in Western Visayas. Thus, one antidote to this prevailing phenomenon in the CPBC churches is to accept the reality that, aside from church budget, God may use the secular skill or advance theological training of ministers to support their needs.

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<sup>1</sup> The question got 90.4% response from ministers (58.2%, “agree;” 32.2%, “strongly agree”) and 62.5% from the laymen (42%, “agree;” 20.5%, “strongly agree”).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix T, no. 26, and Tables 20-21. See *original dissertation*.

<sup>3</sup> Paul's tentmaking provided him the venue for spreading the gospel. This is explained under the section, “Paul's Tentmaking Ministry in Relation to His Task.”

## Summary of the Chapter

This chapter attempted to present a synthesis of Chapters Two and Three. It identified and discussed the points of similarity and differences between Paul's concept of tentmaking and the current perceptions of CPBC churches in Western Visayas on bi-vocational ministry. Based on the four subscales of the survey, seventeen items were analyzed and discussed: ten were seen as perceptual similarities, and seven were considered as differences. From these similarities and differences, the chapter enumerated the biblico-theological, psycho-sociological, ethical, and practical implications. The following were considered biblico-theological implications: (1) the need for the denomination's theological institutions to formulate a holistic theology of spirituality, (2) the need to break the laity-clergy syndrome in the churches. For psycho-sociological implications, two were thought to be relevant, namely: (1) the need to re-educate the CPBC churches be towards the viability and appropriateness of bi-vocational ministry, and (2) the need for CPBC ministers to be selective in the choice of non-pastoral vocation to complement their pastoral role.

The ethical perceptions were also identified and discussed. On the basis of the common perceptions and differing views between Paul and the respondents analyzed in the preceding sections, two implications were seen to be significant. These were: (1) the need for the denomination to establish a fair policy regarding the salary of ministers, and (2) the need for the denomination to review its stance regarding the issue of bi-vocational ministry.

The practical aspect of the chapter includes implications that were found to be sensible not only for the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches and its affiliate institutions to implement, but also for the financially needy ministers and would-be bi-vocational ministers to undertake. These implications were: (1) the need for the denomination's theological institutions to incorporate bi-vocational ministry in their respective curriculum, (2) the need for the denomination to create a department of bi-vocational ministries which will lead, oversee, and coordinate bi-vocational skills training and development programs for ministers, (3) the need for the denomination to recognize bi-vocational ministry as a viable tool for evangelism, mission and church planting, and (4) the need for ministers to learn a trade and pursue additional educational attainment.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This concluding section is divided into two parts. The first summarizes the findings of the study on the research problem stated as follows: What are the implications of Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* to the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas? The second briefly outlines some implications of the researcher's findings of the study.

### Summary of Findings of the Study

This research was conducted to delineate the implications of Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* to the current perceptions of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas on bi-vocational ministry. In response to the

problem stated above, the researcher divided the problem into the following sub-problems:

(1) What is Paul's concept of *skenopoiia*? (2) What are the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas? (3) What implications can be drawn from Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* to the current perceptions on bi-vocational ministry among the churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas?

Chapter Two investigated Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* as recorded in Acts 18:1-4, 20:34-35 and 1 Cor. 9:12-18; 1 Thess. 2:9, and 2 Thess. 3:3-9. To understand the substance of Paul's concept of *skenopoiia*, a literary research was done. There were four sections discussed in this chapter. The first section dealt with *skenopoiia* from a general Jewish perspective. Under this section, the value of learning a trade for the Jews, how the Rabbis performed their religious duties, and the contrast of attitudes between the Greeks and Hebrews attitudes towards manual labor were examined. These were seen as having some bearing or influence on Paul as a tentmaker-missionary.

The second section discussed *skenopoiia* from a Pauline perspective. In this section, Paul gave three specific reasons for being a bi-vocational servant of God.

These were explained as follows: (1) *Skenopoiia* as a means to accomplish his mission and evangelization (Acts 18:1-4); (2) *Skenopoiia* as a form of self-sacrifice (1 Cor. 9:12-18; 2 Cor. 11:9), and (3) *Skenopoiia* as a form of modeling (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:3-9, and Acts 20:34-35).

First, in accomplishing Paul's mission and evangelization, Paul used his skill as a point of entry to evangelize the Jews and Gentiles who gathered at the synagogue on Sabbath days (Acts 18:4). In Corinth he met Priscilla and Aquila. While staying with the couple he took the opportunity to preach the good news to the city and elsewhere.

Second, as a tentmaker Paul worked with his hands because he wanted to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel of Christ. In spite of his privileges as an apostle, Paul insisted to work with his own hands because (1) he did not want to be misunderstood on matters that might hinder the spread of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:12-13), and (2) he did not want to become a burden to the churches (2 Cor. 11:9). All that Paul wanted was to preach the gospel voluntarily and without charge, so he may win as many people as possible for Christ (1 Cor. 9:17-19). Such was a form of self-sacrifice on his part.

Third, Paul worked with his hands because he wanted to be a model to the churches. While he was in Corinth, Paul received a report that the brethren in Thessalonica became idle and undisciplined. Generally, there was a misunderstanding about his teaching on the second coming of Christ. In spite of his earlier instructions for the church not to remain idle, his instructions went unheeded. Hence, Paul wrote them again and encouraged the brethren to follow the examples of the missionaries in not becoming a burden to others (2 Thess. 3:7-8). Paul seemed to have personally applied this principle in his life. He would rather help than become a burden to some. This he did in Ephesus following the example of Jesus who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35a).

The third section dealt with Paul's theology of the church, the ministry, and the spiritual gifts. His convictions on the above issues strengthened his understanding of tentmaking. He believed that any form or method of ministry

must be grounded on theology. A sound theology was essential so a person's ministry, whatever it may be, will not be in jeopardy. Further, the apostle emphasized that all members of Christ's body are one and interdependent with each other. By comparing the church to a human anatomy, the apostle believed that much could be done if the members share the burden of and cooperate with each other in ministry. The local church refers to God's people. Ministers, as Paul understands, are called to enable and empower the members for Christian service (Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 2:2). For Paul bi-vocational ministry, if properly understood and practiced by the local church, will provide every member the opportunity to serve and witness for Christ.

Corollary to Paul's theology of the church was his theology of ministry. Broadly, Paul viewed humankind not only as a spiritual being but also as a physical being with various needs. In this regard, he emphasized the need for a holistic approach in ministering to people. The gospel as he understood must address the whole person, and not simply the spiritual needs. He affirmed that both the temporal and eternal tasks of the local church are not separate but one integrated response to Christian obedience.

The issue of spiritual gifts was also discussed. The following motifs appeared to be found in Paul's theology: (1) gifts are endowments that emanate from God, (2) every member of the local church has a spiritual gift, (3) the purpose of gifts is to edify the body of Christ, and (4) each gift is significant to God; whatever gift one possesses is to be used to accomplish God's purpose in the world.

Chapter Three analyzed the current perceptions of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas on bi-vocational ministry. Three hundred pastors and key church leaders were selected as respondents. The majority (91.6%) responded positively to the questionnaire, except for the few who were not able to complete the data needed for the study. From a total of 300 respondents only 263 (87.6%) completed the questionnaire and were selected as respondents for the research.

Chapter Three was divided into three major parts. The first part discussed the historical background of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches. The second part delved into the demographics of the respondents. The last part investigated the current perceptions of the respondents on bi-vocational ministry. The respondents' response to the questionnaire were categorized, tabulated, and analyzed under the four sub-scales of the instrument, namely: (1) biblico-theological perception; (2) psycho-sociological perception; (3) ethical perception; and (4) practical perception.

As discussed in part one, the history of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches started when the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) requested its missionary, Eric Lund, assigned in Barcelona, Spain and Braulio Manikan, a young Filipino and a convert of Lund, to work in Jaro, Iloilo in 1900. At that time, Jaro was the bulwark of Roman Catholicism, with its diocese located in the area. The Baptist work at first suffered persecution in the hands of some fanatic Catholics, but it never faltered in its mission. Bible translations flourished, evangelistic preaching of the gospel was prevalent, especially in rural areas, and educational institutions, hospitals, and Christian centers were established in order to meet to the needs of the churches.

Despite the split in 1927 and the subsequent hardships that the Baptists have experienced during the Japanese occupation of the country, the Baptist work continued to grow. Today the Convention Baptists emerged as the strongest

Protestant group in Western Visayas. The demographics presented in part two included the following information about the respondents: (1) name, (2) name of church, (3) *kasapulan* (conference), (4) civil status, (5) age, (6) sex, (7) educational attainment, (8) monthly salary bracket, (9) ministry position in church, (10) length of service, and (11) knowledge of pastors engaged in bi-vocational ministry. Two other questions were added to the survey that were applicable only to ministers, namely: (1) current engagement in bi-vocational ministry, and (2) chance to engage in bi-vocational ministry. The researcher presented the analysis of these demographics.

The last part of Chapter Three presented the perceptions of the respondents on bi-vocational ministry. The survey revealed that pastors had higher mean scores in their bi-vocational ministry perceptions than the laymen. The same is evident in their responses to the four subscales, namely: biblico-theological, psycho-sociological, ethical, and practical. In terms of correlation, however, the laymen reversed the trend. The survey showed that laymen had a high correlation coefficient in their biblico-theological, psycho-sociological, ethical, and practical perceptions on bi-vocational ministry than the ministers. In addition, they showed the same degree of perception in correlating each sub-scale with the other subscales. The survey revealed moderate to very high positive relationships.

In the Independent t Test, the survey indicated significant differences between the demographic variables of pastors and laymen in terms of age, sex, salary, years in ministry, and knowledge of bi-vocational ministers. The t values were -3.785, -4.891, -6.542, 3.225, and 2.079, respectively, while the critical value was 1.971. All variables either at 0.05 or 0.01 level on a two-tailed test revealed a significant difference.

The same was revealed in the Independent t Test of respondents in their bi-vocational ministry scale (BVMS), and in the four subscales, namely: BVMBTS, BVMPSS, BVMES, and BVMP. At 3.688, 3.749, 3.460, 3.596, 2.426, and 3.365, respectively, the pastors and laymen differ significantly in their perceptions of bi-vocational ministry. The critical value of t is 1.971. Apparently, their significant difference can be attributed either to their personal circumstances in particular or to their understanding of the ministry in general.

Chapter Four enumerated the implications of Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* to the current perceptions of bi-vocational ministry among the CPBC churches in Western Visayas. The chapter identified several points of "similarity" (agreement, correspondence, and convergence) and "difference" (disagreement, deviation, and divergence) found in Chapters Two and Three. The researcher evaluated and compared the points of similarity and differences based on the sub-scales of the survey, and then drew general implications for the study.

The following were found to be points of similarity: (1) bi-vocational ministry as a concept has a strong biblical support, (2) bi-vocational ministry is practiced by God's servants in the Old and New Testaments, (3) bi-vocational ministry finds a good model in the apostle Paul, (4) bi-vocational ministry enhances the dignity of the pastor in the society, (5) bi-vocational ministry enhances high social acceptance of the pastor among the working class, (6) bi-vocational ministry enhances the minister's coping mechanism with frustrations in the ministry, (7) bi-vocational ministry prevents ministers from conduct unbecoming of their profession, such as borrowing money and asking special favors from the members, (8) bi-vocational ministry prevents the pastors from becoming resentful



with the church members, (9) bi-vocational ministry creates better opportunities for evangelism and mission, and (10) bi-vocational ministry is the practical solution for a church that cannot afford to call for a full-time pastor.

The following were also found to be points of differences: (1) bi-vocational ministry creates an impression that there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular in God's ministry, (2) bi-vocational ministry suggests an image that a minister violates his or her ordination vow, (3) bi-vocational ministry creates an impression that the pastor is getting materialistic, (4) bi-vocational ministry suggests that the pastor does not live by faith, (5) bi-vocational ministry minimizes the spiritual gifts God has given to pastors, (6) bi-vocational ministry does not reflect self-sacrifice, (7) bi-vocational ministry leads to guilt on the part of pastors, (8) bi-vocational ministry projects a half-hearted attitude toward the ministry, and (9) bi-vocational ministry opens the door for the minister to leave the pastoral work.

From these similarities and differences, the following were drawn as implications of Paul's concept of *skenopoiia* in light of the field survey in Chapter Three: (1) biblico-theological implications: (a) the need for the denomination's theological institutions to formulate a holistic theology of spirituality, (b) the need to break the laity-clergy syndrome in the churches; (2) psycho-sociological implications: (a) the need to re-educate the CPBC churches towards the validity and appropriateness of bi-vocational ministry, (b) the need for the CPBC ministers to be selective in the choice of non-pastoral vocation to complement their pastoral role; (3) ethical implications: (a) the need for the denomination to establish a fair policy regarding the salary of ministers, (b) the need for the denomination to review its stance regarding the issue of bi-vocational ministry; and (4) practical implications: (a) the need for the denominations' theological institutions to incorporate bi-vocational ministry in their respective curriculum, (b) the need for the denomination to create a department of bi-vocational ministries which will lead, oversee, and coordinate bi-vocational ministry skills training and development programs for ministers, (c) the need for the denomination to recognize bi-vocational ministry as a viable tool for evangelism, mission and church planting, and (d) the need for ministers to learn a trade and pursue additional educational attainment.

## **Implications of the Study**

On the basis of the findings established above, the following implications are perceived to be significant to the study:

1. Pastors and lay leaders in the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas seem to have an attitude of agree-disagree towards bi-vocational ministry. Apparently, their mixed feelings could be traced back to the lack of understanding of the issue from a biblical perspective. To address this need, it is necessary to prepare a manual of bi-vocational ministries based on the Bible, so that the local church will be enlightened and pastors with special skills, aptitudes, and potentials for bi-vocational ministry will be guided properly.

2. Since bi-vocational ministry offers a wider scope of Christian service for ministers, it is important to formulate a "Theology of Call to Ministry" so the local church will have a broader understanding of the ministry and will neither reduce nor categorize the work of ministers to purely church or para-church organizations alone, nor fall into the error of attempting to standardize the call and methods of God to full-time pastors only.

3. In view of the rising cost of living nowadays, especially in Asia, it is essential for underpaid pastors to blend faith and reality in ministry. As they maintain faith in God under all circumstances, they need to remember they were not called by God to let their families suffer unnecessarily for the ministry. If the local church cannot give them a living wage, then it is practical for the pastors to inform the church about their option to look for non-church related job.

4. Corollary to the low compensation or salaries received by majority of CPBC pastors surveyed in Western Visayas, it is necessary for congregations that are not large enough to support a full-time pastor to allow their pastor to engage in bi-vocational ministry. This will enable the pastor to attend a little more to what is sufficient for his or her family. It is common sense for the pastor to look for means to augment the family income. Paul is quite emphatic in saying that “if anyone does not take care of his relatives, and especially the immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8 NIV). A poor church that allows the pastor to work outside of his parish ministry is, in a way, helping the pastor.

