

expecting has already come, he is Jesus Christ, he has fulfilled the expectations of Humankind.

However there is a big question - do we have to Christianise Buddhism or to "Buddhisize" Christianity? We certainly can present Jesus as the one who fulfils the expectations, the desire for happiness which is common to human kind.

Some Buddhists fear that such prophecies will draw their people away from the faith and have made the claim that these prophecies were actually planted by the early Christian missionaries to North Thailand. Yet it is highly unlikely that you would find the same prophecies in five separate countries, Cambodia, China, Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka, if this had been a plant by missionaries in an obscure Temple in North Thailand and that relatively recently. A well known authority on Buddhism in Burma (Myanmar) records clearly the expectant hopes of Buddhists for the coming of this "Prince of Peace" for centuries. He indicates that there are inscriptions and images of "Metteyya" which have been found in Pagan, the "holy city" of Burma. This author also clearly intimates this prophecy having been known by "the kings of Ceylon" and in all Theravada countries!

"The worship of the Future Buddha, Metteya, who is now living in the abode of the gods, has been prevalent in Burma for centuries. The details of his life and when he comes are so well known to the Burmese that he is known to them as Arit-Metteya. His images have been found in Pagan...even in Ceylon, where Theravada Buddhism has a more or less continuous history, kings set up for worship statues of the future Buddha and in all Theravada countries, devout Buddhists piously hope to be able to worship the Buddha Metteyya in person and listen to his preaching when he appears".

A recent article written by a leading Buddhist scholar in Thailand makes a scathing attack on the Catholics in this regard. They have, says the scholar, deceitfully taken a Buddhist prophecy and applied it to Christ. He claims to possess a top-secret document from the Vatican, which encourages all Catholic priests in Thailand to use this prophecy, in order to "destroy completely every vestige of Buddhism and put the Cross in its place". Another booklet, published by a Buddhist priest entitled "Buddha and Christ", also claims that Christians are guilty of stealing Buddhist concepts and applying them to Christ. Both scholars feel that using this prophecy undermines Buddhism and is therefore basically dishonest.

This may reflect the same feeling that the Jews have when they hear passages in the Old Testament (especially the "Servant songs" of Isaiah) being applied to Jesus rather than "the Servant of Yahweh". Perhaps Buddhists could find some consolation, that in spite of the prolonged Christian usage over millennia of these prophecies from what is essentially Jewish Scripture, Judaism is still strong. Many Christians however, are convinced that any such prophecies are part of God's preparation for the coming of Christ, and because they are common to most cultures there is every justification in using them with integrity for they are essentially "general revelation" a part of God's preparation in bringing the nations to Himself.

The oriental mind places great value of the mystical, subjective experience of the worshipper. The eastern mind places emphasis on "spirituality" a quality of life which stresses meditation, contemplation and asceticism rather than the cerebral and logical approach of the West. This is why many Buddhist's discount Christianity as a "shallow" religion which is incapable of answering the deep philosophical questions of life. This is why the topic of "spirituality" is so relevant to any discussion on contextualising the gospel, especially in Asia.

The term "spirituality" is extremely difficult to define. Both Christianity and Zen speak of mystical experience but from different perspectives. Thomas Merton has written a great deal on the relationship of the two. He concludes that such comparisons are difficult especially on the level of doctrine or teaching. Zen is subjective realisation, while Christianity is objective in that it relates primarily to history and doctrine. Wm. Shannon interprets Merton:

Christianity is verbal: much ink has been spilled in expounding its doctrine, Zen is, as far as possible, non-verbal. To compare the two at the level of doctrine, therefore would be futile. For Christianity, doctrine is of primary importance: in Zen it is accidental. But there is a possible point of meeting for the two: namely at the level of experience.

Although two people may have the same experience subjectively, we cannot conclude that the source of their experience was the same anymore than a Doctor would conclude that all headaches have the same cause! The problem of defining spirituality is therefore complex, differing writers giving exhaustive definitions. Michael Cox in quoting *Varieties of Religious Experience*, says that William James gives four basic absolute categories for describing Christian spirituality:

One: Ineffability - an unutterable, indescribable experience, not a psychological condition. A mystical experience of God's presence.  
Two: Noetic quality - Knowledge that can be grasped by intuition and insight activated by a source beyond itself.  
Three: Transience - mystical experiences rarely last long, though their significance and effects far outweigh the proportion of their duration.  
Four: Passivity - the feeling of something given - a feeling of being overwhelmed by a greater will than one's own, which subsides temporarily.

One distinctive element of Christian spirituality is that it normally produces an overwhelming desire to help meet society's physical and spiritual needs. Jesus comes out of the desert to relieve the needs of the multitudes. True Christian withdrawal and contemplation explodes into action. The *waiting* by the disciples before Pentecost is seen to produce results in the rest of the book of Acts as the church moves out into the world. Spirituality in the Christian community is collective rather than isolated and individual.

Mysticism in its authentic form moves out from individual experience to collective spirituality and functions as an essential vivifying current in the spiritual life of the whole Church. The life and influence of St. Francis is perhaps the supreme example of this creative process, emphasising that the true Christian mystic does not withdraw from life.

A further distinctive of Christian spirituality is that it is essentially Christocentric and Theocentric. Its sources are rooted in both Old and New

Testaments. Spirituality in Israel was understood in terms of the presence of God (the *Shekina*) manifested in the midst of his people not as an individual quality of the obedient worshipper. If God was not manifestly present then Israel saw themselves as no different from the other nations:

Then Moses said to Him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are with me and with you people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

The presence of God was symbolised by the Tabernacle, the Temple, the great Feasts such as Passover, and lesser feasts of Purim and Dedication. One of the Prophets' warning themes to Israel was that God's presence may depart from the midst of His people. Ezekiel sees the *Shekina* glory departing from the Temple. This theme was one of the worst fears of Israel. It is often intimated in the Psalms (Ps 51:11, 73:23-26):

We can say that the presence of God is one of the central themes of the Old Testament. The Torah sets out the terms on which God will be with his people; the histories show from concrete examples how his presence can be forfeited, and how gracious must be the God who never lets his absence from an unworthy people become permanent; the prophets look forward to the day when God will never be or even seem to be absent again; and the Psalms reflect on all these aspects of presence and absence as they effect both the worshipping community and the individual at prayer.

Spirituality in the Old Testament seemed to relate more to the concept of *shalom*, - positive *wholiness* (wholeness), rather than a negating metaphysical mysticism. It was *collective* (affecting the whole community), rather than individual. The prayers of Old Testament saints, which reflected this type of spirituality and Jewish piety, were for God to visit His people in mercy holiness and justice. The belief, was that God was present, not with those who seek to see Him, but with those who seek to obey Him:

We should understand this to mean that the personality of the God of Israel (together with his overwhelming, all-conquering wholly transcendent majesty) made itself felt as increasingly present, more and more immediately perceived in all things, to the degree that this transformation was brought about. Its term was not a religion without prayers and without rites, but a religion in which prayer and rites were permeated with the sense of the nearness of God together with His elevation. The Israelite is a man who lives, who tends to live constantly in the sight of God. His perpetual reflex act is to pray with Isaiah "woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people with unclean lips, and yet my eyes have seen the Lord". But this reflex is accompanied by the continually renewed certainty expressed in the vision of the Seraph taking the burning coal from the altar and saying "this has purified your lips". The purity of heart towards which the requirements of religion thus tend is not a mere interior rectitude; it is the disposition to encounter God: God manifested in the history of his people which is also the history of each person, God manifested as intervening in us in a mysterious way to carry out at the same time both his promises and his demands.

The history of Christian spirituality drawing as it does from its Jewish antecedents, ought never to be seen as the product of subjective metaphysics. Spirituality derives from relationship, rather than mere reflection, from

communion with a person, rather than contemplation of a subjective state. For the follower of Christ, spirituality will never be divorced from either personal piety or the fulfilment of its social obligations. Loving your enemies, praying for those who persecute you, showing concern for the poor and the widow are radical dimensions of Christian spirituality which make the Kingdom of God. The replacing of the heart of stone with a heart of flesh as spoken by Ezekiel, reflects true Christian spirituality; where man is not only commanded to love the Lord thy God and thy neighbour as thyself, but actually wants to do so. The early church drew their models of spirituality from the Old Testament sources. The Apostles, including Paul were thoroughly steeped in Hebrew theology and spirituality.

It is intriguing to observe the way Paul defines his own spiritual experiences. His emphasis is more on the source of such experiences, rather than his own subjective feelings. He spoke of receiving revelation from Jesus Christ, placing the emphasis on the cause rather than the effect. He refers to his Damascus road experience three times in Acts (9:1-19, 22:5-16; 26: 10-18); the emphasis here too, is on the voice from heaven, not primarily on his subjective response to the voice. There are at least three recorded incidents where the Lord communicated to Paul in visions (Acts 16:9; 18:9; 27:23). Perhaps the most important visitation Paul experienced from God, was the one he described to the church at Corinth:

I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven - whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know - God knows. And I know that this man - whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows, was caught up to Paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that a man is not permitted to tell....to keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.

Commentators assert that this experience of not knowing whether he was in the body, probably occurred after he was stoned and left for dead at Lystra (Acts 14:19-20). This was not some form of self-induced astral projection, the result of extreme asceticism or intense meditation, nor did it require some sort of mediator or middle-man to minister channel this experience. It was wholly outside himself - he did not contribute to it. He was caught up to Paradise, implying the action was from someone else. Accompanying the vision was a thorn in the flesh accompanied by an audible voice My grace is sufficient for you. Paul heard inexpressible things, that a man was not permitted to tell. Such was not the experience of a man out of his mind. Paul's deepest mystical experience had within it the essential ingredients of all true Christian spirituality:

1. An overwhelming subjective experience of God. I knew a Man in Christ, showing a personal relationship with Christ.
2. The experience was likened to being caught up to paradise. This legitimises experiences which cannot be explained in reasonable terms. This is why love for God has been termed affective spirituality.
3. Throughout the experience, there was communication and communion. The experience was both mystical and pedagogical.
4. Its effect was strengthening and ongoing. It enabled Paul to carry on his work and witness. My grace is sufficient for you.

Michael Cox in speaking of Paul's experience suggests:

While there was much new in his mystical apprehension, his spiritual life forms a bridge between the Old and New Testaments, across which Christian tradition gained full access to the heritage of Hebrew Scripture. St. Paul clearly illustrates the threefold mystical way through the intensity of his moral struggles, the gradual illumination as the life of prayer develops, and the final consummation of union with Christ – I live, not I; but Christ lives in me. His experience on the road to Damascus is as profound as the consciousness of the Old Testament prophets, that they were being called to be the mouthpieces of God; but the element which is wholly new in Paul's experience is its conviction of direct person to person contact.

The voice he hears asks him – Why persecutest thou Me, to which Paul replies – Who art THOU, Lord? Paul's union with Christ is a unity of faith and love; it is a moral, not a metaphysical union, one in which – as in all Christian mysticism – the integrity of the human and the divine nature remains unviolated. This is not the Neoplatonic union of the alone with the Alone: it is a genuine mystical relationship that takes place within the very body of Christ – His Church.

Paul's use of hymns in Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19 also manifest aspects of spirituality; that he may have even borrowed concepts from non-Christian hymnody and reloaded the words with Christian content in some of these passages. Formulas stating belief and expressing prayer in the Epistles are common (cf. Phillipians 2:6-11).

Often such formulas were fused together so that prayer to God emerges from the faith statements about God.