5. There are churches and institutions within CPBC however that is not poor financially. They can afford to give a good package of benefits to their workers, if they like, but it seems that some leaders are not willing to give the workers the benefits they deserve. Something might be wrong either in the leadership or in their theology of social justice, especially with regards to their workers. Apparently they have “fossilized” themselves theologically. At times they misapplied the text that “the just, (like the humble pastor) shall live by faith.” At this juncture, a thorough re-thinking of the theology of social justice is essential for church leaders.

6. Bi-vocational ministers are vital to the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches. They were part of those who had sacrificed their time and efforts during the early stage of CPBC’s history. Their contributions to the growth of churches in Western Visayas and elsewhere in the country could not be ignored. Though some of them had been the target of ridicule and suspicion, and were hurt many times by those who did not understand their dual role, yet they kept going, contributing much to the work of CPBC since then and even up to the present. They need to be loved, affirmed, and valued by the churches.

# CREATION IN THE BOOK OF JOB

*Mona Lisa P. Siacor*

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Relevance of the Subject

The Book of Job read today at face value features a blameless character befallen with misfortune after misfortune. That he was vindicated in the end, his well-being restored, features relatively little in the entire story line, considering that the narrative telling of it is only part of one of the forty-two chapters comprising the book. Since Chapters 38 to 42 are speeches by God and Chapter 28 is a description of Wisdom, about thirty-five out of forty-two feature depressing moods.

An obvious characteristic of the book is the speaking back and forth<sup>1</sup> between Job and his three friends, with one more joining belatedly. These speeches, always groups of verses at a time, are expressive of deep hurt/pain, hopelessness, bewilderment, varying degrees of condemnation, and supplication. Many of these expressions are couched in a language presenting violent or heart-rending pictures to the mind. Thus it is a book of strong emotions on the negative side, a common theme among wisdom writings in the Bible.

Nevertheless, as attested by various comments, the Book of Job stands as among the best literary works in the world of all time. The author of the book has been referred to as the Shakespeare of the Old Testament in the superlative extent of his vocabulary as well as in his show of “vast resources of knowledge, a superb style of forceful expression, profundity of thought, excellent command of language, noble ideals, a high standard of ethics, and a genuine love for nature.”<sup>2</sup> One other feature that makes this book persistently interesting is the difficulty of the literature itself.<sup>3</sup>

That the main character Job was thus vindicated in the end and restored to his former status has made the book redeemable after all to any reader sympathizing with him. Thus it is made clear that suffering borne with faith may have its rewards in the end – but, only but, to those who endure.

Personal and vicarious suffering in the world today makes the Book of Job enduringly relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> It is not a real dialogue at all since the overwhelming impression is that the speakers don't seem to be addressing each other, their lines of thought not following the one previous to them. See also fn. 96 on page 20 following.

<sup>2</sup> S. J. Schultz, *Message of the Old Testament*, 1986, 126. Baker and Arnold have edited concise discussions on the ongoing development on Joban studies. For instance, see fn. 5, 11, and 24 on pages following.

<sup>3</sup> See discussion on page 5 following.

## B. Scope and Limitation of the Paper

For this Special Paper in a Master of Divinity course, the references are all English translations (such as, The Living Bible, The Anchor Bible, etc., each translation being indicated accompanying the passages), except for the texts of the MT of the Bible, which is in Hebrew. The Book of Job will be described, its features examined, so that a general description of it can be presented.

Without neglecting the other four speakers, specific attention will be directed to the speeches of Job, the sufferer, for it is his suffering that has mitigated the creation of this wisdom writing.<sup>1</sup> Job's theological concerns will be looked at, and out of them the concern on his direct personal suffering will be focused on. As solution for this concern we shall select the creation theology that is found within the book. To do so entails the looking at the entire book for creation passages, and then the connecting of these views with Job's suffering.

The focus on creation may be legitimized by the fact that the whole set of arguments in the book is wrapped up in the end by the speeches of Yahweh, all of which point to His might shown in His creation. One emphasis of the book seems to be pointing out that the answer to Job's struggles is mainly found in the looking at God's creation.

## C. Objectives of the Paper

This paper will present a general description of the Book of Job. Then it will deal summarily with creation in wisdom literature. After doing so, it will pick out passages that have to do with creation in Job. It is hoped that, by looking at these specific passages, a meaning will be reached connecting Job's suffering and Yahweh's creation.

## CHAPTER II. BACKGROUND

### A. General Features

In the MT<sup>2</sup> the Book of Job consists of forty-two chapters. Chapters 1 and 2, the first five verses of the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter, and the last eleven verses of the last chapter are in prose form. The rest is poetry.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* starts off in its description of the Book of Job by saying that it is "among the greatest masterpieces of world literature," and it is

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<sup>1</sup> The book of Job is a Hebrew wisdom literature. See discussion on page 4.

<sup>2</sup> The Masoretic Text (MT) is the [Palestinian] Hebrew Bible, the version followed by the Protestant Reformers. The Book of Job (*Iyob*) is the second book, next to *Tehilim* (Songs of Praise, or the Psalms), in the third division of the books, called *Kethubim* (Writings). The Old Greek Version (OG), a version that existed earlier than the Septuagint, while lacking several verses in the Book of Job compared to the MT, contains "some distinct, lengthy additions..." (Bruce K. Waltke and David Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 319.) *Hagiographa* (the Holy, or Sacred, Writings) in the Septuagint (LXX) is the Greek equivalent of *Kethubim*. *Masoretic Text* refers to the 'received' text of the Hebrew OT with vowel points by the Masoretes (or Masorites), the authoritative teachers of Scriptural tradition; it was developed between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D. and is the basis of all modern critical texts of the Hebrew OT. (Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 1976, 103.) Other Greek translations of the Old Testament are by Aquila, by Symmachus, and by Theodotion. Origen in c.212 compiled the *Hexapla*, "a synopsis of the Old Testament versions": the Hebrew, its transliteration, the Septuagint, the three Greek versions mentioned above, and two more translations for the Psalms. (Henry Chadwick, EB, in, 1965, Vol.16, 1094.)

also “the finest expression of Hebrew poetic literature.”<sup>1</sup> Documents from ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt show that writings similar to the Book of Job were not uncommon. Their similar characteristics were their “literary structures and lament language,” and their dealing with “the meaning of suffering.”<sup>2</sup>

Job is usually labeled as a ‘wisdom’ book, together with Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Wisdom of Ben Sira and Wisdom of Solomon of the Deuterocanonicals<sup>3</sup>, and some Psalms as wisdom literature. These books’ messages deal with ideas, skills, and insights that should help or guide a person so that he develops into a responsible part of his community, and also be successful in his undertakings. “The Wisdom Literature may be called the documents of Israel’s humanism ... because its general characteristic is the recognition of man’s moral responsibility, his religious individuality and of God’s interest in the individual life.”<sup>4</sup>

The *New Jerome Commentary* singles out Job as the most difficult to translate among the Old Testament books.<sup>5</sup> This is because there are difficulties found within the literature. There are problems in grammar, syntax, and spelling.<sup>6</sup> As such one solution would be that the literature is a Semitic dialect of Edomite origin.<sup>7</sup>

The prose parts enclosing, or framing, the entire work are rightfully called Prologue and Epilogue. The Prologue opens the story of a very rich and religious man called Job in the land of “Uz” (location unknown)<sup>8</sup> who it seemed did consistently what’s proper in relation to God. A regular practice of his is to wake up early in the morning after his grown up children’s grand birthday parties and offer to God burnt offerings for each of them, with the corresponding summons and sanctifications, lest they “have sinned and turned away from God in their hearts” (1:5b, TLB).<sup>9</sup>

The character called *the satan*,<sup>10</sup> who is among the beings in heaven with God, twice pointed out in the narrative the possible reasons why Job has

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald James Williams, EB, in, 1965, Vol. 13, 8. David J. A. Clines says of it, “... belongs with the classics of world literature, with the *Iliad*, the *Divine Comedy*, and *Paradise Lost*”. (David J. A. Clines, OCB, in, Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., 1993, 368.)

<sup>2</sup> These are presented in part II.D. on page 9.

<sup>3</sup> John Drane, *Introducing the Old Testament*, 2000, 113.

<sup>4</sup> O. S. Rankin, *Israel’s Wisdom Literature: Its Bearing on Theology and History of Religion*, 1954, 3. There is further discussion on “wisdom” in parts II.D. and E. on pp. 9ff. and 13ff. of this paper.

<sup>5</sup> R. Brown, et. al., eds., NJBC, 1993, 466.

<sup>6</sup> “Being a masterful literary creation, the Book of Job will continue to elicit commentary and readerly engagement on all kinds of fronts and by a variety of interpreters, from those wrestling with linguistic and textual difficulties to those who live and work with the suffering poor. Job is not an easy text from any standpoint.” (Walke and Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 327). Also, there are several words that occur only here and nowhere else in the Bible. Cf. fn. 71.

<sup>7</sup> This is the conclusion reached seeing that in Job 1:3 the character Job is said to be “of the East,” and Edom was a center of wisdom; of help to the translation are languages cognate to that of the book, which are Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Phoenician. Moreover, since no OT Arabic transcripts are extant, nor enough of Edomite or Ammonite to compare with, then the certainty is difficult. The Moabite Stone, which is in prose, does not help much either. Though, being of the longest and oldest documents from preexilic Transjordan, it is a basis for the possibility that, likewise, the Book of Job’s language could have been easily understood by the Hebrews. (Elmer B. Smick, EBC, in, Frank E. Gaebel, gen.ed., 1988, Vol.4, 845) Y. Kaufmann notes that certain poetic parts of the book “is classical Hebrew of the best. Contacts with Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Arabic are most naturally understood as arising out of the antique literary dialect that the author employed; it is this that makes the reading of the book so difficult”. (Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, 1960, 338).

<sup>8</sup> See page 8, fn.27.

<sup>9</sup> Numbers 23:1, 14, 29 speak likewise of a primitive cult where the priesthood is not yet, and as in Job’s case it is the clan’s patriarch who performs the sacrifices. Psalm 4:4 and Ecclesiastes 10:20 likewise speak of the possibility of sinning with the mind even while lying in bed. (Marvin H. Pope, *The Anchor Bible: Job*, 1965, Vol.15, 8 and 9.)

<sup>10</sup> An excursus on *ha satan* is on page 16.

remained faithful to God. They were because God has maintained first Job's wealth and family well-being, and then his health. On each occasion God gave way to *the satan's* requests to take away each reason. Without fail Job ends up staying faithful to God in spite of the calamities.

The Epilogue sounds like a tribute to Job's faithfulness. His reputation among his friends is vindicated. Twice the wealth he had before was restored to him, he begat children again, and he lived until the good old age of 140.

If looked at closely though, it is not only the differing literary forms of the prose Prologue and Epilogue that distinguishes them from the more substantial poetic main body, generally called the Dialogue. It seems that the Job characters, personality-wise, are different as well. The first Job is "the traditional pious and patient saint who retained his composure and maintained his integrity through all the woes inflicted on him and refused to make any accusation of injustice against Yahweh, but rather continued to bless the god who had afflicted him," whereas the second sounded off "bitter complaints and charges of injustice against God."<sup>1</sup> This is among the reasons that led scholars to conclude that these two parts were not composed at the same time or place.

## B. The Name *Job*

Findings from the Amarna Letters, the Egyptian Execration texts, the Mari, Alalakh and Ugaritic documents show that the name Ayyāb or 'Iyyōb<sup>2</sup> is "well attested" to be a Western Semitic name at about the second millennium.<sup>3</sup> The original form seems to be Ayyab-um, which in turn was contracted from 'Ayya-'abu(m), meaning "Where is (My) Father?" Other similar names were Ay(y)a-'ahu, "Where is (My) Brother?," and Ay(y)a-hammu/halu, meaning "Where is the Paternal/Maternal Clan?" The author of the book may have used the name for its ordinariness, or maybe a character Job of similar circumstances did exist then.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it is also thought that the character Job was not an Israelite at all since he has not spoken of the covenant nor of parts of the history of the Hebrew people at all.<sup>5</sup>

## C. Authorship and Date of Composition

The range-allowance given for the dating of the work is very wide, by a minimum of about 200 years to a maximum of about 900 years.<sup>6</sup> Scholars seem to agree that the storyline of the Prologue-Epilogue is a much older material, but

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<sup>1</sup> Pope, 1965, XXI-XXII. There are other 'incongruities' mentioned as well. In the Prologue-Epilogue the 'sacrificial cultus' seemed to be an important feature, the names of God used are Yahweh and Elohim, and the mood is rather one that is "detached and impersonal attitude toward the cruel experiment." In the Dialogue no concept of the sacrifice is mentioned, God is called El, Eloah, Elohim, and Shaddai (that is, Yahweh is hardly used, just as also in Ecclesiastes), and "is highly charged with emotion and the anguish of a tortured soul." (Anderson says the same in *Understanding the Old Testament* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1966, 508)

<sup>2</sup> Pope, 1965, 6.

<sup>3</sup> E. Smick, ZPEB, in, Merrill C. Tenney, gen.ed., 1976, Vol.3, 600.

<sup>4</sup> Pope, 1965, 6. Jansen puts the Hebrew name Job to mean "where is the [divine] father?" or "hated/persecuted one", or a combination of both (J. Gerald Jansen, HBD, in, Paul J. Azhtemeier, gen.ed., 1985, 492).

<sup>5</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol.4, 861.

<sup>6</sup> W. P. Brown here gives 10<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E. though most probably in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>, the exilic or early postexilic period (William P. Brown, EDB, in, David Noel Freedman, ed.-in-chief, 2000, 716). Jansen gives between 7<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, most probably exilic (after 586 B.C.) (Jansen, HBD, in, 1985, 492). Clines gives between 7<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, "but hardly more precisely than that." (Clines, OCB, in, 1993, 369) Therefore, "On the whole, one can make no firm conclusions about setting in terms of the date." (Roland E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther*, 1981, 20).

there are varied ideas as to the development of it as finally connected to the Dialogue part.

It has been thought that the storyline about an innocent sufferer was retold to fit the entire composition, since the Prologue-Epilogue cannot seem to stand alone as a legitimate story.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the author just re-expressed the central part of the old prose story into a poetic form.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, "Either the speeches were spliced into the preexisting narrative story, or the legend of Job was added to tone down the speeches."<sup>3</sup> Or perhaps the Dialogue was itself an old literary work, one that was very similar to the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels.<sup>4</sup>

The Talmudic tradition was that it was written by Moses (*Baba Bathra* 14b, seq.).<sup>5</sup> However for lack of evidences we have no idea at all who the author of the book was. Most probably he was an Israelite living in the vicinity of Edom, southeast of Judah, or of the north of Arabia.<sup>6</sup>

#### **D. On the Universality of the Wisdom Movement and on Parallelisms of the Book of Job with Non-Biblical Ancient Literatures<sup>7</sup>**

The wisdom movement, as reflected in the wisdom literatures, was an international movement.<sup>1</sup> Those responsible for these literatures spoke on societal problems, on the human existence.

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<sup>1</sup> Clines, OCB, in, 1993, 369-70.

<sup>2</sup> H. L. Ellison, NBD, in, I. H. Marshall et. al., consulting eds., 1996, 589.

<sup>3</sup> Walke and Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 325. But the discussion continues on to say, "Recent literary readings of the book, however, have carefully explored the linkage between the prologue and the initial speeches, and have viewed the disparate Job figures as a single unified character. ... suggests that the frame and the core have been masterfully composed as a coherent literary work." ; the references given in the footnote were published in the 1980's, though.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, EDB, in, 2000, 716. The parallels mentioned here are: *Babylonian Theodicy*, *A Man and His God*, and *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom*.

<sup>5</sup> Ellison, NBD, in, 1996, 589.

<sup>6</sup> Clines, OCB, in, 1993, 370. That is, if there was only one author. Murphy (1981, 20 and 45) doesn't place much emphasis on whether the book was either by a single author or by several authors. He seems open to the idea of the book having done by several authors when he writes, "Whatever may one think of the theories of its growth (by various additions), the work is a product of the sages who found the optimism of Proverbs to be an oversimplification. The doctrine of divine retribution, which Proverbs share with the deuteronomistic theology and the general Biblical tradition, needed to be confronted with the "difficult case," and this is Job. There is no proof that it was written out of a personal experience of suffering." Likewise, it does not seem to be a contradiction to him where it sounds like he attributes the authorship to a single person. "The author of Job clearly found it to his purpose ... , the author simply cannot just leave Job suffering in his agony ... The author does accept the doctrine on the goodness of the Lord and he now expresses this concretely in the case of Job." Moreover, Job 1:1 clearly says Job lived in Uz; just where this was in connection to the book is not clear either, though the best conjecture is that "Uz might have been the name of a wide region encompassing many tribes [east] of Pal[estine] from Edom to Aram"; in Lam. 4:21 Uz was Edom (Smick, ZPEB, in, 1976, Vol.3, 603.). Probably where Job lived was "essentially a part of the desert [based on Job 1:19 and also 1:15 and 17] yet comprising farming areas (v. 14) as well as towns of considerable size (29:7)." (B. D. Napier, IDB, in, 1962, Vol.4, 741.) Job might have lived in a rural area. It is also interesting to note that Job is "the greatest of all the people of the east." The phrase *bene kedem* בְּנֵי כֶּדֶם means "the children of the east country." Job 1:3 speaks of Job being the "greatest of all the people of the east." They may be identified as the Arabian-Edomite tribes to the southeast of the Dead Sea. (Samuel Terrien, contributor, IB, in, George Arthur Buttrick, commentary ed., 1958, Vol.3, 49). They may also be the nomadic tribes of the Syrian desert including Arameans and Kedar associated with Midian and Amalek, and were noted for their wisdom. Job may have been one of them. (Madeleine S. Miller and J. Lane Miller, HBD, 1961, 147) A similar phrase is found in Matthew 2:1, "wise men from the East" (οἱ σοφοὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνατολῆς) or the Magi, which Herodotus thought were originally Medians who became priests under the Persian empire. (J. Stafford Wright, NIDNTT, in, 1986, Vol.2, 557) They were also thought to be "part of a stream of wisdom-seekers in the ancient Near East." (Miller and Miller, HBD, 1961, 819) Another view to take note of is that what was called Edom was later called Uz, which was probably in what is now Iraq. (William Saffire, *The First Dissident: The Book of Job in Today's Politics*, 1992, 33) Summarily, therefore, the phrase "of the East" connotes people who valued wisdom, whether of those near Israel or as far away as present-day Iran or Iraq.

<sup>7</sup> The page references are of the 1969 edition of the ANET. Also, Hartley in NICOT, 1988, Vol.18, as well as Pope in *The Anchor Bible*, 1965, Vol. 15, talk lengthily of these parallels.

These discussions Anderson<sup>2</sup> categorizes into two: 1. "Practical advice to the young on how they may attain a successful and good life."; 2. "Probing into the depths of man's anguish about the meaning of life, often in a skeptical mood."

Rankin uses the term *humanism* for this focus on the human. He speaks on the characteristic of this literature type, "In both literatures (Israelite and Egyptian) there is the same ideal of moderation and prudence, the same utilitarian conception and quest of well-being, the same faith in divine justice and appeal to human justice. The pedagogical methods and respect for tradition are the same. There are the same literary forms and type rhetoric – often indeed the same formulae."<sup>3</sup>

Anderson adds that those who actively led this way of looking at the human condition, the sages, presented discussions abstracted from particular exclusive settings, such as, in the case of Israel, "Israel's election, the Day of Yahweh, the covenant and the Law, the priesthood and the Temple, prophecy and the messianic hope."<sup>4</sup> As such the sage did not seem to be limited by time and culture, and that his discussions would apply to almost anyone anywhere.

Kaiser mentions shortly on the affinities between the wisdom literatures of Israel with those of the Ancient Near East, particularly of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan.<sup>5</sup> Von Rad suggests that the wisdom movement in Israel began to be active at about the end of the monarchy. The movement came about with the consciousness of a possible recognition that the individual can be considered apart from the sense of his being a member of the cultic community. Thus, the individual now begins to raise questions that have not before been considered in the teaching tradition about God, specifically, questions that seemed to be against God.<sup>6</sup>

*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* is the name of the monograph containing an "annotated selection of the historical and literary materials in seven languages from the Near East during more than two millennia."<sup>7</sup> These are Egyptian, Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Mesopotamian, of Asia Minor, Babylonian, Assyrian, Palestinian, Canaanite, and Aramaic texts. These extra-Biblical materials are therefore of great help in studies on the Old Testament.

References refer to at least five literary works from the ancient world that have a high degree of similarity with the Book of Job. They are said to be parallels in content and style.

Said to be the "earliest treatment of the problem of suffering in Mesopotamia,"<sup>8</sup> *A Sumerian Variation of the "Job" Motif* (ANET 589–591) or *The First Job*,<sup>9</sup> is composed of parts of a work "having greater affinities with Job than any other Mesopotamian document previously known."<sup>10</sup> Like the Book of Job it tells of a righteous man who became sick and suffered. He was restored after he confessed to his god that all men are sinners. ANET describes it as a *poetic*

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, 1966, 488; Otto Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Presentation of Its Results and Problems*, 1975, 367; Rankin, 1954, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, 1966, 488.

<sup>3</sup> Rankin, 1954, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, 1966, 490.

<sup>5</sup> Kaiser, 1975, 370–371.

<sup>6</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom In Israel*, 1972, 206 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See ANET, 1969, bookjacket.

<sup>8</sup> Pope, 1965, LV.

<sup>9</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol.4, 843.

<sup>10</sup> Pope, 1965, LIII.



essay “for the purpose of prescribing the proper attitude and conduct for a victim of cruel and seemingly undeserved misfortune.” The poem’s date of composition can be placed at 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. “after the overthrow of the Sumerian 3<sup>rd</sup> dynasty of Ur.”<sup>1</sup>

Composed at about the same time also, the best-known parallel to *Job* is a thanksgiving hymn by a righteous man who, after his god Marduk as he thought allowed his suffering, has likewise allowed his healing. It is known by the names *Poem of the Righteous Sufferer*,<sup>2</sup> *The Babylonian Job*,<sup>3</sup> and *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom*<sup>4</sup> (ANET 596–600).

*The Babylonian Theodicy*<sup>5</sup> (ANET 601–604), also called *The Babylonian Ecclesiastes*,<sup>6</sup> is an acrostic poem<sup>7</sup> of almost 300 lines and composed slightly later than *The Babylonian Job*.<sup>8</sup> It is a dialogue between a sufferer and a friend about human suffering and divine justice.<sup>9</sup> It does not have any conclusion at all, no solution to the issue, no account of what finally happened to the sufferer. The 1955 edition of the ANET has the title *A Dialogue About Human Misery* (438–440) for it.

*A Dispute Over Suicide*<sup>10</sup> is an Egyptian didactic tale, which, like the Book of Job, begins and ends with prose passages. Also, the middle part is “a poetic soliloquy by the wretched man.”<sup>11</sup> The man argues with his soul because he is already tired of living. He laments that, “times . . . are so bad that there is no more justice or love.”<sup>12</sup>

*The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*<sup>13</sup>, also called *The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant*<sup>14</sup>, has a prologue and an epilogue that enclose “nine semipoetic appeals for justice on the part of the eloquent peasant.”<sup>15</sup> It concerns social justice, where a peasant complains to a certain Chief Steward and not to the gods. He complains of maltreatment and robbery by a government official. Like Job, he would rather die than agree to injustice. He gets vindicated in the end.<sup>16</sup>

## E. On the Wisdom in Israel and on the Book’s Uniqueness

The wisdom that is of Israel was based on, and addressed, to daily living. Its subject is right behavior, its concern is with the place of man in the divine ordering of the world.<sup>17</sup> “It introduced the topic of the worth of life and emphasized the need of man’s interest in his own self, of man’s regard for man and the belief in

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, EB, in, 1965, Vol. 13, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, EB, in, 1965, Vol. 13, 10; Pope, 1965, LV.

<sup>3</sup> Pope, 1965, LVI.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, EDB, in, 2000, 717; Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol.4, 843; Pope, 1965, LV.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, EDB, in, 2000, 716.

<sup>6</sup> Pope, 1965, LIX.

<sup>7</sup> A poem whose structure is guided by alphabetic considerations. Each unit begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. e.g., Psalm 119 (Murphy, 1981, 72)

<sup>8</sup> Williams, EB, in, 1965, Vol.13, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Pope, 1965, LIX.

<sup>10</sup> ANET, 1969, 405.

<sup>11</sup> Pope, 1965, LII.

<sup>12</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol.4, 844.

<sup>13</sup> Pope, 1965, LII.

<sup>14</sup> ANET, 1969, 407.

<sup>15</sup> Pope, 1965, LII.

<sup>16</sup> Pope, 1965, LIII.

<sup>17</sup> The phrases are from Kaiser, 1975, 368.

God's interest in the individual and in mankind."<sup>1</sup> It is a search for knowledge or the "rule" that is "supported by general evidence which can be controlled and confirmed by the mind."<sup>2</sup> And so, it was understood that though much can be known, much also remains unknown. The recognition of both is essential to acquiring wisdom.

Kaiser writes<sup>3</sup> that beginning with the Davidic reign civil servants were needed. This was as well true with the Ancient Near East monarchies. These civil servants were trained by the schools of the scribes associated with either the temple or the court. As such the original secular perspectives of the "Oriental" wisdom have become to be considered with a religious Hebrew motive, while at the same time turning out to be applicable to all peoples regardless of race or nation.<sup>4</sup>

All in all, Rankin summarizes these to be the distinct features of the Hebrew wisdom teaching: "the individualism which is the inspiration of social justice and equity, the idea of reward and of lending to God as the motive of good or social conduct, and above all the application of the *crea-tion-idea* to enforce the notion of the obligation man owes to his fellow-creatures."<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, for Israel, this wisdom was like the priest's "torah" and the prophet's "word," given to the wise man by Yahweh.<sup>6</sup> It is not something that is reached by a sort of an individual's psychological introspection. For instance, Solomon, the wise man per se of the Old Testament, asked God for a *bel* עמש בל (shomea), a *listening heart* (1Kings 3:9). Therefore God gave him a *leb hakm* ונבון (leb hakam we-nabon), a *wise and discerning heart* (1Kings 3:12). The *listening heart* and the *wise heart* are synonymous. The wise of heart follows the commandments (Prov. 10:8; Eccles. 8:5).<sup>7</sup>

The heart corresponds to "the entire inner life of a person," referring to the center of human psychical and spiritual life,<sup>8</sup> so that in the RSV *לב שמת* is rendered as *understanding mind*. The understanding mind "was not the authoritative reason ... of modern consciousness, but ... a feeling for the truth which emanates from the world and addresses man."<sup>9</sup>

The uniqueness of the book of Job is due to many reasons. It is said to be unique among the literatures of the world<sup>10</sup> in the way it deals with suffering and divine justice.<sup>11</sup> Its theological and philosophical dealing with the matter is intense as well as pity provoking,<sup>12</sup> and none exists of the same kind from its era in history.<sup>13</sup>

It is not easy reading at all especially that no conclusions are given in the end. As such, the book can be interpreted in many ways.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rankin, 1954, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Von Rad, 1972, 289.

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser, 1975, 371.

<sup>4</sup> Rankin, 1954, 9 and 11.

<sup>5</sup> Rankin, 1954, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, 1966, 493.

<sup>7</sup> Alex Luc, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol. 2, 753.

<sup>8</sup> Luc, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol. 2, 749.

<sup>9</sup> Von Rad, 1972, 296-297. Also, speaking of the "good man" who heeds the creation in page 78 of the same work, "The good man is the one who knows about the constructive quality of good (and the destructive quality of evil) and who submits to this pattern which can be discerned in the world."

<sup>10</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol. 4, 843-4.

<sup>11</sup> This is the concern of theodicy, which deals with God's goodness and sovereignty against the reality of evil.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, EDB, in, 2000, 716.

<sup>13</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol. 4, 843-4.

<sup>14</sup> Walkke and Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 327. Also Clines, OCB, 1993, 368.

The book is *sui generis* as well in biblical and Hebrew literature<sup>1</sup> because of its difficult language that has many *hapax legomena*.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that perhaps scribes and translators, as in the case of the earlier LXX form where 17–25% of the Hebrew was missing, found that this made their work difficult.<sup>3</sup> Parallel to this situation is the awkward reading of Chapter 27 where verses 7 to 23 do not seem to follow verses 2 to 6. Similar puzzling juxtaposition of ideas can be found starting Chapter 24, which gives rise to the suspicion of deletions, interpolations, or rearrangements.<sup>4</sup> Likewise looking at the larger area that is Chapters 21–31 it can be seen that it lacks Zophar's third speech, Bildad's is too short, and some of Job's do not harmonize with the sense flow of his previous speeches. Perhaps there has been some error in the editing, after all.<sup>5</sup> It could also be that attempts were made at resolving the issues involved by rearranging the units. Nevertheless, it is best to deal with the book as we have it now in the MT.<sup>6</sup>

### **On the Subjects of *the Satan* in the Old Testament and of *the Heavenly Council* (An Excursus)**

The term שָׂטָן (*satan*) appears with the article הַ (*ha*, the) always in the Book of Job. All renderings, basically שָׂטָן, are found within Chapters 1 and 2 only. In here, the character *satan* is a member of "God's council," or the "sons of God." Chapters 1 and 2, commonly called the Prologue of the book, is in prose form and opens the setting for the entire book. Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-7 present two settings where Yahweh and *the satan* converse having to do with the character Job. *The satan* is presented as one who has just come "from roaming through the earth and going to and fro in it." (verses 1:7 and 2:2) Twice in these narratives he points out to Yahweh the possible reasons why Job has remained faithful. First, that God has blessed Job with abundant possessions; and second, that God has blessed Job with good health. These statements by *the satan* are grounds for "suspicion" of the foundation of Job's faith. In this manner *the satan* is one who opposes Job. He accuses Job of a faith based on an abundance of possessions and health.