The climactic characteristic of Christian spirituality, is love (already defined as affective spirituality). God Himself is love, therefore the supreme Christian virtue must be love. Isaac Watts calls this the singular story of our religion. Once again, the true source of Christian love must be distinguished from mere human love. Here man is overwhelmed by God's love, it is the love OF God (originating from God) that is experienced, rather than man's love FOR God. Paul expresses this in Romans: And hope does not disappoint us, because God has Poured out

His Love, into our hearts, by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us. The quality of Christian spirituality is reciprocal, we love Him, because He first loved us.

It is intimate and trusting, we call Him	Our Father,.
It is reverent,	Hallowed be thy Name.
It has future eschatological aspirations,	Thy Kingdom Come.
It has present social implications, as it is in heaven.	Thy will be done on earth
It is dependent,	give us this day our daily bread.
It is repentant,	forgive us our trespasses.
It is forgiving, against us.	as we forgive those who trespass
It aspires to holy living,	lead us not into temptation.
It anticipates struggle – power encounter,	deliver us from evil.
It recognises His Sovereignty, Power and glory	For thine is the Kingdom the
It anticipates eternity.	For ever and for ever
It reflects certainty- it will be son.	Amen!

Christian spirituality is the instrument and vehicle through which God's saving grace is to be made known to all people. By this will ALL MEN know that you are

my disciples if you have love for one another ( 13:35). It is this love for Christ that constrains Paul to reach out with the good news:

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Christian spirituality without love profits nothing, it is like a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. It may be all knowing, all believing, and totally sacrificial, but if it is not permeated in love from God, it is nothing, valueless, meaningless. True spirituality comprises of faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. The Cross, the centre of Christianity is the paradigm of spirituality, the ultimate declaration to man of God's love. The study of spirituality is a discipline in its own right and has a vast literature. Little or nothing has been printed in S.E. Asian languages, so the Church has only its Missionaries as models of spirituality! They hardly reflect the vast legacy of spirituality of the world-wide Church of God, nor are they attractive to Buddhists, who see their own spirituality more desirable. Some of the following elements of spirituality must be seen by Buddhists before Christian Spirituality could be perceived in any way as a means of communicating the Gospel; a life of meditation and prayer; a life of sacrifice and self denial; a life of compassion, demonstrated in good works; a life of detachment and unconcern for materialism. Christian spirituality should be the most attractive and effective means of communicating the Good News. Christians are called to demonstrate those qualities and virtues of Christ in order that the world may be attracted to Christ:

The credential of the church is her spirituality as perceived by the Buddhists. There is need to take the contextual factor into far more serious consideration than it has in the past. But this can only happen as the Church rises and fits into the cultural configuration of the people.

## CHAPTER 9.

### BIBLICAL PRECEDENTS FOR THE CONCEPT OF CONTEXTUALISATION.

#### 1. THE OLD TESTAMENT AND CONTEXTUALISATION

Some have questioned - why do we need this chapter at all? This in fact is probably the most important part of the whole book - for if we can find no Biblical precedents for the whole concept of Contextualisation, then we are left to the speculative and the subjective. One may say - "I contextualise because I feel it is right" - or another may state: "why should I contextualise at all?" - but such responses are not adequate for the Christian worker, who must appeal to the authority of Scripture both in doctrine and in practice. If there is no Biblical basis for contextualisation, either in the ministry of Jesus, or in the underlying principles of how the early church operated, then we are free to arbitrarily do as we please, for we would have no benchmarks to use or models to work from. But if we can find in the Old Testament and in the New, clear evidence for the principle, then we would be skating on very thin ice to ignore or neglect such an important process of communicating the good news.

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT AND CONTEXTUALISATION:

Many Old Testament scholars try to find a string of supposed "evolutionary patterns" in development from primitive religions into the more sophisticated

Judeo/Christian monotheism. Oesterly and Robinson's book 'Hebrew Religion; its Origin and Development,' uses 121 out of 417 pages attempting without much success to highlight the relationship of the Hebrew religion to animism, polytheism, and other aspects of primitive religion as if one necessarily developed out of the other.

Norman H. Snaith runs counter to the findings of many of these scholars. He questions the supposition that all religions have the same origins and defends the "distinctiveness" of especially the Hebrew religion. Snaith states:

"Our concern is with elements of OT religion which distinguish it from other religions. We recognise the importance of realising that the Hebrews had many items of belief and practice in common with other peoples of antiquity, but our interest in these common features, is for our present purposes, definitely secondary. We are concerned with them only in so far as the study of them throws into greater and clearer relief the essential differences. Our aim here is so far as maybe, to isolate and emphasise the distinctive elements of OT religion".

An illustration of unacceptable elements in pagan religion excluded from (because they would have been unacceptable) the Hebrew religion would be for instance the Egyptian and Babylonian preoccupation with death and the after-life. They had a sophisticated belief system involving Ancestor worship, child sacrifice, preparations for the 'other world', with numerous rites, rituals and ceremonies enacted to bolster their beliefs.

Moses discriminately and deliberately avoids any mention of the after-life, as do most of the writers of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament reflects an interaction between the surrounding nations, Hebrew culture and the revealed "Word of God". When Yahweh chose Israel (Ex.19v6-7) in a special way to be "my people", He at the same time transformed many of the existing pagan rituals and cultural forms and utilised them for perpetual implementation by His people. Of course these outward cultural forms were "reinterpreted" with new inner meaning, but there is no doubt that they were already "there" before Yahweh chose the people of Israel. Few Scholars deny now, that many of the rituals Israel adopted had pagan origins. The annual feasts and even circumcision had pagan antecedents or counterparts. Yet many concepts which conflicted with divine self-disclosure, such as Canaanite concepts of El, the Baals, etc, were progressively removed as the patriarchal story developed. This may sound obscure and academic - but the principles behind what is happening in the Old Testament apply to how we should interact with our own previously pagan religious belief systems and those from the surrounding cultures of our day. Israel could not live in isolation and was therefore continually being affected by rituals and belief systems from surrounding religions. Bruce Nicholls states that:

"During the pilgrimage of the Israelites as nomads in the Promised Land, followed by their captivity in Egypt, and then during the wilderness journey, undesirable elements of the surrounding culture were progressively weakened and eliminated. Idolatry, pagan sexual immorality, corrupt economic and political practices, came under the judgment of God".

He also states, "In the formation of a covenanted people, God transformed some of these cultural forms such as circumcision to his purposes and rejected others such as idolatry. Here we see clearly the principle of continuity and discontinuity operating hand in hand. The story of the Patriarchs, is on the one hand a progressive de-culturalisation of undesirable elements, such as idolatry, sexual immorality, corrupt economic and political practices, and on the other hand, it is an "extension" of other elements from the previous cultural norms or religious forms. The basis of this selection process, will be investigated later. It has been said that the Old Testament is largely the record of the ongoing struggle against the syncretistic tendency of the Baalization of Yahweh worship which continued from the Patriarchs until the exile.

"At times of faith and dependence on God, the people of God acknowledged his Lordship over their total behaviour and the degree of false cultural conditioning by the neighbouring cultures became minimal and the rebuke of the prophets effective. This acknowledging of God's Lordship over history by the covenant people, transformed cultural conditioning from a problem and a curse, to a channel of revelation and grace. The transformed function of circumcision is a case in point, but later degeneration turned it into a stumbling block to true faith".

H. Wheeler Robinson indicates both the principle of continuity and discontinuity in Israel when he states:

"It is this moral intensity, then, which more than anything else, lifted the religion of Israel above that of all its contemporaries, and gave it the power to assimilate foreign contributions without loss of its native strength and continuity. Israel's history is remarkable for the number of influences operating upon it from without. Had it not been for this moral intensity, the nature-worship of Canaan might easily have permanently degraded the religion of Israel to its own low level of sensuality. But the moral instinct of the nation was guided by its leaders to "take the precious from the vile"; the necessary FORMS OF WORSHIP WERE BORROWED, whilst the immoral features of the Baal-cult, such as religious prostitution, were, at least ultimately rejected. The same selective moral sense worked on the legislation and mythology derived from Babylon, and gave them a NEW VALUE AND MEANING. No better proof of the inherent vitality and moral strength of the faith of Israel could be given, than this power it possessed to assimilate and transform the various elements due to its historical environment". (my capitals).

Robinson may give us some clues here as to the modus operandi for the correct application of the principle of continuity and discontinuity within a given culture.

Some scholars, such as H. H. Rowley, interpret the Covenant ritual of walking between the divided sacrifices in Genesis 15 as a willingness to be dismembered (as the sacrifices) if either party broke the Covenant. In the incident recorded in Genesis however, Abraham stands on one side, and it is Yahweh alone who passes between the pieces. The reason appears to be that Yahweh again takes a familiar ritual belonging to the culture and reinterprets it in a way that must be both acceptable to Him, and yet still maintains significant resemblances to its former meaning., but is nevertheless distinctive Dr. Arthur Glasser states in his "Theology of Mission " lectures:

"This ritual was widely used in those days when two contractual parties sealed their covenant

commitment to one another by passing between the divided carcasses of sacrificed beasts and thus

invoked upon themselves a similar fate should they break their covenanted promise, each to the other.

But the covenant God made touching Abraham and his seed was altogether within the Godhead.

Abraham was off to the side. A spectator, completely passive, while God in Shekinah presence moved alone between the slaughtered animals. God and God alone was the covenant's initiator. He alone made the promises and he alone would be the guarantor of their being kept".

The sign of the Covenant, circumcision, no doubt had pagan precedents. The original rite was probably a transition rite of puberty but it was "reloaded" with divine content by its use on infants. In an exhaustive study on the subject De Vaux states:

"It seems, then, that the Israelites were not distinguished from the Semitic population which they displaced, or with whom they mingled in Palestine, by the fact of circumcision. On the contrary they seemed to have adopted this custom when they settled in Canaan (Cf. Gn 17:9-14, 23-27; Jos 5:2-9.), but with them the practice took on a particular religious significance. Originally, and as a general rule circumcision seems to have been an initiation-rite before marriage; consequently, it also initiated a man into the common life of the clan...The custom must originally have had the same purpose in Israel: the story of the Shechemites expressly connects it with marriage (Gn 34); the obscure episode of Ex 4:24-26 seems to refer to marriage also, for the pretence of circumcising Moses makes him a "bridegroom of blood". We may add that the Hebrew words for bridegroom, son-in-law and father-in-law are all derived from the same root, HATAN which means in Arabic "to circumcise". Circumcision, therefore, is regarded as that which makes a man fit for normal sexual life: it is an initiation to marriage. This significance must have died out when the operation was performed soon after birth. Above all religion gave the rite a more lofty significance".

Circumcision, therefore, substantiates the principle of "continuity vis a vis discontinuity". Parts of the ritual were ideinvested of their original meaning (discontinuity) while some parts were a continuation, having similarities to their original purpose and meaning and re-investing other aspects with new meaning. There would have been no misunderstanding that they were still being used in exactly the same manner and for exactly the same purpose as their previous pagan usage.

"From its inception infant circumcision was the distinctive Israelite custom, not derived from Egyptian or other practice and contrasting sharply with the puberty rites of other nations: the latter point to social acknowledgement of adult status, the former to a status before God and a prevenience of divine grace".

There is unlimited evidence to substantiate these findings from theologians across the board. Four outstanding books that offer extensive and thorough scholarship regarding this matter are: "Ancient Israel, its Life and Institutions" by De Vaux, "The History of Israel" by Martin Noth, and "A Survey of Israel's History" by Leon Wood, "The Tribes of Yahweh" by N. K. Gottwald.