In Zech. 3:1 וְהָשָׂטָן (*and-the-satan*) is "standing at his right side," לְשֹׂטֵן (*to-accuse-him*). In Ps. 109:6 ) אֲשֹׁטֵן (*and accuser*) is almost always rendered as "(an) accuser" in the English translations; in here he is also one who "stand[s] at his right hand." This "standing at the right side" is a court setting taken up by the "accuser."<sup>7</sup> Thus it seems fitting that *the satan* of the Book of Job belongs to a council, and that among its members there is one who has this function, a sort of a "public prosecutor."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> That is, unique. Ellison, NBD, 1996, 589.

<sup>2</sup> *Hapax legomena* are words or terms occurring only once in the Bible; there are about 110 of these. See also fn. 11 on page 5.

<sup>3</sup> Waltke and Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 319; Ellison, NBD, 1996, 589.

<sup>4</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol. 4, 846.

<sup>5</sup> Clines, OCB, 1993, 370.

<sup>6</sup> C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, Revised and Expanded, 1988, 75.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth L. Barker, EBC, in, 1988, Vol.7, 623; Jeffrey B. Gibson, EDB, in, 2000, 1169; Von Rad, TDNT, in, 1964, Vol. 2, 73; Bruce Baloiian, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol. 3, 1231.

<sup>8</sup> Verlyn D. Verbrugge, ed., NIDNTT *Abridged ed.*, 2000, 133.

In the Old Testament *the satan* is Yahweh's agent, carrying out Yahweh's wishes. Thus by himself he has no authority at all.<sup>1</sup> Gradually, probably due to the influence of the dualism of Persian Zoroastrianism, *the satan* came to be identified as "the evil one" who is against God and God's people.<sup>2</sup>

Since *the satan* of Job 1 and 2 is only a member of the "sons of God," then basically any member of the "sons of God" can be *the satan*. The change from the common noun *the satan* to the proper name *Satan* may be seen in 1Chr. 21:1, where the article *ha* is not found with the term anymore.<sup>3</sup>

In the New Testament it is said in Revelation 12:10 that *Satan* fell from heaven. This implies that he has become a non-member of the "sons of God," and hence his function as accuser before Yahweh has ceased.

The אֱלֹהִים יְנַבְּרִים (*bene ha elohim*; sons of God) to which *the satan* of Job 1 and 2 belongs is suggested to be God's angels.<sup>4</sup> These angels have to account to God for their activities.<sup>5</sup> This idea is thought to have come from Jewish tradition, being connected eventually to the idea of fallen angels,<sup>6</sup> to which the being called *Satan* is one of. Older is the idea of the heavenly king surrounded by his servants.

Synonymous to *bene elohim* is *bene ha elohim* of Genesis 6:2. Scholars have thought these to be either "divine beings," heroes, descendants of Seth, or gods. In Psalm 29:1 the rendition is *bene elim* (sons of the gods), and is thought to be of polytheistic origins.<sup>7</sup> There is also *bene elyon* of Psalm 82:6 (sons of the Most High) who are neither human rulers nor judges. They are believed to be the gods of other nations.<sup>8</sup> It may have been that differing interpretations were by the redactors in the course on translation, as for instance to the LXX.<sup>9</sup>

It is remarkable that the name YHWH is not used in these phrases.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps because the idea of these phrases is of Near Eastern origin, speaking of an assembly of gods, which is polytheistic. YHWH as God is of Israelite origin, which eventually becomes strictly monotheistic.<sup>11</sup>

## F. The Book's Literary Structure and Outline

As was indicated, the Book of Job is mostly poetry and is enclosed by prose passages. The *Expositor's Bible Commentary*<sup>12</sup> counts off the chapters and the verses, puts them into classifications, and presents them in a manner as to show symmetry within the entire book, from beginning to end.

There is a Prologue (Chs. 1–2) counterbalanced by an Epilogue (Ch. 42:7–17). Job has an opening Lament (Ch. 3) counterbalanced by his Closing

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<sup>1</sup> e.g., see in Gibson, EDB, in, 2000, 1170; also in NIDNTT *Abridged ed.*, 2000, 133.

<sup>2</sup> Von Rad, TDNT, in, 1964, Vol. 2, 75; NIDNTT *Abridged ed.*, 2000, 133.

<sup>3</sup> Von Rad, TDNT, in, 1964, Vol. 2, 74; compare with Barker, EBC, in, 1988, Vol. 7, 623.

<sup>4</sup> Chrys C. Caragounis, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol. 1, 676; H. Haag, TDOT, in, 1977, Vol. 2, 158 and 159.

<sup>5</sup> Haag, TDOT, in, 1977, Vol. 2, 159.

<sup>6</sup> Haag, TDOT, in, 1977, Vol. 2, 158.

<sup>7</sup> Caragounis, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol. 1, 676; Haag, TDOT, in, 1977, Vol. 2, 158.

<sup>8</sup> Haag, TDOT, in, 1977, Vol. 2, 158.

<sup>9</sup> Haag, TDOT, in, 1977, Vol. 2, 158.

<sup>10</sup> Haag, TDOT, in, 1977, Vol. 2, 157.

<sup>11</sup> Various discussions consider Israel's faith to be originally monolatrous. *Monolatry* is almost the same as *henotheism*, which is "a momentary veneration of only one deity during a crisis, or a more persistent worship of one god without denying the existence of others." (Bill T. Arnold, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 405) For instance, H.W.F. Saggs thinks, "What began as monolatry in both Sumerian city-states and Israel developed on one side into polytheism and on the other into monotheism." (Arnold, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 408)

<sup>12</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol. 4, 848.

Contrition (40:3–5; 42:1–6). The group of three cycles of Dialogues (Chs. 4–14; 15–21; and 22–27) is counterbalanced by the group of three series of Monologues (Chs. 29–31; 32–37; 38–42). The central mark is the Interlude on Wisdom (Ch. 28).

Each Dialogue cycle consists of three speeches by Job and one for each of the friends Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad. Job speaks after each friend does, with the exception that on the last cycle Bildad does not speak anymore.

The Monologues are, in order, by Job, Elihu, and God. God's speeches are shortly interrupted twice by responses from Job. Elihu is the fourth "friend" who comes in late and addresses his speeches not only to Job but also to the three friends who have finished speaking as well.

According to C. Westermann, the first three distinctive divisions are Prologue (Chapters 1 and 2), Job's Opening Lament (Chapter 3), and the Dialogues (Chapters 4 to 27). This implies that the dialogues are started off by the friends. Chapter 28, which is solely on Wisdom, comes next serving as a separator from the other three distinctive divisions. These are the Monologues (Chapters 29 to 41, except 40:1–5), Job's Closing Contrition (42:1–6), and the Epilogue (42:1–17).<sup>1</sup>

As also mentioned earlier, the only prose parts are the Prologue, which is Chapters 1 and 2; the Epilogue, which is 42:7-17; and the introduction to the Elihu speeches in 32:1-5. According to Von Rad it was probably centuries after the prose existed when the poetic dialogues were inserted.<sup>2</sup> It is important that they be understood as conversations, however heated, and not as contentious debates. Consequently, as with friends, there is an exchange of complaints and advises.<sup>3</sup>

The way these conversational forms of speech were put, where each monologue is recognizable as a unit, was something new and unique to Israel's literary genre.<sup>4</sup> Within each unit are abrupt "changes of thought,"<sup>5</sup> something problematic for psychology but authentic to Job's setting. The friends were instruments in putting forth traditional concepts.<sup>6</sup> That's why their speeches seem to be just rambling off and not strongly connected to respective preceding arguments.<sup>7</sup>

So, the "debate" is actually on "concepts, values, and meanings" owned by the whole community, where it was considered dangerous to be individualistic. The offensive questioning of God is considered "being resentful."

Von Rad likewise looks at the cycle of speeches as being started off by each of the three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, with Job replying after each. The Dialogue has three of these cycles, except that in the last Zophar is not heard of anymore. The monologue of the fourth friend Elihu (32–37) is a later addition, an inserted transitory portion between Job's challenges to God and

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<sup>1</sup> Claus Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis*, 1977, 6.

<sup>2</sup> See also earlier at II.C. on page 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Pastoral words of comfort" were indeed expected, and these as well as the complaints "take on a very passionate form". (Von Rad, 1972, 209)

<sup>4</sup> Although the style and the subject matter of the psalms of lament are used, what is new is "from the whole" there is seen "a shift of certain emphasis or of a radicalization of traditional forms of speech, especially, however, by means of the skilful manner of composition". (Von Rad, 1972, 209)

<sup>5</sup> So that the result is not a "spiritual biography". (Von Rad, 1972, 209)

<sup>6</sup> And, "Even Job is deeply rooted in the thought-forms of his day". (Von Rad, 1972, 210)

<sup>7</sup> "As they listen to each other, both partners in the dialogue scarcely have more than very loose connections with individual, characteristic hypotheses... [they] move forward only in a circular fashion." (Von Rad, 1972, 210) See also fn.1 on page 1 earlier.

God's answer (38 ff.). On the issue of justice and injustice, there is no systematized argument. The speakers are heard, yet in the end a conclusion is lacking. The fact that Job answers to each person's speech provides a focus for the entire literature.

Westermann considers that insofar as the book has been traditionally classified as wisdom literature, this has affected the exegesis of it. The uniqueness of the book's literary form, however, should not be significant for exegesis, and indeed no disputation has arisen from it. What is important, though, is the recognition that the book deals with a "problem," albeit what exactly the problem is has not been agreed on unanimously. In this connection, the verbalization of this problem on suffering, called the lament, "dominates the book."<sup>1</sup>

The whole book, Westermann further explains, is actually a drama, and not just a disputation or a dialogue. It is a drama in the sense that it depicts a narrative that is presented into the framework of a narrative in this manner: a lament is followed by a supposedly consolation, which actually develops into a disputation that lacks a resolution; thereby the lament resumes, up to a summoning of God, who answers, and which finally ends with Job's submission to God.<sup>2</sup>

R. E. Murphy, however, counters that "dramatization of a lament" is not a literary genre after all.<sup>3</sup> He even comments that the more appropriate term is *complaint*, rather than *lament*. Indicated with their genres and subgenres, this is how Murphy looks at the structure of the Book of Job:<sup>4</sup>

- I. Prologue 1:1–2:13 Story
- II. Job's Soliloquy 3:1–26 Complaint. 3:3–10 is a curse

### III. Cycle of Speeches

#### A. First Cycle

- Eliphaz 4:1–5:27 Disputation speech.
  - 4:2 is a rhetorical question;
  - 4:17 is a wisdom saying;
  - 5:8–13 is a hymn;
  - 5:27 is a summary-appraisal.
- Job 6:1–7:21 Disputation speech.
- Bildad 8:1–22 Disputation speech.
  - 8:8–13 is an appeal to ancient tradition;
  - 8:11 is a saying;
  - 8:13 is a summary appraisal
- Job 9:1–10:22 Disputation speech.
  - 9:5–10 is a hymn;
  - 9:29–31 is an avowal of innocence;
  - 9:25–10:22 are complaints; 10:3–12 is a lament
- Zophar 11:1–20 Disputation speech.
- Job 12:1–14:22 Predominantly complaint.
  - 13:15 is an avowal of innocence; 14:1–22 is a lament

<sup>1</sup> Westermann, 1977, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Westermann, 1977, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Murphy, 1981, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Murphy, 1981, 15-45. These genres and subgenres are defined in the book's glossary.

## B. Second Cycle

Eliphaz	15:1–35 Disputation speech. 15:17ff. is an appeal to ancient tradition
Job	16:1–17:16 Disputation speech
Bildad	18:1–21 Disputation speech
Job	19:1–29 Disputation speech. 19:28–29 is a warning
Zophar	20:1–29 Disputation speech. 20:4–29 is an appeal to ancient tradition; 20:29 is a summary-appraisal
Job	21:1–34 Accusations; Warning.

## C. Third Cycle

Eliphaz	22:1–30 Threat; Instruction. 22:15–16 is a warning, a wisdom saying transformed into question form
Job	23:1–24:25 Disputation speech. 23:10–12 is an avowal of innocence; 24:1–17 is a complaint
Bildad	25:1–6 Hymn; Rhetorical question.
Job	26:1–14 Disputation speech. 26:5–14 is a hymn
Job	27:1–23 Disputation speech. 27:2–4 is an oath

IV. Wisdom Poem 28:1–28 Genre elements from wisdom teaching.

V. Job's Soliloquy 29:1–31:37 Soliloquy.  
30 is a complaint;  
31 is purificatory oath

VI. Speeches of Elihu 32:1–37:24 Disputation.  
34:31–37 is a complaint

VII. The Confrontation Between the Lord and Job  
38:1–42:6 Disputation speech.

VIII. Epilogue 42:7–16 Narrative frame.

Thus, like Westermann and Von Rad, he also looks at the dialogues as being started off by the friends and followed by Job's replies. The literature is predominantly of disputation speeches that are in turn containing subgenres.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Pope starts the Dialogue with Job's first speech, Chapter 3. He divides the book into five parts: Prologue (Chs. 1–2); Dialogue or Symposium (Chs. 3–31); The Elihu Speeches (Chs. 32–37); Theophany (Chs. 38–42:6); and Epilogue (42:7–17).<sup>2</sup> In fact, Murphy also mentions that Fohrer, just

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<sup>1</sup> A disputation speech is an *argument between two or more parties, in which differing points of view are held. The disputation is an overarching genre that can designate the discussions of wise men (cf. Job), or parties in court, or prophet and people (cf. Jer.2:23-28). In the disputation itself, a vast array of subgenres can be employed, drawn from judicial practice, worship, the world of wisdom, etc.* (Murphy, 1981, 175.)