Although such findings may disturb Evangelicals, there should be an acceptance of the fact that in this act, God is validating many important cultural forms

which we in a monocultural environment may write off as "pagan", or even "demonic". In conclusion, it is probable that none of the festivals or rituals used by Israel appeared out of the blue - "ex nihilo", but that God took what was already in the pagan culture and reformed it, by giving it both distinctive outward form and new inner meaning.

Rev. Alec Moyter, a highly acclaimed Old Testament scholar admits that there is a difference between the concept of "borrowing" (from surrounding nations), and "revelation" where God gives direct instructions to the Prophets, yet, even the "borrowing" by Israel from its pagan surroundings was directly under the control of Yahweh and certainly was not indiscriminate. "Israel was not born in a vacuum, there were already 8,500 years of history before Moses." So states K.A. Kitchen in a Lecture on "The Old Testament and Pagan Cultures".

If we accept that the God of the Old Testament is not only portrayed as exercising care and control over Israel, but also of Israel's environs, then we ought also to accept that God is the God of all cultures and that there is nothing inherently wrong in cultural borrowing or transfer. Different people groups who live in close proximity will always have a certain amount of assimilation and borrowing. Yet amid this cultural mix Israel was not only chosen, but was prepared in a unique way to fulfil God's purposes. It was through Israel that all the families of the earth were to be blessed. We see therefore a unique shaping, both of what was essentially Israel's own culture, and those aspects borrowed from other cultures.

It is worthy of note that even Israel's main Festivals probably had pagan origins. Rowley intimates that aspects of the Passover feast were known among the Arabian tribes and that it was originally a nomadic springtime festival to ward off evil from flock and home. The I.V.P. Bible Commentary suggests that "Moses quite possibly adapted more ancient ceremonies, Unleavened Bread being an agricultural festival". And yet in respect of the Passover, we are told clearly that "The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron..saying this month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you..." (Exodus 12v1). In the instructions that follow there are changes in time, function and meaning, but the pagan roots remain.

It is also highly probable that the other Feasts of Israel were "re-loaded" with new meanings, labelled "historicised" by Edmond:

"It is the significance of the great feasts that the process of historicization is most apparent; the Passover, originally the Feast of offering of the first-born of the flock, became at a very early date by reference to the Exodus, the commemoration of that event. The New Year Feast, the annual feast par excellence, became through the theme of the kingship of Yahweh revealing himself in history, much more the time of renewal of the nation's destiny than the renewal of nature.

Edmond again states:

"Although much indebted to Canaan, whose ritual and cultic practices it adopted to a large extent, Israel succeeded, through the substitution of history for myth, in breathing a new spirit into identical forms. Israel's originality in the cultic field is shown by the priority of history over myth and of time over space" (*my italics*).

Another remarkable observation concerns the architecture and design of both the Tabernacle and the Temple. It is generally assumed that these places of worship were unique, since the pattern was given directly to Moses and David by God. (see Exodus 25v8 & 1Chron 28v11, 19ff). Yet K.A. Kitchen speaks of "portable pavilions, employing practically the same constructional techniques as the tabernacle to have been in actual use in Egypt long before the time of Moses. This did not mean that the whole structure was exactly the same. The layout, for instance, of the "holy of holies", was different.

Yahweh's temple had no seating arrangements, but pagan temples did. The layout of some temples including the entrance to the holy of holies compares with the Jerusalem Temple. That the actual activities within these structures were notably different, is of course self evident.

Such observations must have far-reaching implications. Whatever else one may deduce, one must accept the fact that Yahweh is in the business of validating all cultures by using what is there (even the architecture!), and transforming it for His usage. If Yahweh did it, why are His servants (missionaries) so reluctant to follow suit?

It is widely held, even by Evangelical scholars that much of the Biblical Wisdom literature was "common knowledge" to all cultures. This would be classified by some under the category "general revelation" because it was almost certainly "there" among the pagan nations before Israel was constituted as "the people of God". Since Israel lived in such close proximity to their neighbours, it was inevitable that Canaanite stylistic devices with regard to poetic forms would influence Hebrew literature. For instance, Proverbs 31:1-9 is written by a non-Israelite woman.

King Lemuel's mother was the Queen Mother of the Arab Kingdom of Maseh (Gen 25:14). This wisdom was passed on to her son and considered important enough to include in the Hebrew canon. Wisdom literature as seen in Proverbs has a distinctly international character. Bauckmann observes:

"The sages of Israel belonged to a world of international learning. Because their wisdom was not like the law and the prophets, based on the special salvation history of God's covenant people, but that which was based on common human experience, they readily borrowed from foreign wisdom literature".

This example suggests four clear points:

1. The Bible itself incorporates common wisdom of mankind irrespective of the cultural context.
2. The material is taken into the Bible when and if it correlates with other Biblical material:

"The content of the advice correlates very closely with the concerns of their law and the prophets, concern for the rights of the weakest members of society, who cannot protect themselves (Prov 31:8-9), is required of Israel's political and judicial authorities, both by the law (Exodus 23:6) and by the Prophets (Jeremiah 22:2-3). Lemuel's mother expresses a common ideal of kingship in the ancient Near East which was also Israel's ideal (Psalm 72:12-14) and became the Messianic ideal (Isaiah 11:4)".

3. The material is contextualised into salvation history. The kind of concern that Lemuel was to show for his people gains new motivation and there is new insight given for their importance, because this is the way Israel's Covenant King behaves toward his people. King Lemuel's concern for the needy, reflects God, King of Israel's concern for the poor, the needy, and the rights of those who are destitute. The Messianic King will come to show solidarity with the poor. The Messianic King will come to show solidarity with the poor.

4. The incorporation of this material is important not only for what it reveals concerning God himself, but His activity within history. History is not an unending cycle but will push ahead until God's ultimate goals are achieved. When the King behaves in this way, he is not only being wise, but he becomes a model of God's activity which will continue to its climactic eschaton.

Israel understood the risk of syncretism but continued to adopt, adapt, transform and re-invest anything from the surrounding cultures, and make it uniquely its own. They knew they could not live in sterile, vacuum-sealed isolation and unashamedly borrowed whatever may further their own purposes. Ringgren observes:

We may ask what elements are part of a common heritage, what elements are really imported in the course of Israelite history, and what elements of tradition are a protest against foreign ideas....It is important that foreign influence is given its right place: it should neither be flatly denied, nor be exaggerated. Above all, it should be stressed that foreign ideas were never taken over unchanged but were adapted to suit their new Israelite context. The important task of research in this area, therefore is to assess the Israelite use of the foreign material and the reinterpretation it underwent in the framework of Yahwistic religion.

If Israel could borrow from OTHER SURROUNDING CULTURES which were familiar to them, why is it wrong for Asian Christians to borrow from THEIR OWN CULTURE S? How would the Gospel have impacted Thai society from the start had the early missionaries adopted the principles that God seems to have used in the Old Testament? What would have happened to Christian Mission in Africa? Why are there now more than six thousand New Emerging Religious Movements (NERMS) in Africa today? Surely the heart cry of the African is to express his worship to God, not in unfamiliar foreign forms and meanings, but in local forms that are vital to him because they belong to his own culture; not an imported package, which shouts "foreignness", and includes foreign buildings and architecture with mediaeval European style stained-glass windows, foreign music, foreign liturgy, foreign dress, foreign presentation, and worse than anything else, foreign theology! Deep down in the heart of the Asian Christian there undoubtedly must also be this same yearning to be free to worship God in his own cultural forms.

## 2. CONTEXTUALISATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Undoubtedly contextualisation took place in New Testament times. The apostles, were continually involved in contextualising the Christian message. The message came to them in a Semitic language and culture, and they communicated it to those who spoke and thought in Greek patterns. They took local indigenous words and concepts full on non-Christian values, often transformed their meaning, and

used them to communicate in culturally acceptable ways. Almost every significant New Testament word in the original Greek must have had very different meaning in its original religious non Christian context, from the meaning that the New Testament writers subsequently loaded them with.

The Incarnation is a classic case in point.. There God "contextualised" Himself in Jesus Christ. He became "Emmanuel", God with us - in concepts and language that we understand. The Incarnation had nothing essentially "foreign" about it. Of course He was different and yet, He was one of us.

The New Testament is not a definitive, systematic-theology textbook, although systematic theology may be derived from it. The New Testament says much concerning sociology and anthropology but it was not written as a text book in these disciplines. What can be stated, is that all the events recorded in the New Testament are earthed in real-life situations. Teaching emerges from "context". Miracles did not just happen for the sake of it. They were responses to evident needs in real situations. Water was not turned into wine just to show how clever Jesus could be, but to meet a need. It is pointing to the Messianic nature of Jesus' ministry. Even the few Credal statements that may be found in the New Testament (Phil 2 & 1 Tim 2:16) were not intended as "blanket statements", nor were they comprehensive summaries of the life and ministry of Christ. They were apologetic responses to the need of the hour in that historic context. The Gospels, and the Epistles, were written not just as doctrinal or propositional statements, but as responses to audiences who had specific needs or questions. The synoptic Gospels were written to different audiences with different literary techniques. Matthew's Gospel was written to a Jewish audience and thus foregoes the traditional chronological treatment in favour of a more Jewish method. The Gospel is broken up into sections of threes, and fives and sevens and forms blocks of narrative followed teaching this means that Matthew was taking his target audience into consideration when presenting his "Life of Christ" - he was in other words "contextualising the Gospel". Mark most probably wrote for the Romans. His readers were totally unfamiliar with Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives has to be located (13:3); Jewish customs are explained (7:2 ff; 15:42). Certain words needed to be interpreted (from their Aramaic original form) into Greek. Latin words occur which are not in the other Records (eg. 6:27; 7:4; 12:42 etc); his very "racy" journalistic style, which is simple and direct, all appeal to the Roman mind-set.

Luke's cosmopolitan, universal appeal, with its emphasis on women, and the poor, and John's "spiritual" approach are not accidental, they reflect a desire to be culturally relevant. One may legitimately state that each Gospel reflects "different Christologies". Not that these Christologies contradicted each other. Like a diamond they merely reflect differing colours as observed from varying angles. John does not trace a genealogy from Abraham like Matthew or Adam like Luke but "out of the blue" introduces a "precosmic Logos". John made this emphasis with his audience in mind and "reflected" on what would be most significant about the Christ for them, in terms of their assumptions and world view .

Although Paul's letter to the Corinthians teaches aspects of universal truth (for instance the Resurrection), he nevertheless applies his theology into given contexts . His teaching on holiness was due to the danger of sexual immorality in Corinth. In fact all of Paul's letters are written to specific, historical contexts. The teaching in Galatians arose from a number of issues concerning the problem with Judaisers. This was totally different from the problem at Colossae which was Gnosticism.

Erickson states concerning the nature of the New Testament:

"The dynamic of the New Testament literature consists of its life orientation. Rather than being an abstraction of principles, ideas or dogmatics, it is a treasury of the experiences of the early church. It includes material from the preaching of the apostles, directions from travelling evangelists, and samples of the homilies of the early church ministers. In addition to this there are special types of literature which reflect the ideological and literary customs of the day".

### 3. Some examples of Contextualisation within the New Testament.

The prime example of contextualisation in the Christian church centres around the Council of Jerusalem. It has been said that, had a wrong decision been made at this Council, Christianity would have remained an insignificant, obscure Jewish sect. In fact, if the Church had failed to contextualise in this instance, there would never have been a Church. The leaders confirmed that they had been led by the Holy Spirit, thus affirming the principle that God Himself is in the business of contextualising the Christian faith. The consensus of the Church at Jerusalem is simply recorded; "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us" (15v28). Two vital issues were at stake. The first was HOW could the Gentiles receive salvation, and the second, WHAT were the conditions of fellowship between the new Gentile believers and the older Jewish believers in Messiah?

In regard to the "HOW", it seemed that the Jewish faction were attempting to impose two Jewish requirements on the Gentiles; the rite of circumcision, and keeping the Law of Moses (v5). In regard to "WHAT", - what were the conditions of fellowship? Acceptance of Christ was not sufficient in the mind of many Jews. They must also meet certain regulations, before the right hand of fellowship could be offered. (There seems to be a familiar ring about this!). There was also the conviction that since all truth had once and for all been delivered to the Jew, IT MUST BE AS FAR AS THEY COULD UNDERSTAND, SUPRACULTURAL AND THEREFORE BINDING ON THE GENTILES. So how could the Gentiles possibly be accepted, except by total conformity to their prerequisites? There are of course all sorts of modern counterparts to this position, the most scandalous being the concept of apartheid, taken supposedly from the book of Genesis.

F. F. Bruce states:

"Centuries of devotion to the laws governing food and purity bred in (many Jewish Christians) an instinctive revulsion from eating with Gentiles which could not be immediately overcome. Gentiles quite happily ate certain kinds of food which Jews had been taught to abominate, and the laxity of Gentile morals, especially where relations between the sexes were concerned, made the idea of reciprocal hospitality between them and the Jewish Christians distasteful".

The conclusions reached by the Council were far reaching. First, the Gentiles were not compelled to observe circumcision or the Law Moses; (discontinuity). Second, the Jewish Christians were not compelled to STOP circumcision, nor to stop observing the Law (continuity); third, the acceptance and fellowship with Gentiles was ratified. In the practical sense, the "middle wall of partition" had now been taken down in a practical sense and the way was open for true cross-cultural fellowship.

1 Corinthians 8:1-10:22.

In this passage, Paul is again dealing with the problem of food offered to idols, which had already been addressed in the letter from the Jerusalem Council. Since however the audience was different, Paul in his wisdom does not even mention the letter from Jerusalem, fearing perhaps that the Corinthians may rebel against some new law, imposed at a distance by a Jewish church upon Gentiles! His argument is far more relevant than some remote letter from a distant Council, although the conclusion is the same. Here Paul reasons with the Corinthian Christians in a way that would be acceptable to them and take their worldview into consideration with its broadened understanding of the supernatural; that all principalities and powers were made by Him and for Him etc).. First, that an idol has no real existence in the world (contrary to the local worldview) (8:4). He qualifies this later, by saying that what a person really worships when he worships an idol, are demons, and that food has no intrinsic religious value (8v8). Second, that the table of the Lord is authentically what the idol banquet purports to be (10:16) and that worshipping anything but God Himself is in effect again worshipping demons (10:19). The conclusion is that you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons at the same time (10v21). Here is a clear case of "discontinuity" from both belief and behavioural systems or what Luzbetak calls "cultural surgery".

Paul does differentiate in these chapters between "outward form" and "inner meaning". If the meaning is intrinsically contrary to Christian perception of truth, no Christian may participate. If however a practice is wrong only in view of some people, then the Christians must abstain only in their presence, in order not to be a stumbling block. One person's "liberty" must not be another person's stumbling. (8v7-13). Is there some inconsistency in Paul's arguments here? The answer could be in the affirmative. This is because Paul saw no incongruity or inconsistency between writing to the Galatians about circumcision saying "those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised...circumcision is nothing" (Gal 6v11-14) and then taking Timothy and having him circumcised (Acts 16:3)! He saw no inconsistency between enjoining others not to keep the Law, and then undertaking a vow - "to show that you yourself keep the Law" (Acts 21v21-24). He even saw no inconsistency theologically (it seemed) between the once-for-all, sufficient sacrifice of Christ upon the cross and his paying expenses for sacrifices for him and others in the Temple!

"Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved..the next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the sacrifice would be made for each of them" (Acts 21:23-26).

The overriding principle was that of "contextuality". Erickson states:

"The pinnacle of Paul's enculturation is expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:19-21. He accepts-for the sake of evangelisation- the life style (enslaved), ideological mold (Judaistic or lawless), and personal deficiencies (weak conscience) of the people to whom he ministers".

Erickson also points out a further illustration of contextualisation by Paul from the various epistles he wrote.

The frequent occurrence of a "haustafel" (a Roman-type household structure which included master and slaves) shows that Paul addresses an immediate situation in a local church, quite unlike the Jewish context. In fact Paul's whole teaching on slavery is "situational". To the Corinthians he indicates that they should not bother about being slaves (7:21). He encourages Philemon to treat a slave as a brother in the Lord (v16). On the other hand he warns slaves in his letter to Colossians to serve their Masters "as to the Lord" (3v23-25).

It has been noted that even "baptism" as an outward form, previously used in Judaism, Pagan religions, and by John the Baptist, is taken by Jesus and given another inner meaning. He did not create some new type of ritual, but transformed what was there into something distinctively "Christian". There were resemblances, to other forms, but Christian baptism is invested with a unique meaning of its own.

The "principle of continuity" is further illustrated by the use of the word "LOGOS". in the John's Gospel and Epistles. John does not take a "foreign" word to express the nature of Christ or his preexistence. He takes a word, long used in Greek philosophy, to express his meaning. Not all agree with regard to the origin of this controversial word and some maintain it was Hebrew in origin. Even if that were the case, John nevertheless "reloads" the word and builds into it a unique concept of who Christ is. The context of the usage of the word is the loading apparatus for its new meaning. It must be added that John's use of the term is not to engage in deliberate syncretism, as some may suppose or propose. Dr. Christopher Wright contributes to the debate in an article in "Themelios" :

"John (and even more obviously Paul, in Colossians) is resisting the syncretistic tendency by deliberate assimilation of current vocabulary into a thoroughly Christian (OT based and Jesus centred) theology. In this he differed greatly from what the Apologists were trying to do. If A=the revealed truth of the gospel and B= the 'target' culture (in this case Greek popular philosophy and religion), it is one thing to say, with John 'I will use vocabulary from B because it can be used to make A intelligible to people in culture B, but A remains the unique distinctive and governing truth which will give the vocabulary fresh shades of meaning'. It is quite another to say 'I will use vocabulary B because B (or the best in it) is in reality the same as A, such that B people unconsciously believe A anyway'. Secondly, talk of the logos as the non-incarnate Christ' easily becomes abstract and divorced from the unique particularity of the incarnation. The historical Jesus becomes 'The Christ principle'. the once-for-all atoning death of Jesus becomes "the pattern of the cross" etc. Such worthy-sounding concepts fit easily into the syncretistic soup and nicely avoid the scandal of particularity. However, it can easily be seen that though this process may use the Johannine logos as a tag, it is fundamentally incompatible with John's intention in his Prologue, which is to lead relentlessly up to the climax: 'The logos became flesh. Whatever you may do with the concept of logos, you can't syncretise or abstractify the flesh of the man Jesus'.

Acts of the Apostles.

Perhaps the most significant evidence for the principle of contextualisation comes from the Acts of the Apostles.

A comparison between Peter's message on Pentecost (to Jews Acts 2 v14-36,) and in the house of Cornelius (to Romans 10v34-43) reveals a completely different

emphasis. The same thing happens in Paul's messages to monotheistic Jews and Gentile God-fearers in the synagogue of Antioch (13:16-41), and polytheistic devotees on Mars' hill (17:16-33). In Paul's two messages to polytheistic audiences he clearly contextualised his message according to his receptors' categories, not his own. For instance, why does Paul mention the fact that it is God who gives rain from heaven and crops in season in chapter 14 and not in 17? And why does Paul exhort them "to turn from these worthless things to the living God" in chapter 14 but in chapter 17 says "The God whom you ignorantly worship, Him I declare to you"? If we desire to be sensitive to our audience's needs when we communicate the Gospel, then we must be sensitive to these fundamental principles of contextualisation.

Joslin examines the content and structure of three of Paul's sermons recorded in Acts noting various differences. See chart on the following page.

#### Joslin's Analysis:

Three evangelistic sermons preached by the apostle Paul to different audiences:

#### Background:

1. Geographical location:	Pisidian Antioch	Lystra	Athens
2. Bible text:	Acts 13:13-43	Acts 14:8-20	Acts 17:16-34
3. Religious Status of the audience.	Jews and God fearing Gentiles.	pagan Gentiles	pagan
4. Social Status of the audience.	various? intellectuals.	working-class community.	middle-class farming

#### Sermons

a. Point of contact and gaining attention. ignorance.	synagogue worship and teaching. (13: 14-15).	idolatry and ignorance. (14:13-15).	idolatry ignorance. (17:22-24,29)
b. Evidence of the The Living God the nature of God. (cf idols) created world and every thing in it. (17:24-25)	God's Word (13:15) and God's acts in choosing Israel as His people. (13:15-20)	The Living God (cf idols) created the world and every thing in it (14:15)	

- c. Experience of the God's provision and God has provided  
 All life is sustained  
 goodness of God (Rom:2:4). protection for His them with the  
 necessary by the providence of  
 people climaxed in the harvest, food and God.  
 Nothing exists  
 promised Saviour (13:17) happiness (14:17).  
 independently of God. (17:21, 26-28).
- d. Cultural identification. Paul is Jew. He speaks God's provision of  
 crops World order and of brothers 13:13, and and food (14:17). A  
 purpose considered. the God of our Fathers farming community Quotation from  
 one of (13: 17, 32). would appreciate this. their  
 poets (17:26-28).
- e. God and history. The history of God's In His grace and patience  
 In His grace and dealings with Israel. God overlooked their  
 patience, God (13:18, 37). former ignorance.  
 overlooked their (14:16). former  
 ignorance. (17:30).
- f. Spiritual obligation. God kept His promises God has blessed them  
 As God's offspring and sent them the with food and joy. It  
 they are completely Saviour they need. is their duty to honour  
 dependent on him. (13:23, 37-39). God as God and give They are  
 to honour thanks to Him. and give  
 thanks to (Rom 1: 21). Him.  
 (Rom 1:21).
- g. Evangelistic exhortation. They must believe in telling you to turn from  
 God demands the resurrected Jesus these worthless things  
 immediate repent- for forgiveness of sins. to the living God  
 ance from all people. (13:38-41). (14:15). (17:30).  
 God will one day judge the world  
 through the  
 resurrection of Jesus (17:31).

Don Richardson also helpfully illustrates the background to Paul's preaching on Mars' hill. Apparently about 600 BC there had been a devastating plague in the city of Athens. The people of Athens offered sacrifices to their 30,000 gods asking them to intervene and halt the plague but the plague raged on. Epimenedes was summoned to help resolve the problem. Since the gods were silent he felt there must be another God who would be great enough to help. He called for a flock of sheep to be let loose on a sacred spot on Mars' hill. He commanded the men to follow the sheep, and call upon this "unknown god" to cause the sheep to lie down on the spot where the "god" wanted a lamb to be sacrificed. On that spot the Athenians built an altar and inscribed on it "To an Unknown god". Subsequently the plague lifted and the city was delivered. Six centuries later, Paul takes the story of this "pagan" altar, and states clearly "Him who you worship I declare unto you". Richardson adds:

"Others remarked 'He seems to be advocating foreign gods! In other words, Paul, whoever you are, we already have 30,000 gods here in Athens, and you are bringing us the message of still another god? We need another god like we need a hole in our heads! We've got so many gods here in Athens we can't keep track of them all! Who would have the audacity to proclaim another god in that context? How does he respond to the charge that he's advocating some superfluous or nuisance god in the city already afflicted with 30,000 or more of them?.....Paul was in effect, saying: 'Foreign God? No!. The God I proclaim is that God who did not consider himself represented by any of the idols in the city so many hundreds of years ago, but who delivered your city from the plague when you simply acknowledged your ignorance of him. But why be ignorant of him any longer, if you can know him!. In this way Paul used that familiar Athenian altar as an eye-opener to get to first base. Then he went on to try to turn his listeners from the darkness of idolatry to the light of God's truth. And this God has left himself a witness in hundreds of other cultures around the world".