<sup>2</sup> Pope, 1965, XII–XIV.

like Pope, lets Job speak first. That is, in contrast, Westermann, Richter, and Dhorme separates Chapter 3 and lets Eliphaz, the first friend-speaker, speak first.<sup>1</sup>

Murphy further explains that “the text has been scrambled in Chs. 24–27... It is customary to divide the speeches of Job and the friends into three cycles (3/4–14; 15–21; 22–27), but since the third cycle is defective, not much is to be gained by this.” Therefore, to arrange the structure as to make either of Job and Eliphaz speak first does not disrupt the coherence of the book’s sense.<sup>2</sup> Whereas, reading the speeches without regard to division, Job’s are the starters and Elihu’s monologue serves as reply for Job’s last speech. The discourses seem to go like this:

- 1a1. Job curses his birth date.
- 1a2. Eliphaz says the innocent don’t suffer, though man has the propensity to sin. Job therefore must appeal to God who disciplines.
- 1b1. Job says he wishes to die, and he asks God to leave him alone.
- 1b2. Bildad declares that God is just.
- 1c1. Job agrees with Bildad, but then wonders how can man be blameless before God.
- 1c2. Zophar says though God is mysterious, it is still best to believe in what is already known.
- 2a1. Job mocks his friends. He says God does what He wills. Nevertheless, he wants to speak with God despite thinking that it must be preposterous for God to bother with man at all since he’s inconsequential anyway. Yet, Job has hope.
- 2a2. Eliphaz repeats his earlier idea, adding that Job’s words condemn him.
- 2b1. Job does not like his friends’ answers, and he seeks other answers.
- 2b2. Bildad challenges Job, asking why he thinks they’re stupid. He says Job is wicked.
- 2c1. Job says God has wronged him, and he asks for pity.
- 2c2. Zophar speaks of the fate of the wicked, and also repeats what he said earlier.
- 3a1. Job is still asking for answers.
- 3a2. Eliphaz again says what he has already said.
- 3b1. Job looks for God, and for justice.
- 3b2. Bildad almost repeats Eliphaz’s idea.
- 3c1. Job is now exasperated with his friends.
- 3c2. Elihu speaks once and for all; he says God speaks in various ways and does no wrong. He points out to Job that he has been rebellious, saying that God is unjust. He repeats the idea that it is the wicked who suffers, not the good.

### CHAPTER III. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BOOK OF JOB

For Von Rad the book has a prose narrative that, though divided into two parts with each placed at the beginning and at the end of the work, presents a cohesive idea. It speaks of a pious and prosperous man who was robbed of everything, whose children died, and who became sick. Nevertheless he remained faithful to God, accepting the bad now just as he had accepted the

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<sup>1</sup> Murphy, 1981, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Murphy, 1981, 16.



good before.<sup>1</sup> This was due to one in the heavenly council<sup>2</sup> presenting to God the possibility that Job's piety was due to the security he felt with his wealth. So the calamities were allowed but to no avail, though Job had no idea about the reasons for the disasters. The accuser was wrong all throughout the two tests, and Job's prosperity was restored to him, afterward dying at a good old age amidst children and grandchildren.

This narrative was to teach<sup>3</sup> that piety such as Job's exists. This is with the assumption that Job must not have known that God, even before he survived the difficulties, had already made sure to the accuser of Job's faithfulness. There are no deep probings in here, none that is new. Von Rad thinks it was not at all surprising that Job in the narrative, as was the ideal situation for a pious man, did not derail God for his sufferings despite his innocence. This was the ideal situation<sup>4</sup> for a pious man, and the readers knew he may have to suffer even.

Job as well as his friends understands that his suffering is from Yahweh.<sup>5</sup> This is the starting assumption of the entire set of speeches. The three friends follow ideas on the same theological line. They differ only in the suggestions on what Job should do next: one theoretically, another practically. They made it clear that no one, not even the angels, is sinless and pure before God. Furthermore, God punishes the sinner. Therefore Job must admit his sins since it is impossible for God to be unjust. He must accept this experience as punishment for them. What he must do, as they urged him, is to perform a sacral confession.<sup>6</sup> This should result to God blessing him once again. This belief is echoed in the "Deuteronomistic prayer offered by Solomon at the dedication of the Temple (1Kings 8),<sup>7</sup> though this concerned Israel as a community, and not individual personalities.<sup>8</sup>

Job, on the other hand, insists on his integrity<sup>9</sup> before God and he demands an audience with God. Since God is his creator then surely God will have compassion on him. But in Job's point of view, as evidenced by his complaints and laments, it seems that God was unwilling to restore their relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Job's two confessions of faith are: If God gave, then He can take away (1:21); and that good as well as evil must be accepted from Him (2:10).

<sup>2</sup> That is, the *satan* of the heavenly council dealt with in the excursus, II. B. See above p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> That is, it is a didactic narrative, a "highly cultivated literary prose". (Von Rad, 1972, 208)

<sup>4</sup> So that in the narrative there is no "inner struggle" at all, no "theological tension". (Von Rad, 1972, 208)

<sup>5</sup> That is, it is something not subjected to discussion anymore. (Von Rad, 1972, 211)

<sup>6</sup> He must "admit that God is just" (Von Rad, 1972, 212.; Also, fn. 31 here indicates these passages: Job 5:8f.; 8:20f.; 11:13-15; 22:21-30; 36:8-11.)

<sup>7</sup> This prayer follows a fixed pattern, and it has three elements. First is when to repent: your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you (v.33); heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you (v.35); if they sin against you – for there is no man who does not sin – and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy (v.46). Second is how the repentance is done: if they turn again to you and praise your name (v.33); if they pray toward this place and praise your name (v.35); if they lay it to heart and repent of their sin (v.47). Third is of the forgiveness that has been prayed for: then hear in heaven and forgive their sin (v.34); then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication (v.45).

<sup>8</sup> (Reconstructing Von Rad's, 1972, sentences in page 196) The whole prophetic proclamation of disaster rests upon the awareness that disaster would return to the person who had committed it. The prophets extend this perception to the lives of the nations that, in their opinion, would have to perish because of their own guilt and pride. The insight into the act-consequence relationship [is behind Achan's public stoning when it was found that he disobeyed orders and took for himself battle spoils (Joshua 7:6ff.)]. Before this punishment was done to him, Achan said a 'judgment doxology', which is a confession of sin, as recorded in Joshua 7:19ff.]

<sup>9</sup> Von Rad uses the word 'righteousness'. "The noun *tummâ* is used exclusively in the book of Job (except for Prov.11:3) and describes the character and quality of a life that is guided by the fear of the Lord and by the ethical principles of uprightness, honesty, and loyalty; namely, integrity (Job 2:3, 9; 27:5), the results of which are perfection, peace and ultimate happiness." J. P. J. Olivier, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol.4, 308.)

The friends were angry with Job for his reactions; Job's expressions vacillate between the extremes of submission and offense. His friends cannot provide answers because they knew of the "old" Yahweh and only he knows of this particular Yahweh now, a Yahweh whose "anger" is directed to an individual and not to a community. This is supposed to be the Yahweh who defends the downtrodden. It's as if Yahweh has shifted to one who was not known before, so that this Yahweh poses threat and elicits fear.

The friends could not understand Job. His experience is outside their scope of knowledge and experience.<sup>1</sup> The effect is that they cannot receive what he is saying, and they cannot react as well. The inadequacy of the responses to Job is limited by the literary form itself that the poet used. This was also because at the time of composition the issue presented by Job has not been discussed properly by the intellectuals yet.

Yahweh condescends and answers Job lengthily, which consisted mainly of counter-questions pointing to God's power reflected in creation.<sup>2</sup> He rejects Job while at the same time not addressing the issue on justice. God's answers can be put into two statements: that Job questions God's ability to plan out everything in his creation, as well as God's prerogative at doing anything at all. In Job's questioning and God's responding came out the affirmation that, indeed, the two statements above are valid and are important considerations. They are substitute enough answers for Job's query on justice, which went unanswered until the end.

While for others it is something else, suffering still is the obvious subject of the literature for many. With suffering as the subject, there are differing citations as to the object. In the sixth century A.D. Gregory stressed on "the importance of suffering as an opportunity for spiritual ascent," looking at the Book of Job from the consideration of morality and employing allegory in the reading of it.<sup>3</sup> On the same thread of thought, it can be said that through suffering "human integrity is tested and refashioned, and moral vision is reshaped and broadened."<sup>4</sup> Likewise, as Job's experience allowed him to experience first fear then hatred then trust, a "man of faith" should undergo such "pilgrimage."<sup>5</sup>

It can be said that God has a hidden purpose in letting people suffer, in this instance Job.<sup>6</sup> So, yes, the innocent sufferer does exist.<sup>7</sup> Job also shows two ways that this suffering can be handled. Either there is calm acceptance of the perplexing situation, or there is hostile questioning towards God. Still, as Job's friends argue, suffering most probably is the consequence of sin, a punishment.<sup>8</sup>

There are those that would argue that the book's focus is neither pain nor suffering, but a questioning of a theological world-picture that does not seem to be applicable anymore.<sup>9</sup> Here the question of God's justice in the face of evil seemingly triumphant looms big.<sup>10</sup> This is the issue on theodicy.<sup>1</sup> Consequently,

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<sup>1</sup> Though parts of their answers to him are found in God's answers as well (the divine speech). Von Rad's fn. 47 (Von Rad, 1972, 225) enumerates these: Job 11:7-9; 36:22-30; 37:2-16.

<sup>2</sup> In Von Rad's fn. 43 (Von Rad, 1972, 223) it is pointed out that since the divine speech is in two parts, each with an opening passage (v.38:1 and v.40: 6), and that since Job's submission is in two forms (40:3-5) and (42:1-6), then it was certain that it underwent 'secondary expansion'.

<sup>3</sup> Walke and Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 322. This is Calvin's view.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, EDB, in, 2000, 710.

<sup>5</sup> Pope, 1965, LXXVII.

<sup>6</sup> Williams, EB, in, 1965, Vol.13, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Clines, OCB, in, 1993, 369. Also Bullock, 1988, 69.

<sup>8</sup> Clines, OCB, 1993, 369.

<sup>9</sup> Ellison, NBD, in, 1996, 590.

<sup>10</sup> Bullock, 1988, 69.

the “traditional theory of retribution,” the one that the friends espouse, has been found out to be not absolute. God, after all, is free to do whatever He wants.<sup>2</sup> In spite of this hiddenness of God, when He cannot be understood at all, the book clearly shows that He can be trusted still<sup>3</sup>, is still worth serving. As such, the book is a “probing into the character of God”<sup>4</sup>.

Again according to Von Rad, the friends’ actuation towards Job and towards Job’s topic of lamentation was not something new. They responded to him according to what has been generally experienced. What was highly unusual was Job’s expressed belief that Yahweh, whom he thought to be just, was being a violent personal enemy to him when he did nothing to deserve it. This way of thinking was not heard of in Israel before, this new way of thinking about God that no new pattern can fit into. Hence, Job’s friends’ speeches did not seem to have an effect on him.

It is important to know how the poet intended for the reader to understand the sense of the dialogues and the speeches, especially on justice. Scholars have no unanimous opinion on this.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that the author intended to point out the limitations to each way of thinking by constantly posing opposing views --- for the friends the old way; they see the situation as an act-consequence example, an order in life that the society accepts as the order of things. They, along with the ancient world, believed that “No man is righteous before God, therefore all must suffer.”<sup>6</sup> Righteousness, acceptability before God, can be had by the confession of sins first. For Job, though, knowing that he was not absolutely sinless, he believed that it was not him but God who broke their relationship, as evidenced by his suffering to which he could not see a reason for. The Yahweh that he used to know is now attacking him, and he expresses his anguish as in the “psalms of lamentation,”<sup>7</sup> which he intensifies according to his grief. What he wanted was for God to give him an assurance of the constancy of their relationship, the ‘justificatory verdict of God.’ It could be seen though that Job was still strongly guided by the old principles, because he believed that by his forcing God to answer him God may exact retribution. Yet he had no choice but to stick to his dealings with God, since only God can provide the answers that he needs. Job wanted to be sure that He is still the same God whom he believed in,

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<sup>1</sup> Smick, ZPEB, in, 1976, Vol.3, 603.

<sup>2</sup> Murphy, 1981, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Waltke and Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 322.

<sup>4</sup> Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology*, 1998, 425-38.; Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol. 4, 861.

<sup>5</sup> “Westermann maintains that Job is a dramatized lament with disputational speeches. Others view Job as a dramatic tragedy or comedy. Still others consider the book as a whole to be sui generis, a unique literary creation of the wisdom tradition that made use of a variety of literary forms: didactic narrative, lament, disputation, legal forms, and so on. Cheney has argued that the present arrangement of Job formally constitutes a type of frame tale (the wisdom *tension*) that has ancient Near Eastern parallels... Katherine Dell has argued that the entire book is best understood as a parody that expresses skepticism (suspending of belief) toward traditional wisdom categories... Bruce Zuckerman also perceives the significance of parody in the “original” core of Job, but the ironic voice of protest was silenced by the addition of contrapuntal material... Clines attempts a deconstructive reading of Job to show how it undermines the philosophy it asserts, in terms of the notions of retribution and suffering. David Penchansky reads Job in a sociological vein, arguing that the literary tensions in the book reflect ideological struggles within a cultural context... A fine reading of Job “from below” is that of Gustavo Gutierrez, who sees in Job the struggle of the poor of Latin America who, in the midst of innocent suffering, must learn to speak to and about God.” (Waltke and Diewert, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 325–327)

<sup>6</sup> Von Rad, 1972, 218.

<sup>7</sup> Examples are Pss. 3, 6, 13, 22, 28, 31, 51, 88, and 102. These are individual laments. That is, they are having these elements: address to Yahweh, complaint describing the situation (often employing the language of sickness metaphorically), request for help, affirmation of confidence, assertion of innocence or confession of sin, and hymnic elements. (F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, EDB, in, 2000, 785)

a God most probably his friends don't even know about.<sup>1</sup> Job therefore has introduced the idea of the questioning of whether this Yahweh, as experienced by Job, is still the Yahweh of Israel.<sup>2</sup> Thus the issue is on the identity of God, and not primarily on the suffering of Job.

## CHAPTER IV. CREATION IN THE BOOK OF JOB

### A. On the Subject of Creation as Dealt With in the Pentateuch and in the Wisdom Literatures (and Psalms)

The traditional documentary hypothesis puts forth<sup>3</sup> that there are two strains of the creation account in the book of Genesis. The Priestly (P) account comes first in the narration, which is Genesis 1:1 –2:4a. The Yahwist (J) account comes next, in Gen. 2:4b –3:24.<sup>4</sup> The P shows rhythm reminiscent of recitations in the Temple worship services.<sup>5</sup> Thus though the transcribing and compiling was exilic, the origins of the storyline goes back generations earlier.<sup>6</sup>

The J account does not emphasize much the creation of heaven or the cosmic scene as much as P does. J is more interested with man's situation here on earth, like the forming of man from dust and the assigning of the garden for him to take care of (Gen. 2:7 and 2:15 respectively).