Wright correctly points out that Paul is not congratulating the Athenians on their polytheism, rather he is saying, 'Despite your religiosity, you don't know the true God at all, though you could and should do, for the knowledge of him is available before your eyes, but you have obscured it with your 'every religious Temples and idols':

"Taken thus, it fits perfectly with what Paul writes concerning the availability but suppression of the knowledge of God in Romans 1. God is not, in fact an 'unknown God'; it is the Athenians who are ignorant of Him".

There remains a fear for those of us committed to contextualisation that in applying these principles we may fall short of communicating distinctive "good news" and instead leave a hotchpotch mixture of diluted Christianity with a large dose of paganism as the principal ingredient. We should take courage on three accounts.

First, it has been clearly proven that God initiated and inspired this principle of Contextualisation in Scripture.

Second, the result was not a mixed up "soup" of religion, but a unique revelation of Person and purposes applied to the historical context. Third, that both the Word of God and the Spirit of God have been given to guide and ensure what the appropriate parameters of contextualisation will be.

Contextualisation is as great a risk for the servant of God as exercising faith and trust in Him!

In conclusion, there will always be the danger of syncretism; in fact all expressions of Christianity are in some way culture-bound and therefore by definition syncretistic to some degree. The key is to discern between illegitimate, critically-determined syncretism, and uncritical syncretism. The former will be authentic, constructive, will validate the Scripture, and affirm the Culture, resulting in an unambiguous application of the 'good news'. The latter will be confusing, destructive both to Scripture and Culture, leaving no Scriptural 'good news'. With the assurances already indicated, our task must be to Contextualise for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.

#### CONCLUSION.

Before a new product is launched, feasibility studies and market research must be done. The same must be done with some of the proposals in this book. Experimentation and investigation may reveal some of what has been proposed as impractical or ineffective. On the other hand, the writer feels that the church in Asia, has nothing to lose by testing some of the radical innovations suggested. Only the results can determine whether they will be effective or not.

This thesis is not a final answer but merely an introduction to the task of Contextualisation. The general principles suggested must be beaten out on the anvil of creative experimentation by the hands of those more qualified for the task - Asian Christian leaders. This subject needs much more research both in detail and depth.

One important area that needs further investigation is the relationship of Biblical studies to Contextualisation.

Reference to the Bibliography may be helpful in pursuing this theme.

Due to space limitations, many crucial issues have not been dealt with. The following are some areas that require further research.

#### 1. The Development of 'Local Theologies' in Asia.

At one end of the spectrum, there is 'Traditional Theology' which Tissa Balasuriya defines as 'culture-bound, church-centred, male-and-age dominated, pro-capitalist, anti-communist, over theoretical and unrelated to the social contexts in which it is developed'. At the other end there is 'Planetary Theology', where the planet Earth in its entirety is the context. In the middle are 'Local Theologies'. The problem arises, how 'local' should they become? To develop a 'Contextualised Theology for the Church in Thailand', further research should be done in Sri Lanka, Burmese, Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese contexts. Such experimentation, dialogue with other leaders and research, will contribute to the development of an authentic Thai Theology which will answer the questions Buddhists in Thailand are asking. Such interaction may also encourage National leaders in other countries in Asia to consult together and develop local theologies, suitable to their particular context. It may be that a broad based contextual theology could be developed for all of the Buddhist countries in Asia since all of these countries have very similar Folk-Buddhist belief systems. Schreiter's 'Constructing Local Theologies' is definitive, and gives invaluable guidelines in this whole area. Who will take the first step to initiate such a proposal?

## 2. An in-depth Analysis of Rites, Rituals and Ceremonies .

A problem arises in that Thai and other national leaders are generally not prepared or very reluctant to engage upon this delicate operation themselves, but neither the writer nor any other expatriate is qualified either! The alarm warning that SOMETHING MUST BE DONE has been sounded. The type of Christianity introduced by the early missionaries created a 'black hole' leading to social alienation and loss of cultural identity for those who became Christians. It does not require a Prophet to predict that unless something is done soon, Thailand and other Buddhist countries in Asia will be added to the long list of countries with New Emerging Religious Movements mushrooming everywhere, because the climate is now ripe for this phenomenon to occur. Already there are as many as 300 such NERMS in S. Korea. It is therefore imperative that Asian leaders address the issue at national level immediately. Certain rites and ceremonies should be adapted, new ceremonies inspired by the Spirit could be created and new methods of communication developed, all contextually relevant. There is nothing to be lost, and Asia to be gained!

## 3. Cognitive Processes of Communication.

Systematic theology is a distinctively Western approach to theology and is derived in its cognitive process and forms from the ancient Greek philosophers. Alternative methods of communication have been discussed here, but the 'content' of local theologies needs to be packaged in local 'forms'. One must address the question, are Asians essentially non-linear 'Oral' Cultures? If they are, then our present methods of communication need major changes. Hollenweger points out :

'Oral theology operates through the medium of story, not statement. It does not use definitions, but descriptions. It operates with songs, not systematic statements. It is not based on an Aristotelian framework of logic but on the cohesion of the tradition in a community'.

Suffice to say the communication process in Asia needs to be predominantly Oral. This would mean that local theologies should be developed and communicated within Asian oral traditions. For instance, Thai song styles, such as the 'jo' and the 'so', together with Thai 'Pop' and folk music, should be used as effective mediums of communication. The tentative Credal Statement in the Appendix could be restructured by perceptive Thais, so that its form, as well as its content, be culturally applicable. It would also be profitable to research what Stroup terms 'Narrative Theology'. This of course does not necessarily mean we adopt an 'either/or' philosophy, for - 'Christian theology has always been oral AND literary. The Gospels belong to the oral genre. The Epistles to the literary genre. Academic theology so far has not developed sophisticated oral theologies'.

## 4. Culturally appropriate expressions of Christian Spirituality.

There is always the danger in a book like this, of analysing belief systems and world views in a detached academic fashion, emphasising what people believe while overlooking how they behave. When one observes both the dedication and the devotion of a sincere Buddhist, one must ask what has the Christian to

offer? Sad to say, many Christians in Asia, (especially those influenced by a predominantly affluent, materialistic hedonistic Western value system), live below the standard set by and indeed achieved, by many Buddhists. Although some of the related issues are dealt with in chapter 8, far greater reflection is necessary especially in view of Wanís statement:

if we live simply as those who have given themselves to the service of God, I believe people will receive us gladly because Thai people already have faith in and admiration for this kind of life, that is, the life of sacrifice. All those in Buddhism whom they admire, whether abbots or priests or Buddha himself, are people of sacrificial lives. If Christians present themselves like Jesus, it will certainly reinforce what they say.

What is needed is a distinctive Asian spirituality which combines both a "mystical" dimension as well as the practical. Such a "prophetic-type-spirituality" is appealing since it addresses BOTH manís inward condition AND his outward environment. This would reflect the balance of inward and outward spirituality portrayed in the nature and role of the "Servant" in the Old Testament, and perfected in Christís own life and ministry. The practical application of a culturally attractive Christian spirituality still needs to be seriously addressed. The idea of "Christian Community" also needs consideration. Since the Temple (Wat) is a place of Buddhist community - ought there to be some Christian "functional equivalents" for these life-styles and structures?

#### 5. The issue of "Power Encounter".

The shortest chapter in this Thesis (8) concerns "Power Encounter" as it relates to effective communication of the "good news" to Asian people. This should not reflect the relative importance of the subject. Although controversial, the subjects of "stoicheia", "principalities and powers", "territorial spirits" and the nature of "spiritual warfare" must be addressed. The responsibility of developing suitable "local theologies" in this area falls mainly to Asia Christian leaders since the tendency of the Western observer is either to over simplify and theorise, (people falling over themselves to experience the latest type of supernatural phenomena) or to sensationalise, as indicated by the recent spate of Christian "novels" on the unseen world, together with the voluminous literature pouring forth from the West on areas that Western theologians are least qualified to theologise on!

#### 6. The need of a Thai Creed

One of the most important elements of this Thesis is found in the Appendix! This attempt to develop a Thai Creed will need exhaustive work before it becomes meaningful for the Thai Church. An ongoing process has begun; now a Commentary on the Creed should be written to explain why certain important elements have been omitted and others added. It is anticipated that Thai Christian Leaders will work together on this important project. See appendix for an example of the Thai Creed.

#### CHAPTER TEN:

HOW CHURCH STRUCTURES CAN EFFECTIVELY HINDER OR HELP  
CHURCH GROWTH.

INTRTODUCTION :

This chapter interfaces the nature of culture and the nature of the church and asks what structures the church should adopt to express the full life of Christ within a given cultural maxtrix. It suggests that many missiologists have unconsciously capitulated to cultural norms with their hidden values and that this has been the cause for the church to be stunted in its growth and witness. The following diagram will indicate five irreducible components for dynamically equivalent church structures and the chapter will seek to evaluate the results of not applying these Biblical principles when planting churches in any culture.

A SUGGESTED THAI CREED.

slyd-hvg=njv-v'8iblg9upo=k;wmp

1. -hkrq0hjjkg=njv;jk lbj'lkiryfmuj,uvp^j.oF]drihv,myh'0ydi;k]w,jwfhhgdbf  
-7hogvH'c]tw,jwfhv6[y9b-7ho,kFfpv;b=kgxHogs96c9jritg0hkz^hmi'vmbbAmTb  
c]tlyrryPP^mi'gxHoz^hobi,b9lhik'07'gsHo;jkm6d lbj'fuoyd

I believe in God who is Almighty and All knowing, who having created the Universe saw that everything he had made was good, All things did not come into being on their own, nor did ěIgnoranceı create them.

2. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk ,o6KpNF]d,udbg]L9yPPskw,jgmujp'myh'.o8;k,8bfdbibpk  
c]t;k0k07's,flbmTbNc]tw,jlk,ki5muj0tg-hjjk57'g,nv'[i,l6-gdK,=7j'  
gxHomuj]ib16mTHmuj]l6f

I believe that all mankind have evil desires, are not righteous in thought, word and deed, and consequently are both disqualified from and incapable of entering paradise, because it is a holy place.

3. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk ,o6KpNw,j,usomk'muj0t.sh9ogxNomujr7j'-v'9oc]t  
w,jlk,ki5muj0tlitl,[6Pw;hrvmuj0toe57':7j'dkis]6frho07'9hv'  
rbokL9k,g;i9k,dii,

I believe that mankind has no hope by depending upon himself. He is incapable of attaining sufficient merit to liberate himself and therefore sowing what he reaps according to karma, he must perish.

4. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk v'8Hritz^hgxHog0hkmi'xitdv[fh;prit,skdki^IkTb86I  
07'wfhibgibj,0yfg9iup,somk'cdhxyPsk[kxdii,-v',o6KpHFfp  
. :hz^hcmog-hk,k.oF]d8nvrtpg:^8ib19Hrit[69i-v'ritv'8Hgrnjv  
Ffp[69ioyho,o6KpH0trho0kdv[kp,6d

I believe that God who is full of compassion and mercy,initiated the way of solving man's problem by sending His Representative Jesus Christ into the world so that man may be delivered from Hell.

5. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jkk ritgp:^8ib19HwfhvkLkl,y8i] ',k  
0kdl;iiLHiy[=k8bdegobfgxHo,o6KpHFfpxDBloTH.o8iipH,kgiup9k,  
xit;y9bLkl9HgrnjvgxHoıcrtiy[[kxıcmo,o6KpH07'wfhlbhorit=opH[o  
w,hdk'g-Hogrnpjviy[FmKmyIRHmuj8;i9dvpj^dy[,o6KpHgrikt[kxdii,-v'g-k

I believe that Jesus Christ volunteered to come from heaven to be born of the Virgin Mary according to history in order to be manís escapegoatí by dying on the Cross to receive the penalty due to man because of his sin.

6666. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk ritgp:^8ibl9Hz^hgxHoTii,twfhmi'g,99k,o6KpN07'  
rihv,muj0tpnjo[6PPko64krvyov6f,[ib[^iIH-v'ritv'8H.sh  
cdjz^hmujpv,lki4krc]t]tmbh'[kx-v'9o9jvritv'8Hf;hp8;k,0ib'.0

I believe Jesus Christ who is truth and mercy is ready to offer his own abundant merit to whoever will confess and forsake their sin with sincerity.

7. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk ritgp:^8ibl9H,uveok01^'l6fgsonvok,vnjomyh'xj;'mujg-k  
gvjp-7how,jw=j.op68ouhgmjkoyhoc9j.om6dp6dm6dl,yp07'wfhxit0koc]t  
=ot9jv[iifk4^9bzuxbLk19Hc]tlbj'LydfbHlBmTHmyh's]kpmjy;lkd]F]d.shvp^j  
.9hrit[km-v'ritv'8Hffpw,hdk'g-Ho

I believe that Jesus Christ has power over all people and all spirits in all ages and has demonstrated his power over them openly by the Cross.

8 -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk ritgp:^8ibl9HgxHoz^hgfup;mujwfh=ot,iI4krFfpwfh  
mi'aanho8norit=opH=u[c]tmi',u=u;b9v,9txy006[yo07'lk,ki5  
c]trihv,muj0t=j;pd^h,o6KpH.shrho0kd[kxdii,wfh9]vfdki

I believe that only Jesus Christ has had victory over death through his resurrection, that he is now alive and is therefore able and ready to deliver mankind from the results of sin for ever.

9. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk ritgp:^8ibl9HgxHoz^hmuj0tglfH0,k.oF]dgxHoz^hmuj0t  
x]fgx]nhv'8;k,m6d-H-v'[iifk,o6KpH=k9b9k,8emeokpc]t.o  
vok890tglfH0,k.oF]d8iyh'mujlv'grnjv0t9yh'vIk0ydiHobiyofi:7j'  
xitdv[ fh;p8;k,p69bTii,c]t8;k,=v[Tii,

I believe Jesus Christ is the One who is to come according to prophecy to liberate all mankind. He will come the Second Time to establish his everlasting Kingdom on earth which will be filled with Justice and Righteousness.

10. -hkrq0hkg=njv;jk z^hmujg=njvg]njv,.lLiyMtk.oritgp:^8ibl9Hwfhg-hjjk  
gxHolj;oso7j'.o8ibl0ydi-v'ritv'8H07',usohkmujg=njvay'c]txDb[y9b  
9k,s]yd8elvo-v'ritv'8H:7j'[ii06w;h.orit8iblTii,8e4uiH  
Ffpw,jiy'gdup0;y<oTii,vyofu'k,-v'=k;wmpmujw,j-yf0kds]yd8e  
lvoLydfbNlBmTbNfy'dj]k;

I believe whoever puts their trust in Christ becomes a member of His Church and is therefore responsible to be obedient to His teachings which are written in the Christian Scriptures and that by so doing he will not despise or destroy those beautiful parts of Thai culture which accord with Scripture.

#### AN AFRICAN CREED - BY VINCENT. J. DONAVAN.

We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created man and wanted man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on earth. We have known this High God in the darkness, and now we know him in the light. God promised in the book of his word, the bible, that he would save the world and all the nations and tribes. We believe that God, made good his promise by sending his son, Jesus Christ, a man in the

flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good curing people by the power of God teaching about God and man, showing that the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day rose from the grave. He ascended to the skies. He is the Lord.

We believe that all our sins are forgiven through him. All who have faith in him must be sorry

for their sins, be baptised in the Holy Spirit of God, live the rules of love and share the bread together in love, to announce the good news to others until Jesus comes again. We are waiting for him. He is alive, He lives, This we believe. Amen.

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- Wink, Walter.        Naming the Powers - The Language of Power in the New  
Testament.  
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This is a quote from Koyama's "Waterbuffalo Theology".  
Markus Tsering "Sharing Christ in the Tibetan Buddhist World" p164.  
Bong Rin Ro. "The Bible and Theology in Asian Contexts" a chapter entitled  
"Contextualisation of Asian Theology ". p63.

The writer is not alluding to "Book Aid" an organisation in England that  
collects used Christian books and distributes them across the world. They are  
very sensitive to this issue and carefully cull those books which would present  
a purely Western perspective.

It is not the place here to debate the nature of what will be conveniently termed "the supernatural". (Please see footnote 12 in Chapter 3. for further discussion ). One could just have easily used 'ordinary' vis a vis 'extra ordinary', or 'normal' vis a vis a vis 'para normal' or 'empirical' vis a vis 'trans empirical'. It does presuppose a view that perceives phenomena akin to Greek, rather than the Hebrew worldview. For an investigation into the 'naturalist versus the supernaturalist' debate, the most comprehensive book to study would be "Miracles" by C.S. Lewis, especially the first two chapters. This matter will of necessity be dealt with at length in various places in this Thesis.

John Mbiti. "Mission Trends No. 3, Third World Theologies" quoting from "Lutheran World Federation" (xxi 3-1974) Geneva, Switzerland.  
Leslie Newbigin. "Phenomenology of Folk Religion " Lecture Notes from Fuller Theological Seminary 1974.

Dr.Saad Chaiwan. An important Doctoral Thesis presented to the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary. Korea. Entitled "A Study of the Impact of Christian Missions on Thai Culture from the Historical Perspective 1662-1985." Dr. Chaiwan, is now Dean of McGilvary Theological Seminary, Chiangmai, N.Thailand.

Philip Hughes. D.Th. Thesis "Christianity and Culture;A case study in Northern Thailand". p 100. quoting from C.C. Zimmerman and Mrs. G. B. McFarland, "Report on Siam" 1931, in Maen Research Papers. MSS Div. Payap College.  
Byang H. Kato "The Gospel, Cultural Context and Religious Syncretism" in "Let the Earth Hear His Voice ". p 1217.

"Theology and Mission". op.cit., p 91-92.

Walter J. Hollenweger. Selly Oak Journal, "Mission Today " No. 4. Jan. 86.Until 1990 Hollenweger held the Chair of Mission at the University of Birmingham. He gives credit to Kraft for this quotation.

J.M. Roberts states in "The Triumph of the West" :  
"The idea of progress sustained a secularised missionary spirit. The faith it was morally proper to spread was not just that of the Cross (though that was for a long time to continue to be part of the package), but faith in Western values - understood of course, as universal - and in the material bounty of Western civilisation. As fresh material succeeded from the manipulation of nature, the Europeans' belief that they ought to spread the Good News, of which their culture was the carrier, broadened out to sustain that Christianity and material improvement were meant to go together, that men ought to share prosperity as well as truth and that Western man has a duty to beings unfortunate enough not to have arrived at them for themselves. This was a new kind of missionary zeal, unknown to mediaeval Christendom. The Gospel, hospitals, schools, uncorrupt administration, women's rights, protection of animals - the whole benevolent but culturally arrogant bag of goods is still with us today, sustained by a conscious sense of superiority and duty". (p 308)

Hiebert, P. "Anthropological Insights for Missionaries" p 174-192.  
ibid. p 217.

David Barrett listed 6,000 in his book "Schism and Renewal in Africa"  
Harold Turner coins  
a new expression to distinguish between "NERMS" and "PRI-NERMS". For extensive  
Bibliographies on this subject, see "African Traditional Religion in Biblical  
Perspective",  
Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 18. p 698 under "Tribal Religious Movements,  
New."

See Kraft, "Christianity in Culture" chapter one. And Phil Parhsall, "New  
Paths to  
Muslim Evangelism" p 43-45.

"The Wheaton Declaration." 1966.

John Hick, "God has 100 Names " pp 50-58.

From a Paper entitled "Buddhist Christian Encounter" Feb 21. 1961.  
presented at

a Consortium of Asian Scholars. Holy Cross College, Rangoon. part 2. p 65.

Hans Kung, op.cit., p 104.

ibid. pp 50-58.

Byang H. Kato, quoting Stott in "The Gospel, Cultural Context and  
Religious

Syncretism" from "Let the Earth Hear His Voice". Ed. J.D. Douglas, p 1218.

Hiebert, op.cit., pp 184-186.

McGavran, quoting Seely in "The Clash Between Christianity and Cultures"  
p 32.

ibid. p 33

See Glassers' Chapter in "The Word Among Us - Contextualising Theology  
for Mission Today  
". 1989, Word Publishers.

The literal transference of the prohibition regarding blood implies a  
continuity of form rather  
than meaning. It is still a major problem for some peoples who are not living in  
the same  
context as the Jews & Gentiles at this time. For further observations concerning  
this issue, see  
Footnote 33. Chapter 9.

See Luzbetak, "The Church & Cultures". "Evangelisation consists in more  
than tenderly  
planting, gently watering, faithfully weeding, and carefully cultivating, for  
mission work  
actually implies a kind of "cultural surgery". If a cultural trait, complex, or  
institution  
"scandalise" (i.e. prove to be inconsistent with Christianity and therefore a  
stumbling block),  
the society must "cut it off" or "pluck it out". Compromise is impossible when  
'surgery'  
happens to be the only means of saving the true and full meaning of the Gospel"  
p 183.

Krikor Haleblian quoting Ericson, op cit. p 231.

ibid. p 231. quoting Rene Padilla.

Krikor Halbelian, op.cit., p 232.

ibid. p 233.

Hollenweger prefers to use the term "decisiveness" of Jesus because it describes the quality of His 'otherness'. It is essentially evangelistic and calls for response and decision, whereas 'uniqueness' is static and does not.

These observations result from personal conversation with Professor Hollenweger.

see Hollenweger's book "Evangelism Today-Good News or Bone of Contention" "Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism" .p 115.

Dr. Kim in his Thesis entitled " The Unfinished Mission in Thailand, The Uncertain Christian impact on the Buddhist Heartland" from Theo van Der Weele, M.A. Fuller Degree entitled "Encouraging Emic and Etic Pastoral Counselling in Thailand. p 137

Paul F. Knitter "No Other Name?" SCM Press Ltd., p211.

Sire, J.W. "The Universe Next Door a Guide to World Views" p 16.

Much of the material in this section has been the result of observation and

conversation with Thai villagers. It is confirmed in a scholarly study (by S.J.

Tambiah) of the subject entitled "Buddhism and Spirit Cults in North East Thailand".

Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology No 2. Details of various ceremonies are

referred to extensively in this book, including the house construction ceremonies

referred to here.

Some of the information here comes from B. J. Terwiel in a Monograph series

published by the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies (No 24) entitled "Monks and

Magic, An analysis of Religious Ceremonies in Central Thailand".

Thai Airways produce "Sawasdee-Inflight Magazine" Invariably there are some articles

on popular art and folk religion. This information came from July/August 1983 issue, an article

entitled "Bangkok's Multi-spirited Shrines" Wm. Warren.

Niles Mulder. "Everyday Life in Thailand" A remarkable book which has evoked

considerable protest by Thai critics because of its forthrightness.

S.J. Tambiah "The Ideology of Merit and the Social Correlates of Buddhism in Thai Villages" . p 41.

Mulder. op.cit., p 24.

op cit., Kirsch. p 146.

Robert Schreiter indicates that one must recognise the need for local theologies (and creeds) in our own time, otherwise one does injustice to previous creeds, by 'disincarnating' them from their historical contexts. See "Constructing Local Theologies". p 77.

Parshall "New Paths to Muslim Evangelism - Evangelical Approaches to Contextualisation" p 139. Parshall asks: "Does the Muslim designation of Jesus as 'the Word of God' help us bridge the gap which exists between the Muslim and Christian understanding of Jesus' person and His relation to God? Certainly this title is more helpful than others such as "son of God" or "Lamb of God". This designation can be a launching pad to show the Muslim that Jesus is God's eternal Word.

An Article by Dr. J.A. Veitch, entitled "Is an Asian Theology Possible" in "The Scottish Journal of Theology", quoting "The South East Asian Journal of Theology", Vol.2, Autumn. 1969. p3.

Bong Rin Ro. "Asia Theological News" Vol. 123:4. Oct-Dec, 1987. See also "A Korean Minjung Theology - An Old Testament Perspective". C.R.H.S. Moon.

"Mission Trends No. 3. Third World Theologies" p 7.

Kosuke Koyama. "Waterbuffalo Theology" preface pp viii-ix.

ibid. p 27.

John Stott and Robert Coote. "Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture". Stott is most helpful when he suggests that it is the believing community who must assume the ultimate responsibility for Contextualising the Gospel in its own setting p 121.

Wan Petsongkhram. quoting Puttatat in "Talks in the Shade of The Bo Tree" p 52.

ibid. p 59.

Don Richardson. "Concept Fulfilment" from "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" A Reader. p 414.

Harvey M. Conn. "Conversion and Culture - A Theological Perspective with Reference to Korea" from "Down to Earth - Studies in Christianity and Culture" p154.

Bernard Dupraz "Insights into the Religious Background of the Khmers" Cambodian Catholic Centre. p15

Koyama. op.cit., p 97.

Donald Swearer Thompson Memorial Lecture "A Theology of Dialogue". p38.

Van der Weele. "Encouraging Etic and Emic Pastoral Counselling" p 140.

ibid. p 142.

Schumann. op.cit., p 65.

ibid. p 17.

Wm. Hendriksen "The Gospel of John" Banner of Truth 1961.

see Robert J. Priest. "Missionary Elenctics; Conscience & Culture" Missiology  
Volume XX11  
No 3. July 1944.

Winston. L. King. "Buddhism and Christianity " p 110.

It may be argued that the central teaching of Christ was the Kingdom of  
God, or love, or  
justice, etc. The purpose in emphasising 'moral evil' here is to attempt to  
contrast what was  
at least very high on Christ's agenda, to what was undoubtedly paramount in  
Gotama's  
thinking - not how to deal with moral evil, but how to escape the cause and  
effect of  
suffering.

B.H. Streeter. "The Buddha and The Christ ".p 63.

King. op.cit., p 118.

King. p 115. The "Fall" as far as Buddhism is concerned does not relate  
to an historical  
event, or even a "mythological tale". Buddha refused to speculate about the  
beginning of  
individualised sentient being or whether there ever was state in the world where  
there was  
no craving and no karma existed. His assumption is that while there is life,  
there must be  
karma. Its origins are of no significance or interest whatsoever. He is more  
interested in  
extinguishing the blaze, rather than worrying about how or who caused it!  
Therefore 'the  
fall of man takes place every time a new birth occurs, or for that matter, at  
every successive  
moment of one's continued individual existence'.

King. ibid. p 115.

Ecclesiastes 2:17.

Isaiah 40: 6-7.

Ecclesiastes 12:2-6

ibid. 3:19

D. Swearer "A Theology of Dialogue " p 27. Swearer emphasises from his  
quote, the  
"fleeting reality of the world". There is of course much evidence in the New  
Testament  
concerning the transitoriness of life, especially when the people of God are  
experiencing  
intense persecution or suffering. But normally we are exhorted to "enjoy, both  
food and  
marriage which God created to be gratefully received, for everything God created  
is good  
and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude!" (1 Timothy 4:4-  
6.) In his  
endeavour to syncretise Buddhist and Christian concepts, Swearers' bias is  
revealed. He  
seems to want to pour into the same mould teachings that have an apparent  
similarity, but  
which have different purposes in view. Buddhism deprecates everything material,  
while  
Christianity can with qualification appreciate everything material. The  
qualifying factors  
relate to a right prioritisation and evaluation between what is created and who  
Creates.

Immediately the created takes precedence over the Creator, then Buddhist values of "detachment" could be applied, not with a view to eradicate the God given gift of appreciation, but so as not to restore the right balance between a right appreciation of, rather than a total dependence upon "all good gifts around us".

1 John 2v15  
Genesis 1:31

Jung Young Lee "The Yin-Yang Way of Thinking" in Mission Trends No.3. p 29.

Morris Inch "Doing Theology Across Cultures " p 50.

J. Fenton. "Buddhist Meditation and Christian Practice", Anglican Theological Review 53 (Oct. 1971). p 247

David Lim. "Sharing Jesus In The Two Thirds World " An Article entitled "Biblical Christianity in the Context of Buddhism ". This paper explores the various philosophical issues raised from the Christian dialogue-in-mission in Buddhist Cultures. The paper suggests that the approach of some Christians who adopt Christian symbols and fill them with Buddhistic meaning is a non-historical and non- doctrinal model incompatible with the biblical world-view, see pp253-298.

D.T. Niles. "Buddhism and the Claims of Christ" p 49. For a slightly different emphasis on the nature of dukkha see Cotterell "Mission, meaninglessness and the

Good News in a World of suffering".

David Lim quoting C.G. Williams in "Sharing Jesus and the Two Thirds World" p 269.

King. p.128.

David Lim. op.cit., p 274, points out in a footnote that Sundar Singh discusses the futility of gaining salvation by the extinction of all desire (both good and bad). Singh gives six arguments:

(a). Even good desires are based upon selfish motives. When desiring to do good, consciously or unconsciously, we expect some reward we shall merit;

(b). As living beings we cannot exist without emotions or desires; where there are feelings, desires surely will be produced from them;

(c). The desire to kill desire, is itself a desire, like trying to extinguish fire with fire;

(d). The Creator's desire is for us to use rightly his created things, and we sin by not using and by killing our desires;

(e). The fact of any desire is proof of the availability of the material to satisfy that need (like water for thirst, sleep for fatigue) and proof that it will be fulfilled (not eliminated):

(f). Restlessness increases if desire is not satisfied: but even if desire increases, that infinite Being, which is love, is sufficient and able to fully satisfy all our desires".

Buddhist Scriptures.

Wan. "Talks in the Shade of the Bo Tree " p110.

These rules are identical with the translation by Rhys Davids and Oldenberg in Vol. 13. of the "Sacred Books of the East " p 1-69. Quote from Wells op.cit., p 154.

Wan. op.cit., p 110.

Wan. op.cit., p 137.

David Lim. op.cit., p 271.

ibid. p 275.

Richard Drummond. op.cit., p 191.

deSilva. "Creation, Redemption, Consummation " p 164.

David Lim. op.cit., p 281.

King. op.cit., p 131.

ibid. p 133.

Kenneth Cragg. "The Christ and The Faiths-Theology in Cross-Reference " p 263.

ibid. p 265.

Christmas Humphries. "The Buddhist Way of Life " p 53.

Karl Barth. "Church Dogmatics" Vol. 4. Part 2. p 297.

deSilva. op.cit., p 69.

ibid. p 70.

ibid. p 70.

Marku Tsering. "Sharing Christ in The Tibetan Buddhist World " Tibet Press 1988

p 108.

R. Brow. Article in "The Lion Handbook on World Religions ".

Michael Banton in "Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion " points out that

even in Theravadin Buddhism, the Pali Canon does not deny the existence of a wide range

of superhuman beings who interact with humans, accept sacrifices, grant merit to them and

grant them assistance in times of need. "To summarise I would argue that the belief in

superhuman beings and in their power to assist or to harm man approaches universal

distribution, and this belief-I would insist-is the core variable which ought to be

designated by any definition of religion" p 94.

Phillipians 2:6-11.

Isaiah 53:4-6.

King. op.cit., p 180.

G. Appleton. "Christian Presence Amid Buddhism ". p 51

"Clues to Thai Culture " p 219.

deSilva. op.cit., p 73.

Irving Babbit "The Dhammapada " p 20.

Christmas Humphries. op.cit.,p 85.

In spite of the fact that orthodoxy in Theravadin Buddhism normally requires a belief

in the 'non-transmigration' of a soul from a previous existence, Weber noted that the

concepts of karma and of multiple rebirths are logically interrelated and form, in Webers own

words 'the most consistent theodicy ever produced in history'. (see his "The Religion of India:

The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism" p 21. A. Thomas Kirch points out that the

ordinary Thai recognise this link and that King Prajudhipok in a preface to a popular Buddhist

Catechism for young people observed "the great point of Buddhism is the belief in karma, but

Karma cannot be taught without an understanding of transmigration" see "Clues To Thai

Culture" p 135 for further elaboration on this important subject.

Herbert P. Phillips. "Thai Peasant Personality ".p 84.

Christmas Humphries. op.cit., p 143.

King. op.cit., p 192.

Wan. op.cit., p 93.

ibid. p 93.

H.P. Phillips. op.cit., p 89-95.

B.J. Terwiel. "Monks and Magic-An analysis of Religion Ceremonies in

Central Thailand "

van der Wele. op.cit. p 141.

ibid. p 20. See also "Christian Presence Amid Buddhism" p85.

This would be a form of 'adoptionist Christology'. for further discussion see

A. Harnack. "History of Dogma". p 48-50.

op.cit., Swearer (p37). Prefers to compare the Buddhist concept of "non-self" (anatta) with the

Christian concept of the "new creation in Christ". This does not seem appropriate for the "new

creation in Christ" has positive connotations, rather than negative, it emphasises the idea of

creation, not destruction, fullness rather than emptiness.

1 Corinthians 2:9-13.

Humphries op.cit., p 114.

"Biblical Christianity in the Context of Buddhism" from "Jesus in the Two Third's World"

p 288. This article by David Lim is extremely valuable and relevant to this discussion.

Saddatissa. op.cit., p 42.

Wells. op.cit., p 214.

"Clues to Thai Culture ".p 125.

An extensive study under the Editorship of Dr.Bong Rin Ro has been produced, with mainly

Asians contributing to the discussion. The book is entitled "Christian Alternatives to Ancestor

Practices ". Another important contribution is a Paper presented at the Congress on

Evangelism for Malaysia and Singapore (COEMAS) in Singapore (1978), entitled "The

Christian Answer to Ancestral Worship " by Lucy Tan.

Hebrews 12:23-24.

Vincent Cronin. "The Wise Man from the West ", p 261. See also an unpublished Paper by A.