The Yahwist most probably started writing about David's time in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>7</sup> Both P and J accounts placed at the beginning of the Bible indicates the significance of the creation story. It is the beginning of Israel's history, "the stage for the unfolding of the divine purpose."<sup>8</sup>

Ancient Israel's creation account is not surprisingly based on a similar cosmology with her neighbors' – the Babylonians, Egyptians, and Canaanites. As in Exodus 20:4, basically there are three layers to the universe's structure: heaven, earth, and underworld. Covering the flat earth is a dome holding back the heavenly ocean (Gen. 1:8, Ps. 148:4). The earth is supported by pillars around which are waters (Ps. 24:2 and 104:5–9). The difference, though, between Israel's creation story and those of her neighbors' is that Israel confesses that it is

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<sup>1</sup> "...they always presuppose a Yahweh who is beyond dispute." (Von Rad, 1972, 221)

<sup>2</sup> "While Job's involvement in 'wisdom' questions is unmistakable, it nevertheless recedes in view of the fact that Job introduces into the debate theological points of view of a quite different type. The picture of God which destroys that involvement does not arise from the experience of orders, nor does the image of God for which he struggles for himself." (Von Rad, 1972, 220-1)

<sup>3</sup> Popularized by Kuenen, Wellhausen and Driver in the late 1800's, the documentary hypothesis explains that the Pentateuch is derived from four sources available in written form at varying periods, and were one after the other incorporated into the literature. The Yahwist (J) of 850 B.C. and the Elohist (E) of 750 B.C. became a single material c.650 B.C. The Deuteronomistic Source (D) of 621 B.C. was redacted into them c.550 B.C., and finally the Priestly (P) by 400 B.C. (Soulén, 1976, article: "Documentary Hypothesis"/ "Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis", 69). This theory has been accepted until about 1970, when since then it has been challenged by scholars. There are now alternative explanations as to, for instance, the way the sources were determined, or the dating of these sources, and even the archeological parallels by way of basis are being questioned of their validity. Thus, perhaps, the J-E-D-P order is not at all correct, or that even the P, J, and E sources do not even exist at all as continuously running sources through the Pentateuch. The resolution of the Pentateuchal development is still a developing issue. (Gordon J. Wenham, *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, in, 1999, 116-144)

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, 1966, 170 and 383.

<sup>5</sup> In fact there were eight creative acts originally, but the six-day pattern follows the Israelite calendar scheme. (Anderson, 1966, 384 fn.17)

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, 1966, 384.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Green, EDB, in, 2000, 1402.

<sup>8</sup> Anderson, IDB, in, 1962, Vol. 1, 727.

Yahweh who created all.<sup>1</sup> In contrast her neighbors' creation stories were about creation produced by struggles between gods. For instance, the god of order, the city god of Babylon Marduk and the goddess of chaos Tiamat fought. It resulted to Marduk dividing Tiamat's body, whereby eventually forming the three-storied universe.<sup>2</sup>

Israel's wisdom is "directed at creation."<sup>3</sup> Its teachings are strengthened by pointing to God as the Creator of heaven, earth, and man.<sup>4</sup> This is because creation speaks of God's order, and is therefore trustworthy. Unlike the surrounding cultures of the Old Testament world, Israel did not believe in myriads of gods who control events in the environment. Instead, in her radical way, she confessed that it is Yahweh who created and sustains everything. In this sense, creation points to Yahweh. Moreover, Job 38-41 is natural or nature-wisdom, the speeches of God pointing to His might seen as creation.<sup>5</sup>

Two characteristics of the *חכמה* *wisdom*, feminine in Hebrew, can be understood within Proverbs 8. Verses 22 to 29 speak of Wisdom as being there already, before God created the universe. Verses 30 to 36 speak of Wisdom's status as God's favorite and as man's way to finding life. It is in this sense that Wisdom is a sort of a mediatrix in the work of creation. "Both texts speak of a reality which is surrounded by the most profound mystery. In the cult, it was an object of praise; in the school, an object of contemplation."<sup>6</sup>

## B. Creation Passages in the Book of Job

The idea of creation in the Bible encompasses two considerations. These are concerned with cosmogony, the origins, and preservation, *creatio continua*.<sup>7</sup> Many contexts show that when the Hebrews speak of Yahweh as Creator, they simultaneously tackle Yahweh's activity of preserving what He Himself has made.<sup>8</sup>

For instance, Psalm 104, a psalm under the influence of the wisdom movement (*In wisdom you made them all*, v.24), in verse 29 says of God, "When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to dust." This passage relates the idea that creation did not stop after the act of creation was done, but continues in the preservation of creation as well. Gilkey puts it this way, "Thus without the continuing power of God each creature [including man] would lapse back into the non-being whence it came."<sup>9</sup> Also, "Their being has come to them, not from their own nature, but from beyond themselves in God, whose creative act brought them into being. They *are*, then, only so long as God's creative act continues to give them being, for they do not generate their own power to be from themselves, but as the moments of their existence pass, they receive it continually from beyond themselves."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The more popular view is the *ex nihilo*, the "out-of-nothing" creation by God. There can be found arguments saying that it was not so. Since chaos was there in the beginning, then God created from out of that. (See Pfeiffer, 1948, 704)

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, IDB, in, 1962, Vol. 1, 726. More on this can be found on page 40 of this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Von Rad, 1972, 298.

<sup>4</sup> Rankin, 1954, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Kaiser, 1975, 373.

<sup>6</sup> Von Rad, 1972, 157.

<sup>7</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, EBC, in, 1988, Vol. 5, 664, speaks of this as Bernard W. Anderson's term for the concept.

<sup>8</sup> That is, "No idea of creation can now be taken as complete which does not include, besides the world as at first constituted, all that to this day is in and of creation. For God creates not being that can exist independently of Him, His preserving agency being inseparably connected with His creative power." (James Lindsay, ISBE, in, 1956, Vol.2, 738)

<sup>9</sup> Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth: A Study of the Christian Doctrine of Creation*, 1959, 95.

<sup>10</sup> Gilkey, 1959, 95.

In the book of Job, the verses 36:27 until 37:18, twenty-five verses in all, provide pictures of how God constantly provides for the needs of His creatures. To speak generally of creation in the book of Job necessarily deals with not just a few passages anymore. In fact, it is not at all difficult to point out preservation of creation passages in the Book of Job. The following can also be mentioned: 8:7; 28:25– 26; and finally 38:12–39:30 and 40:9–41:34, which constitute the bulk of God's reply to Job, at least *o n e h u n d r e d t h i r t y – e i g h t* verses all in all! Moreover, there are those passages that mention God having made Job or man (or creatures), such as: 4:17; 10:8; 10:10–12; 12:9; 14:3; 14:15; 28:21; 31:15; 32:22; 33:4; 34:19; 35:10; and 36:3.

The following speak of creation that is of making something entirely new:

*9:8 He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.  
9:9 He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south.  
10:8 Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me?  
10:9 Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?  
26:7 He spreads out the northern [skies] over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.  
26:8 He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight.  
26:9 He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it.  
26:10 He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness.  
26:11 The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke.  
26:12 By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.  
26:13 By his breath the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent.  
33:6 I am just like you before God; I too have been taken from clay.  
38:4 Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand.  
38:5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?  
38:6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone –  
38:7 while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?  
38:8 Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb,  
38:9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness,  
38:10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place,  
38:11 when I said, "This is far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt"? NIV.*

9:8,9 and 10:8,9 are parts of hymns of praise, within Job's third speech. Bildad has just spoken on the concept of double retribution – that the blameless prosper and the wicked suffer – so that if Job was really blameless, then he'll be vindicated.

9:8,9 is within a legal language, where Job is considering challenging God for a debate so that the problem of God's hostility against him be resolved. It's as if God is unjust because although no trial has happened, Job is already

experiencing the punishment for the guilt. Job then realized that God's power and wisdom are evident, and that God does what He wants.

10:8–9 is within a lament. Job confronts God with the contradiction where God has become careless toward something He has created.

9:5–10 are describing God's acts of power in the creation and the maintenance of the universe. 9:5–7 speak of God's power over natural events, both on earth and over the skies. 9:8–10 speak of God's creative and preserving acts in the universe. These accounts of creation are preceded by the declaration, "For God is so wise and so mighty. Who has ever challenged him successfully?"<sup>v.4.NLT</sup>. Thus, they are accounts in support of the idea that God is wise and mighty.

**9:8 He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.** *The heavens and the waves of the sea* is a parallelism, a poetic way of speaking of the universe. *Alone* or *by himself* (לברו) of verse 8 emphasize monotheism (or monolatry at least). When God *stretches out* (נמה) *the heavens* (verse 8), like a desert sheik spreading out his tent, God is preparing the sky, creating it in the sense of Isaiah 44:24 (I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by himself). See also the explanation for 26:7 below. God *treading on the waves of the sea* (ים יתמב ילע רודו) recall Asherah the goddess in the Canaanite texts who walks on the sea-god Yam to subdue him. Deut.33:29 uses the same expression.<sup>1</sup>

**9:9 He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south.** NICOT renders the Bear as Aldebaran, which could be the brightest star in the constellation Hyades. Pleiades and Orion are constellations, or part of a constellation (Pleiades is a group of seven stars, part of the constellation Taurus). The terms *Bear*, *Orion*, *Pleiades*, and *constellations* are mentioned again in Job 38:31–32, and the last two again in Amos 5:8. Aldebaran, Pleiades, Hyades, and Orion are markers of seasons according to classical writers. Hyades is not mentioned here. Instead, *the constellations of the south*, *deredner* (ידרהו, *the Chambers of the South* in NICOT and *The Anchor Bible*) is mentioned, which could be a star, a group of stars, or a constellation in the southern sky. Pope connects this with the place where the south wind is stored according to ancient peoples, as in the sense of Job 37:9, hence the translation *chambers*.

Stars and constellations were objects of worship. Thus, their movements were studied since it was believed that messages could be gleaned from them as to events in the future. On the other hand, Israel claims that these stars and constellations are merely creatures of God, and so they are not worthy of worship. Here, the author of Job shows his "wisdom" through his knowledge of astronomy. In 1Kings 4:33 as well, Solomon's international reputation is due to his knowledge of many things including of plants, animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. The international wisdom movement deals with advice as with knowledge of things as intellectual pursuits.<sup>2</sup>

The following two verses are preceded by the statement, "Although you know I am not guilty, no one can rescue me from your power."<sup>v.7.NLT</sup> Job laments his helplessness as a mere man before the capability of God to do anything with him.

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<sup>1</sup> See also the explanation for 26:7 below on page 40.

<sup>2</sup> Drane, 2000, 118.

**10:8 Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? 10:9 Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?** 10:8 and 10:9 is a parallelism. The parallels are 10:8a and 10:9a; and 10:8b and 10:9b. Job seems to remind God that God has made him, and yet it is God Himself who seems to be destroying him. Like a potter God has shaped and made him.<sup>1</sup> He expresses his confusion at God who's seemingly destroying what He Himself spent effort on. As he says in 10:3a, "Why do you reject me, the work of your own hands...?".NLT. It is also said in Job 4:19, Job 33:6, Psalm 103:14, and Isaiah 45:9 that man is of clay or dust. In Gen.2:7 we can read the account of God forming man out of dust, אָדָמָה *adamah*.

On the other hand, Psalm 25:6,7 and Psalm 74:2 are like verse 9 above, asking God "to remember" the goodness that He has shown in the past, implying that on that basis it should be improbable that God will not show also goodness now. Job complains that God, in His uncaring treatment of him, seems to be turning him back to dust where he came from. The passages seem to imply that it is Job's belief that since he is a creation of God then God will consequently take care of him, and not to undo what He has done already, which is a reversal of creation.

26:7–13 is spoken by Job praising God's majestic power. It is part of a hymn, of 26:5–14. It is a creation account of the imagery of the ancient Near East mythological accounts. The wisdom movement of Israel "emphasized the creation-faith and reinterpreted the old chaos mythology... not only to magnify God's power by extolling his first and most marvelous work but also to reflect upon the wonderful order and regularity in the universe."<sup>2</sup> Bildad has just finished speaking, which will be the last of Job's three friends' speeches. He reemphasized earlier (18:1–21) the certainty of retribution, implying that Job believed wrongly that there are wicked people who go unpunished. And since all man is prone to wrongdoing, then none deserve the "court hearing" as asked by Job of God.

At the start of this last reply of Job to his three friends, he bewails that they have not helped him at all (26:1–4). They are convinced that he's wrong about his innocence and that he must repent to attain God's forgiveness, and be restored once more to God's goodwill. Bildad before this (that is, in 25:1-6) spoke of the power and the glory of God. Part of Job's response is in agreement with Bildad's statements. In fact he uses creation accounts to emphasize his concurring point.

26:7 He spreads out the northern [skies] over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. **26:7a is like 9:8a where God does as the desert dwellers do, pitching a tent, which is the north, or the northern skies.** נוֹפֵץ *sapon*, literally north, is not speaking of direction here but is a term for the heavens, where God's throne is.<sup>3</sup> Comparing with Job 9:8 and Isaiah 40:22, the phrases used for both are "stretches out the heavens", נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם *noteh shamayim* and "He stretches out the heavens like a canopy", מִיֵּשׁ קַדֵּךְ *hanoteh kadok shamayim* respectively.

Moreover, here *north* is parallel with *earth*. Usually, *heavens* is parallel with *earth*, as in Gen.1:1, Isa.44:23,24. Pope mentions that Mt. Zaphon is "Jebel el 'Aqra, Bald Mountain, on the Syrian coast opposite the finger of Cyprus, some

<sup>1</sup> Likewise in Jeremiah 18:1-10 is an account of God's message delivered to Jeremiah through the picture of a potter forming clay on the wheel. God speaks of Himself as like the potter who shapes Israel according to His wish and purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos*, 1967, 71.

<sup>3</sup> John E. Hartley, NICOT, in, 1988, Vol.18, 366.



thirty miles north of Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit.”<sup>1</sup> It is directly to the north of Palestine. Mt. Zaphon is the sacred mountain of Baal, who is the Syrian god of weather. This is as well seen in Isa.14:13 “and you said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Zaphon (the sacred mountain).

So in 26:7a God “spreads out the northern skies over” תהו, which is nothingness, void, or emptiness.<sup>2</sup> The same idea of “nothing” is in Job 6:18; 1Sam.12:21; Isa.40:23; 41:29; 44:9; 49:4 and 59:4. In 26:7b He “suspends the earth” over ממה ילארעילב (yllaretil) לֹב *not what*), or *nothing*.

NICOT translates *tohu* as *watery chaos*, and *b<sup>e</sup>li mah* as *ocean depths*. So that the sky is over the waters, and the earth is as well above the waters. Found commonly in creation accounts, *tohu* indicates chaos, as opposite to the order in creation.<sup>3</sup>

The origin of this expression is the Babylonian myth known as the *Enuma elish*. There was a “primeval, watery chaos (cf. Gen.1:2) consisting of the male and female precreation powers: the primordial father, Apsu (the fresh-water lakes, marshes, and subsoil waters) ... -and the primordial mother, Tiamat (the salty marine waters).” Out of their union came gods who caused disorder, causing Apsu’s death and Tiamat left waging wars. One god, Marduk, eventually established order by dividing Tiamat’s body, whom he killed, into two. So that chaos, which is Tiamat, is conceived as a dragon or a fishlike monster. “Half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky, ... The other half became the “waters below,” the watery abyss upon which the earth rests and which encircles it (cf. Gen 8:2).”<sup>4</sup>

This does not mean that this was how it was with Israel also. In Gen.1:2 chaos is not a monster but an emptiness.<sup>5</sup> The mythological creation language, anywhere that it appears in the Old Testament, is just a “creative application of the concept of an uninhabitable empty wilderness to the disordered state before creation. Creation begins with the waters that are then conquered and divided”.<sup>6</sup>

Take note, though, that the earth in 38:4 has a foundation. These verses, in the intuitive sense, sound contradictory. But taking into consideration the meaning of *nothing* as chaos, as briefly commented on above, then the confusion is somewhat cleared.

**26:8 He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight.** God *sorer* דניב ,seit, סררצ, or shuts in the waters *in its clouds*, בעבו (b’abaw). *sorer* is used in the sense of binding wineskins, as in Joshua 9:4. The above sense of binding clouds is also found in Prov. 30:4b. ‘ab is a distant cloud, that is, a rain cloud or a thundercloud. The other cloud noun, *anan* אַנַּי, *dense cloud cover*, a cloud mass, or a fog or mist.<sup>7</sup> The waters bound within b’abaw does not burst out of the *anan*, like wine bursting out of wineskins.

This water is still part of the chaos, the waters, which have been put by God above the heavens. Binding these waters is a process in creation, preventing it from flooding the dry land and have chaos dominion once again.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope, 1965, 165.

<sup>2</sup> A. H. Konkel, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol.1, 607.

<sup>3</sup> Konkel, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol.1, 607.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, 1967, 18-21.

<sup>5</sup> Konkel, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol.1, 607, “In Genesis precreation chaos is not a sea monster but is a desolation of waters; the expression *tohu wabohu* in Gen.1:2 is a hendiadys meaning an unearthly or indescribable emptiness.” See also Henricus Renckens, *Israel’s Concept of the Beginning: The Theology of Genesis I-III*, 1964, 86.

<sup>6</sup> Konkel, NIDOTTE, in, 1996, Vol.1, 608.

<sup>7</sup> See Hartley, NICOT, in, 1988, Vol.18, 366 fn.16.

**26:9 He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it.**

To protect creation, God covers His throne with clouds so that its glory will not overwhelm them and kill them. Job 22:14 and 2Samuel 22:10 likewise speak of clouds covering God against people's eyes.

**26:10 He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness.** The boundary is the line of the horizon, separating light from darkness. The light is of the heavens, and the darkness is of the watery chaos. In Gen. 1:3–8 creation is a separation of light from darkness, and a separation of the waters above from the waters below by the sky, the firmament.<sup>1</sup>

**26:11 The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke.** The pillars of the heavens could be the mountains that support the sky. These mountains shake violently in God's anger; the passage seems to be speaking of an earthquake. Very similar passages appear at 2Samuel 22:8 and Psalm 18:7. In Ps.104:7 God also rebukes the chaotic waters. Ps.104:6-9 speaks of the waters clearing off the dry land at God's command, an idea of creation by word.

**26:12 By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.** *Churning up the sea* is a manifestation of God's power. The same idea is found in Isaiah 51:15 and Jer.31:35. For these two verses God's control over nature is spoken of. In the passage given above, the churning up of the sea is parallel to cutting of Rahab to pieces.

Rahab is identified as the Canaanite name for the mythological monster of chaos. The name appears also in Job 9:13, Isaiah 51:9, and Psalm 89:10. This creature is among those whose name is mentioned with the idea of God subduing the forces of chaos during creation. Leviathan<sup>2</sup> and Tiamat are as well associated with it (see Ps. 74:12–17).

**26:13 By his breath the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent.** This passage is a parallel to the previous one, thus, also a creation account. In Isaiah 27:1 the *gliding serpent* is referred to as Leviathan.

Pope<sup>3</sup> presents an interpretation of the passage in the sense of the sea-struggle creation story. He says 26:13a can be rendered as *by his wind he bagged the Sea*. He explains that *shiprah* ( sa detalsnart פשרה *fair* is similar to the Akkadian word for *net* (*saparu*). Furthermore, considering that Marduk defeated Tiamat by a mighty wind as well as by a net, then 26:13a is an allusion to God's defeat of the chaotic forces. This way, 26:13a and 26:13b are parallels.

Another explanation is that "clearing the skies" is as after the storm, with God's breath being a manifestation of His power to be able to do this. The clearing of the skies, the restoration of light, is the result of slaying the gliding serpent of 26:13b who is responsible for swallowing the sun, hence the gloom. Thus, the piercing or the slaying of the serpent in 26:13b, as well as the cutting of Rahab into pieces of 26:13a, are here creation acts different from that of Gen. 1 and 2.

**33:6 I am just like you before God; I too have been taken from clay.**

This verse properly belongs to the introduction to the main disputation part, 33:8–30, which is Elihu's reply to all the speeches that have gone before. Elihu was not

<sup>1</sup> More on this has appeared in page 39ff. above in the explanation for 26:7.

<sup>2</sup> Leviathan in Job 41 could be a crocodile; *The only other interpretation of any significance regards Leviathan as a mythical monster, perhaps to be identified with Bab. mother goddess Tiamat (father Apsu), who in the Creation Epic, even in battle against Marduk "recites charms and casts spells". The word is cognate with Ugaritic Itn, the seven-headed monster whose description as "the fleeing serpent, ... the tortuous serpent" smitten by Baal is so reminiscent of the language of Is 27:1.*(D. G. Stradling, IBD, in, 1980, Part 2, 896) In Ps.104:26 the leviathan is mentioned as playing on God's seas. See also page 40 above.

<sup>3</sup> Pope, 1965, 166.

among Job's friends who have come to comfort him. He was just a bystander (32:11), and as one who is young among the elders, had to be respectfully silent (32:6).

He was angry with Job for "justifying himself rather than God" (32:2b NIV). He was also angry with the three friends "because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him" (32:3b NIV).

He claims to be speaking "from an upright heart" (33:3a) and so he is ready to be challenged (33:5). He presented himself as someone truthful, because he believes God's Spirit is with him. This challenge as among equals is possible since he and those he is speaking to are alike "before God" (33:6) as having come from, taken from (.rettop a yb demrof gnieb dna yalc ,יִרְקָה The creation from clay makes all men equal in a relatively lowly status before God the Potter. The same idea is found in the passages 10:8,9 above.<sup>1</sup>

38:7–13 belong to God's first of two speeches (38:1–40:2 and 40:6–41:26 [Eng.34] respectively). Elihu has just spoken, (Chs. 32–37), saying that God's justice and power can be seen in creation. God does no wrong, so that if ever Job is suffering despite his not sinning, then most probably there is another reason for this. Perhaps God is teaching him something, and this is what Job must find out. Job's insistence on his innocence might also be angering God, so Elihu tells him to stop it.

All the speakers are through speaking at this point. The friends have insisted on the principle of double retribution, thereby implying that Job must repent. Of what, they were not clear. In view of Job's insistence on his innocence, he had been seeking God's response to this.

Now, indeed, God responds. This response is an expression of God's "merciful goodness to his suffering servant."<sup>2</sup> He engages Job in rhetorical questioning intended to make Job see the unfathomability of His wisdom, as clearly shown in the wonders of creation. Not once did He point a fault to Job. On the contrary, it is the friends who have spoken wrongly of Job (42:7–9).

In 38:4–38, which are all rhetorical questions, God's non-living creation that He has made and is continuing to govern is being spoken of. The presentation of these vast and complex natural phenomena to Job points out the infinite gap between him and God.

God in 38:4–11 is asking Job for information that can be known only if one were present at the beginning of creation. Of course Job could not answer since Job was not there at all. It is Wisdom that was there at the start of creation. As was mentioned earlier, *הַחֵמָה* *hokma* (wisdom) is being spoken of in Pr.8:22–29 as present during creation.<sup>3</sup> Likewise Chapter 28 of the Book of Job affirms the superiority of Wisdom, which God only knows where to find (vv.23,24).

The following group of creation passages is an answer to the challenges issued by those who question God's wisdom. 38:4–7 speak of the creation of dry land, where God is pictured as a builder, a craftsman; 38:8–11 speak of the separation of the bodies of water, one in the heavens and the other the seas.

38:4 Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand. ***Wisdom was God's companion (Prov.8:22-31) at the creation of the world. Since Job was not there, how was he supposed to know about the earth's foundations? 1Samuel 2:8b, Psalm 102:25a, Proverbs 8:29b and***

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<sup>1</sup> See page 37 above.

<sup>2</sup> Hartley, NICOT, in, 1988, Vol.18, 487.

<sup>3</sup> See page 33 above.

**Isaiah 48:13a likewise speak of the earth's foundations. As with Ps.104:5, setting the earth on its foundations guarantees that God has made earth reliably stable.**

38:5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? ***It is God who determines the extent and the dimension of creation. As reflected in Isa.40:12, the preparations echo those done for the building up of manmade structures, such as in Jer.31:39 (city), Zech.1:16 (house), and Zech.4:9-11 (temple).***

**38:6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone** – 38:6a speaks of the mountains being settled in place. The idea is clearer in Pr.8:25 where הרים הטבנו , *the mountains were settled.* ) הטבעו ( , means “to sink into something”. The only other passage where הטבעו appears is Jer.38:22, where Jeremiah sinks into the mud of his cistern prison. The sinking of the mountains is “the lowering of their roots over the nether ocean, to prevent its waters from rising and flooding the earth.”<sup>1</sup> The cornerstone in 38:6b could be “one of the large stones near the foundations of a building which by their sheer size bind together two or more rows of stones”.<sup>2</sup>

38:7 while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ***Psalm 136:9 says stars help the moon govern the night. This is the same as Gen.1:26,28 where God assigns governance roles to his creatures. The sons of God are the bene elohim, already dealt with in the Excursus above. As in 1Kings 22:19, it is here in the sense of the heavenly council standing in the presence of God. In Isaiah 6:3 the seraphim call out “glory” three times around God’s throne.***

***To shout and sing in praise of God by His creation is common among the Psalms. Examples are 29; 89:12; 96:11-13; 98:8-9; 103:22; 145:10; 148:3-4,7-10. Also, in Isaiah 44:23; 49:13; and 55:12. Some of these passages refer to God’s coming for judgment.***

**38:8–11 speak of God creating the sea as if it were an infant human being. This theme is different from the violent creation of the seas, the result of splitting Tiamat into two as explained for the passage 26:7 above. Indeed Pope writes, “The present allusion presents an otherwise unknown motif, the birth of the sea god and the use of swaddling bands to restrain the violent infant.”<sup>3</sup> Creation and birth are not contradicting each other. Instead, the forming of the child within the mother’s womb is a creative act focused on the individual human being. God is creating a person within his mother’s womb.<sup>4</sup>**

**38:8 Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb**, The idea here of the sea being shut up behind doors intuitively seems to tie up with the idea of God having put a limit to its extent in the verses 10 and 11 that follow. NICOT and The Expositor’s Bible Commentary<sup>5</sup> agree that 38:8 is a pre-birth scene whereas vv.10 and 11 are after-birth situations.

בַּיָּם מִיַּתְּלָדָה and he shut up the sea behind doors means God formed the sea within the womb that is mentioned here. The root כָּסַח or כָּסַח means to shut up, and also to join together or entwine. Put together with the word of the root דָּלַת meaning a two-leaved door, something swinging, or the valve of a door, then

<sup>1</sup> Theodor Gaster, IDB, in, 1962, Vol.1, 705.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Taylor, IBD, in, 1980, Vol.1, 319.

<sup>3</sup> Pope, 1965, 251.

<sup>4</sup> There is also a short discussion on this for the passage 31:15 on page 51.

<sup>5</sup> Smick, EBC, in, 1988, Vol.4, 1040.

there is the sense of the fetus being formed within the womb and then eventually *bursting forth* from it through the labia. Implying that it was God who formed the sea, and He was also there when it was given birth to.

**38:9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness,** *Now that the sea has been born God clothes it with clouds, as a baby is wrapped in swaddling clothes. The thick darkness seems to be as that in Gen. 1:2, which in reality are heavy dark clouds sometimes hovering over the sea.*

**38:10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place,** 38:11 when I said, "This is far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt"? ***These two verses are a synonymous parallel. Like the putting in place of the gate's beams, doors, bolts, and bars in Nehemiah 3:3, God has determined the limit of the sea's extent. He has control over it. The idea is similar in Ps.33:7 and 104:9; Isa.40:12; Job 7:12, 26:10, and 28:25; and in Jeremiah 5:22. God controlling the seas is an act of creatio continua.***

***Likewise, God has command over the sea. As in Ps.104:7–9, the sea follows God's orders, going down to the place assigned for it and disabling it from flooding the land, causing destruction. God can even still its unruly characteristic, as in Ps.65:7 and 89:9.***

The word ברא *bara*, meaning *create*, does not occur in the Book of Job (and to a great extent in the Wisdom literature<sup>1</sup>). Instead, terms of the root עשה *asah*, meaning to *do* or *make*, appear. In the sense of creation they are found in 4:17b; 28:25; 31:15; 32:22; and 35:10.

4:17b – *Can a man be more pure than his Maker (מעשהו)? NIV.*

*Can a man be pure before his Maker? The Anchor Bible.*

*Can a mortal be blameless against his Maker?*

The New American Bible.

Connecting 4:17b with the sense of 15:14 to 16, all of Eliphaz's speeches, we feel the weight of Eliphaz's argument, which is, that it is impossible for Job to be innocent after all. Bildad speaks the same thoughts in 25:4-6. Both are saying that none of God's creations can come up to God's perfection, and so implying that none can hold him for accountability to anything at all. Therefore it is futile for Job to demand anything from God at all, even answers to his questions.

That is, this creation passage spoken by Eliphaz is a point to speak of the difference between the creature and its creator. Because the creature, here man, is just the work of his maker then he cannot acquire an integrity apart from his maker. If Job claims he is innocent then that could not be the end of the argument since he could not know everything about himself at all. Someone else, his maker, knows more, in fact everything, about him, and so he may not be at all as innocent as he thinks he is.

28:25 – *When he established (שעל) the force of the wind and measured out the waters.* NIV. The instance of this verse's appearance is within a discourse on wisdom, which is the whole Chapter 28. This material is inserted between speeches by Job. In the chapter before it, Chapter 27, two ideas were predominant. First, Job is found to be insisting on his innocence. Second, the dismal fate of the wicked is described. In the two chapters after it, Chapters 29 and 30, Job laments his present misfortune, comparing it with the previous days

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<sup>1</sup> Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, TDOT, in, 1975, Vol.2, 245.

of his well-being and respectability. The chapter following it, Chapter 31, is taken up by Job's introspection as to what sins against man, and against God, has he possibly committed.

In this wisdom chapter, Chapter 28, man is pictured as able to go even into the hidden parts of the earth and acquire precious metals and stones. Yet he does not have the ability to find a way to wisdom. Man simply cannot know the means to wisdom. Only God knows where it can be found. Therefore the mystery that Job is in – he is innocent yet he suffers the fate of the wicked – can only be explained by God.

This creation passage reinforces the idea that God can see everywhere (v.24), by virtue of the wind being known to blow to any direction at all. It is therefore in support of the chapter's idea that though man has the skill to look into hidden places underground, yet he does not have the skill to discover where wisdom can be taken, and so acquire it.

31:15 – *Did not he who made (עשׂו) me in the womb make (והו) them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?*.NIV. This is part of a soliloquy (Chs.29-31), also a part of an avowal of innocence (Ch.31), which is of the same motif as Pss.5, 7, 17, and 26. Specifically, Ch.31 is primarily of the genre purificatory oath of the if-then (the deed – the punishment) style, like of Ps.7:3-5 (liturgy) and Exod.22:7, 9-10 (judicial process).

Job here is enumerating misdeeds he would have possibly committed (if's), and side by side he names what he believes are corresponding measures for them (then's). In 31:15 Job gives the point that he has violated in possibly denying justice to his maid and menservants on grievances against him (v.13) – that he and them were made by God in the womb, and so he really is not superior to them in the absolute sense.

By the mention of the above passage, the reader is being reminded by the common origin of humankind, dust. In the same way is every human being formed—carefully by God, inside the mother's womb. Therefore, put side by side with God, all humanity is the same regardless of the status in society at present. This idea is like that of 33:6 as well as of 10:8,9 as explained above.

32:22 – *for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker (עשׂו) would soon take me away.*NIV. Again, as in 31:15 above, Elihu now points to the reason why he believes that what he is about to tell Job and his friends is truth without the motive of flattery. That is, that his Maker will mete out corresponding punishment on him were he to utter falsehood on anyone at anytime.

By Elihu's mentioning of the consequence were he to speak falsehood, it is shown that he has the consciousness of a high moral or ethical standard expected of him by virtue of his being the creation of such a Maker. That is, the significance of this consequence is mentioned several verses before it, in verse 8. It says there that man's capability of understanding is given to him by God's spirit. Hence by implication Elihu believes that it is through the spirit that he speaks now, and hence truthfully.

35:10 – *But no-one says, "Where is God my Maker (יְעֹשֶׂה), who gives songs in the night.*NIV. In this verse Elihu says that the righteous, when oppressed, do not cry out like this. Even to the oppressed innocent, the assumption still holds that God continues to preserve their existence (said in verses 13 and 14). That is, this creation passage echoes the given assumption by Israel that God continuously supports and preserves His creation, especially man.

Pope translates 35:10b as "Who gives strength in the night." Though *רָמַח* is usually rendered as *songs*, Pope explains that the sense of this Hebrew word

in Exod.15:2 ; 2Sam.23:1 ; Isa.12:2 and 25:5 ; and Ps.118:14 is that of *strength or protection*.<sup>1</sup> Pope also explains here that critics suggest that “songs of joy and praise” is the expression of gratitude of those whom God has helped “in the night of distress”.

This verse is part of Elihu’s third speech, part of his argument against Job’s claims that he thinks he is in the right (35:2), yet he is treated as a sinner (implication of 35:3). So Elihu consequently says that even if the innocent do this, God still may not answer because of their pride (v.12).

Three lengthy ascriptions to God’s activity in looking after creation can be cited: 36:27–37:18 (twenty-five verses); 38:12 –39:30 (sixty verses); and 40:9 –41:34 (forty-nine verses).

36:27–37:18 belongs to the end part of Elihu’s last speech. After he has said everything, the final surge of his impassioned arguments, and perhaps the most weighty, features God’s might over the condition of the skies—over what seems to be autumn (36:27-33), winter (37:1-13), and summer (37:14-18).<sup>2</sup>

Elihu says that it is at God’s command that marvelous things happen in the weather. It is God himself who personally looks over and accomplishes these complicated and powerful meteorological phenomena. He then concludes his speeches by pointing to God’s transcendence (*Now no-one can look at the sun v.21a. NIV*), and so to man’s incapacity to exact anything from Him (37:19-24, especially verse 23 *The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress.NIV*).

These creation passages therefore serve as a point of emphasis pointing to God’s power. Pictures from nature are presented to lead to the conclusion that these phenomena are beyond a mere man’s capability to handle. Man does have the power to successfully and harmoniously control such large-scale events, and only God can.

38:12–39:30 belongs to God’s first speech. In 38:4-11 He spoke of how He created the earth and the sea (brief discussions on this have been above). In these verses now He speaks of how He continues to govern and look after everything that He has created, specifically here the weather and the wild animals. As in Psalm 104, what is being pointed at is God’s matchless capacity for bringing things and events into being. He does things in order and does not fail to support the existence of all these. Mentioning therefore several of these *creatio continua* instances point to the characteristic of God’s, being accomplished in the looking after all the details for the perpetuation of the living and non-living things that He Himself has created.

40:9–41:34 belong to God’s second speech. 40:9-14 finds God intensely questioning Job as to his capability to bring down the proud. These are rhetorical questions, as it does not seem to be expected of Job to be able to answer at all. Next, in 40:15–41:34, God points out to Job that He alone is able to do this. As a picture of how capable God is at this, God points out that He is able to subdue the unruliness of two of His awesome creatures, the leviathan and the behemoth.

Both could simply be interpreted as the crocodile and the hippopotamus respectively but Pope says more about them in his commentary.<sup>3</sup> According to Pope the behemoth could be the Ugaritic mythological bulls that Baal was to hunt but which struck him down instead. Likewise the leviathan could be the seven-

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<sup>1</sup> Pope, 1965, 229.

<sup>2</sup> Buttrick, commentary ed., IB, 1958, Vol.3, 905.

<sup>3</sup> Pope, 1965, 268ff.

headed monster *lotan* (*ltn*) still of the Ugaritic myths.<sup>1</sup> Again Baal and the goddess 'Anat were supposed to have slain it. Nevertheless, the book of Job ascribes the taming of these two creatures, whatever they have been, to God alone.

Compared to all of God's living creations, the behemoth and the leviathan are the most fearful to man. By bringing out the picture of God's capability to handle them, God makes it clear to Job, and as the book's reader might as well understand, that God does not look at any of His creation with fear. In contrast, man does that sometimes. For God, each of His objects of creation has its own place that He has determined, and none is a threat to Him.

## CHAPTER V. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

The Book of Job is a way of answering the situation where an upright man is experiencing what is for a wicked man. The man knows he is upright. The friends know this, too. Only that, by the evidence that they see in Job now, they have begun to think otherwise. But in the attempt to help Job, the friends point out to him the only solution they know: that God is never wrong, and that somehow Job must have done something wrong. Because the rule as they know it – the good prosper and the wicked suffer (double retribution) – is now at work in his situation. Despite the attacks Job receives against his expressions of conviction, Job holds on to his arguments. In the end, it is God Himself who eases him of his deep questions.

The literature explores how a man who is aware of his humility before God can speak about his experiences, which he himself describes as unjust. Job is seen to be using several genres for these expressions. He curses first. Then he avows his innocence, complaints, and laments, the series of which he does at least four times all throughout the book. He expressed a warning (19:28–29), that is, “an address, often accompanied by an indication of a danger or threat, pressing an individual or a group to accept a point of view or to do an action.”<sup>2</sup> He also pronounced an oath. Whereas, his friends keep on saying almost the same things, always centering on the idea of double retribution.

What's remarkable among the speeches of Job is the presence of praises to God. It is remarkable that the God whom Job is having a problem with is the same God whom he gave unwavering faith to. Job praises God in His majesty (9:4,10,11 ; 12:10,13); as the Creator of the world (7:12 ; 9:5–13); as the Creator of mankind (7:12 ; 10:8–12); and as the Lord of history (7:12 ; 12:14–25). Indeed, underlined among these praises is the belief that God is Creator.

The book of Job then, when seen from Job's perspective, is an attempt at encapsulating the found-out situation of the innocent that suffers. In the final application, I think it is immaterial whether the book was written by single or several authors, or by an Israelite or a non-Israelite. It is even immaterial from which ancient Near Eastern mythological motif the creation pictures have had influence. What is more important is that an answer to the age-long puzzle of unfulfilled double-retribution has been found. That is, that sometimes the wicked prospers and the innocent suffers. The answer simply is what can be seen in creation.

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<sup>1</sup> There is also a brief discussion on pages 42 and 43; see fn. 162 above.

<sup>2</sup> See fn.96 above on page 20.



In creation Job perceives a God whom he thinks to be the cause of his laments, as well as the object of and the answer to the same. Whenever the awesomeness of nature is mentioned, it is invariably used as evidence to God's power, His capability to accomplish anything He wishes. Whenever the origin of man is mentioned, the direction of the focus is that he was made by God. That is, the mention of God forming the baby within the mother's womb does not distract from God's preeminent role in the forming of a new human being. Thus, for the author of the book of Job, each person has been especially created by God. Precisely of this reason therefore that Job, at least, believes that God should also be taking care of him (10:8,9); that Eliphaz (4:17) and Bildad (25:4-6) believe that man cannot exact accountability from God; and that Elihu believes it is God's Spirit that should guide man's thoughts (32:8).

Job laments because he knows in his heart that he has been faithful to God and yet it appears to the world as if he was otherwise. The society around him sees that he is suffering, and hence the conclusion that he has sinned against God. What is amazing in this character Job is that through all the strong emotions he expressed to God only one fervent wish can be summarized from it—that God somehow made Himself known to Job *again*.

*Again* because Job is puzzled by this experience God has allowed to happen to him; it is something that is new, something he had not known of God before. This wish by Job is expressed elaborately in four requests, as can be understood from a compound of two requests: v.20. *"Only grant me this t w o things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: v.21. Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. v.22. Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply.* 13:20-22. NIV. Verse 21 is simply a quest to God, to whom Job has remained faithful and unquestioning. This is the circumstance evident as well in 2:9-10.

In these requests Job clearly shows that for him God is sovereign and that God is still for him. What's radical about Job is his insistence on two contradictory beliefs—that God gives blessings to the godly and likewise misfortune to the wicked, and that God has permitted him to suffer despite his innocence. Because this is what he could see now, something quite puzzling not only to him but to his friends as well, all he wanted from God, it seems, is that God somehow respond so that Job can accept that such a thing he is experiencing now is indeed possible.

God responds finally. Despite beliefs that God is beyond man's capacity to influence (at least in 37:19-24), God graciously responds to Job. Alas, God does not point out Job's transgressions to him. Instead God convicts Job of inadequacy by pointing out to Job His power, wisdom, and loving-kindness as seen at and experienced by creation—God commands the elements of weather and seasons 36:27–37:18. He appoints when daytime and nighttime should take their turns (38:12-15). He provides food for all living creatures, as well as water for them and for plants and trees (38:34ff.). He assigns the positions of stars in the sky (38:31-33).

Creation can verify the existence and the being of God. He is sovereign God because He is Creator and Upholder of all. The cosmogony accounts in the Book of Job, as dealt with in the previous chapter, speak of God as the only origin of everything. The mythological motifs have been used to give emphasis to the accomplished spontaneity of God's acts of creation. For instance, God simply "spread out the skies" (9:8 and 26:7). Also there appears the unique narrative instance of God giving form to the sea in as delicate a manner as God forming

and seeing to the birth of a human baby.<sup>1</sup> The victory-over-chaos motifs speak as well of God's capability of accomplishing the creation deeds all by Himself.

Likewise, seeing that creation is continuously upheld by God even with an impartial abundance (38:26,27) should be enough reason for Job to trust in God's wisdom to take all details into consideration. Thus, Job's puzzling situation in contention should not be a problem. Zophar in 11:7-9 and Elihu in 36:22-30 also use this characteristic of God, His incomprehensibility as at times seen also in creation, as arguments against Job.

As thus, creation reveals God as well as announces the characteristic of mystery that remains in Him. For instance, He alone knows the answers to the rhetorical questions He asked Job (Ch.38ff.). Creation speaks of God but not enough to speak of the whole of Him. For the author of the Book of Job, nature speaks of a God whom they already are certain exists and nowhere in the literature is there a demand for the proof of His existence.

In contrast, natural theology as proposed by Thomas Aquinas (1255-74) touches on the idea that proof for the existence of God is important, as knowledge of God is gained by reason alone through what we can experience by our senses.<sup>2</sup> Not everyone has accepted this theology. There is a similarity though between Aquinas' idea with the author of the Book of Job in that "God leads us to know him, therefore, by helping us to think straight about what encounters us" from creation.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, Job is more than satisfied by this response he got from God. Moreover, he became overwhelmed to the point of seeing his own inadequacy before God's majesty, and thus confessing so (42:1-6).

The author/s or editor/s of the Book of Job, nevertheless, has to keep his/their readers' sense of order intact. Thus, he/they show(s) Job to be restored into good fortune after all his suffering. In this, the order of and by God that man sees in creation is harmonized with the order that they experience in their everyday living with the community. That is, that the act of believing that God does not turn away from His creation is part of God's order, even if this truth at times is not at all evident to man.

Although there is a concentrated chapter on the virtues of wisdom, still it can be found among the arguments ascriptions of wisdom to God, such as in 9:4; 11:6; 12:13; 38:36,37. Wisdom is not even spoken of so much as being there before God created everything, as in Proverbs 8. Nevertheless, the Book of Job Chapter 28 affirms that wisdom is essential for correct living and likewise only with God is the key to acquiring it.

Accounts of cosmogony within the book are not as particular about details as they are there to give weight to the descriptions on the majesty and the power of God. Creation accounts in the Book of Job, both as of something new and as *creatio continua*, serve as evidences or as exhibits to the supremacy, wisdom, authority, and the faithfulness of God to the entire world of creation.

The latter characteristic of God is among the strongest reasons why Job insists to stand by his reasoning—that he could not understand why God has seemingly turned His back on him for no reason at all. Wherein, God should have been unailing in the way He deals with Job. Only that, this is according to how Job understands *the* assumption – that is, Job and his friends as well as the

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<sup>1</sup> Also at the discussion for Job 38:8,9 above at page 47ff.

<sup>2</sup> James Packer, EHCB, in, 1982, 146.

<sup>3</sup> Packer, EHCB, in, 1982, 146.

community where they belong understand that God repays good with good, and evil with evil (double retribution).

Moreover, the issue on evil in the book of Job is not dealt with separately, as if it's a phenomenon in contradiction to God's will. This concept is not at all present in the book. Rather, the misfortune of the wicked is simply the consequence to his acts. It is God who allows these consequences. In the same way, it was God who gave *the satan* permission to bring calamities to Job. Thus, the book is clear in its declaration that it is God alone who has control of everything.

This omnipotence of God is reflected likewise in the creation accounts, where all powers and phenomena are subject to His will and command. As thus, the issue on Job's experienced injustice becomes a spectacular background against which the wisdom and the power of God, as can be verified from creation, remain trustworthy.



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