Ewbank on "Baptism for the Dead vis a vis Lao Song Ancestral Beliefs" Alan Ewbank

makes some very interesting observations and suggestions in this paper which are the result of

his wrestling with the beliefs of the Lao Song people and the apparent inadequacies of Western theological perceptions to contribute to a Christian understanding of the issue. See Also A.J.

Broomhall's "Barbarians at the Gates" (Vol 1 of the Life of Hudson Taylor), where he expands upon the Rites Controversy in detail.

Ricci, op.cit., p 280.

ibid. p 282.

ibid. p 282.

ibid. p 283. "Christianity appeared to the outraged Tartar no longer a universal religion adaptable to all peoples, but a swashbuckling, narrow, prejudiced local cult".

A.R. Tippet. "Introduction to Missiology " quoting Malinowski, p183.

ibid. p 185.

ibid. p 185.

ibid p 187. Christologies can be developed that meet these needs. Anselm of Canterbury

developed an understanding of the Atonement based on a Germanic idea of honour. God had

been dishonoured, and now honour must be restored to God, by an innocent sacrifice.

Different perceptions of the atonement, do not take away from Christology, but reveal its

multi-faceted possibilities. It is only when 'Christology' has been put into cement (by Western

theologians who are either afraid of error, or believe they have a monopoly on INTERPRETATION

OF the truth) that it becomes insignificant to some people in some cultures.

ibid. p 185.

Luke 11:24-26.

Any evaluation of the history of Protestant Christian Missions must incorporate observations

which confirm the calamity produced when early missionaries assumed that their institutional

structures and culture were the only viable vehicle for the presentation of the Gospel. Such

contributors to the debate as John Mott, Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson, Rolland Allen, John

Nevius, were, for their time, all innovative and revolutionary in their thinking.

Kraft. op.cit., p 321.

Kraft. ibid. p 323. quoting Smalley.

The Manuscript Division of Payap University, Chiangmai. Records of Lampang Presbytery dated 1933.

Philip Hughes. op cit., p 101.

ibid. p 102.

Saad Chaiwan. op cit., p 31.

ibid. p 33.

"The Willowbank Report " (1978), p 78.

See Bernard Ramm, "After Fundamentalism ", Kraft, "Christianity & Culture ",

Conn, "Eternal Word and Changing World " Costas, "Theology at the Crossroads in Contemporary Latin America ", plus the writings of Vinay Samuel, Chris

Sugden, Arthur Glasser, Paul Hiebert, et.al.

Maen Pongudom, A Ph.D. Thesis for the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 1979.

entitled "Apologetic and Missionary Proclamation: Exemplified by American Presbyterian Missionaries to Thailand (1828-1978), Early Church Apologists: Justin Martyr, Clement of

Alexandria and Origen, and the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, A Thai Buddhist Monk-

Apologist ". Having said that one is sympathetic with the Thesis, it must be noted with regret,

that the writer has himself been predominantly influenced in his theological presuppositions,

not by Eastern thinking, but by certain critical forms of Western theology, imported without

question, from the USA, and which appear to have done neither him, nor the church in

Thailand as a whole any good at all.

Maen. *ibid.* p 78.

Dr. Charles Taber pointed out to the writer that this was by no means the position taken by all

the Church Fathers, especially Tertullian.

*ibid.* p 80.

*ibid.* p 79.

*ibid.* p 79.

Gustafson. A Master of Arts Degree presented to Fuller Theological Seminary, the School of World Mission, entitled "Syncretistic Rural Thai Buddhism " (1970); parts 2 and 3.

Maen. *op.cit.*, p 154. (quote from footnote).

*ibid.* p 163.

*ibid.* p 396.

*ibid.* p 397.

Gustafson. *op.cit.*, p 225.

"Thai Customs and Christian Belief " (Prapeni Thai kab khwam chuer khong Christian)

"*xitgrIuwmpdy[8;k,g=njv-v'8iblg9upoî* by Seth Jansong.

"Thai Customs " "*phitikam lae prapeni " ìrbTudii, c]t xitgrIu*" Author: Plaek Sontirak.

see note 35.

Mark 7:6-9.

Seth Jansong. *op.cit.*, p 12.

Matthew 5:4-10.

Compare Matthew 28v18-20 with Acts 19v4-7.

van der Weele. *op.cit.*, see his Appendix C. p 227-230..

*ibid.* p 205 para 9.

P. Octavianus. "Let the Earth Hear His Voice " pp 1244-1246.

*ibid.* p 1245.

Bavinck. "An Introduction to the Science of Missions " p 170.

*ibid.* p 180.

Luzbetak *op.cit.*, p 341.

ibid. p 349.

ibid. p 350.

Bavinck. op.cit., p 174.

ibid. p 174.

ibid. p 178.

ibid. p 178.

Paul Hiebert. "Anthropological Insights for Missionaries" Baker, 1985.  
p 188.

W. Wink. "Naming the Powers, The Language of Power in the  
New Testament" p 89.

Barth. "Church Dogmatics iv - The Christian Life" (Das Christliche  
Leben) Zurich: 1976 p 367.

H. Berkhof. "Christ and The Powers" (Trans. J.H. Yoder). p10.

Wink. op.cit., p 6.

ibid. p 12.

ibid. p14.

Berkhof. op.cit., p 22.

O'Brien's perceptive chapter on "Principalities and Powers" is worthy of observation in this regard. He refers to various Commentators on the verses in Colossians, especially Eduard Schweizer who suggests that: "the Colossian 'philosophy', which Paul was seeking to correct in his letter, had been influenced by Pythagorean ideas in which cosmic speculation about the elements had been ethicized. The elements exercised power in much the same way as the law did. Purification of the soul took place by abstaining from meat, etc. To behave in accordance with these elements was a matter of life and death, but in fact led to a kind of slavery to innumerable legalistic demands". Whether Schweizer's detailed arguments with reference to a Pythagorean background convince contemporary New Testament scholars or not, he has certainly opted for an impersonal understanding of "stoicheia" meaning "elements" or "elemental principles" and such a view lends itself more easily to being reinterpreted with reference to a structural understanding of the principalities and powers." op. cit., p 136. However O'Brien insists that stoicheia has reference almost exclusively to personal beings rather than impersonal force.

Berkhof. op cit., p 32.

ibid. p 33.

L. Newbigin. "Honest Religion for Secular Man". p 35.

Hiebert. "Anthropological Insights for Missionaries" p 223.

It is interesting to note that Ronald Sider makes the following perceptive statement with regard to

Principalities and Powers: 'The announcement of Christ's Lordship to the Principalities and Powers is to tell governments that they are not sovereign....there is growing agreement that when St. Paul speaks of the principalities and powers...he refers BOTH to the sociopolitical structures of human society AND to unseen spiritual forces that undergird, lie behind and in some mysterious way help shape human sociopolitical structures'. See Sider in 'Christ and Power', I.R.M. 69. (1980) p 17.

Wimber. 'Power Evangelism'. p 32.

Oscar Cullman. 'Christ and Time' p 64.

Ephesians 3:10-11.

Colossians 2:15.

Hebrews 12:23.

D. Burnett. 'Unearthly Powers' p 259.

The Willowbank Report.

22

23

24

ibid. p 170.

E. Wagner Tearing Down Strongholds - Prayer for Buddhists  
Christian Literature Crusade, Hong Kong. 1988.

See in 'Life and Times of Messiah' by Eddersheim. You will find an Appendix on Jewish belief and practice of exorcism of demons at the time of Christ - a fascinating study!

The writer could relate a number of unusual and inexplicable events that happen in Thailand (everyday life to them), which will not fit into western world view categories, so they, will be immediately consigned to the nearest possible interpretation to fit the Western 'rational' world view, namely - 'wild imagination', 'myth', or simply untrue. However, knowing many of the persons involved, who are just as biblically knowledgeable and devout Christians as any from the West, such happenings cannot simply be swept under a convenient theological carpet and be forgotten. How would you for instance, respond to a letter from a theologically educated evangelical Pastor who asks advice on how to deal with the following pastoral problem: 'Some of our women who have to leave the village before dawn and pass through the paddy fields and a wooded area before arriving at the market, have recently been sexually molested by a 'female person', who appears out of nowhere, makes lewd suggestions, attempts physical contact, and then when resisted, literally disappears into thin air'. This has been the experience of a number of the women who have witnessed and experienced similar attacks even when they have been together. I can assure you this is not some sort of early morning

mirage, wild imagination, or mass hysteria. Please could you give your advice on how to deal with the matter!

See 'Transformation' July issue 1944

Alford. 'New Testament for English Readers' p 210 Vol 11 Part one. Rivingtons. 1881.

Eliade. op.cit., Vol.4. p 152.

Extract from a Publication of the Christian Communications Institute

Chiengmai Thailand. (1986).

Extract from a Pamphlet published by The McGilvary Theological Seminary and

the C.C.I. in Thailand, 1987.

Alex Smith. "Siamese Gold" p 276.

D. Gilliland. "Pauline Theology and Christian Practice" p 233.

D. Richardson. "Perspectives of the World Christian Movement " p 417-420.

ibid. pp 420-430. Other books that illustrate the effectiveness of the use

of Redemptive Analogies as far apart as South America and Africa, are

"Bruchko ", (previously published as "For This Cross I'll Kill You ". A remarkable story of a young man who discovers the key to their culture.

And "Christianity Rediscovered" by Donovan. A Roman Catholic

missionary, who realising the irrelevance of traditional approaches,

speaks to the Masai in terms of their own cultural surroundings, likening

faith, for instance (p63) to the Lion hunter, who when felling the Lion

pulls it to himself and thus makes it part of himself. However the debate

continues and Arthur Glasser, Dean Emeritus of The School of World

Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in their latest publication: "The

Word Among Us " feels Richardson to be simplistic, especially in regard

to the concept of a "high god" in all primitive religions. Glasser states

concerning Richardson's use of Wilhelm Schmidts "High Gods" concept,

(see "Ursprung der Gottesidee"): "On close examination however it

became apparent that Schmidt's "High Gods" although characterised by

a sort of solitariness, were far removed from approximating biblical

monotheism in any recognisable form. It is rather unfortunate that this

particular application of Schimdt's thesis has been recently revived and

promoted by Don Richardson (Eternity in Their Hearts 1981). He uses it as a springboard for the thesis that in the culture of every people one can find redemptive analogies reflecting this primordial faith. What he unfortunately overlooks is that all alleged evidence for this one Prime Cause of all, is so shrouded in mythology, so dependent on the world (rather than its Source), and so manipulatable by external forces that no common ground exists with the biblical God who is supreme over all". p 38. Also see Eliade's contribution with regard to "The High God" among primitive people in "Journal of Religion and Religions" Vol.3. Spring 73, p 18. And "Patterns in Comparative Religion " and "The Sacred and the Profane " by the same author.

A sensational article from a Thai monograph entitled "The Buddhist Messiah and Roman Catholic Priests" by Dr. Sethipong Wannapok. This article is a strong refutation of the claim that Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of Buddhist prophecy. It accuses the Vatican of subterfuge and of having secret plans to destroy Buddhism.

P. Carus. "The Gospel of Buddha " p 196.  
"A Dictionary of Buddhism:Chinese-Sanskrit-English-Thai " Bangkok 1976. p 511.  
Wm.C. Dodds. "The Tai Race, Older Brother of the Chinese " p 68.  
Pracha Thaiwatcharamas "God and Christ in the Context of Buddhism" an article from "Jesus and the Two Thirds World".p 313.  
For an excellent illustration of Contextualisation within the Hindu/Buddhist perceptions, see "Fulfilment of the Vedic Quest in the Lord Jesus Christ", by Acharya Daya Prakash Titus. Completely at home with the Vedic documents in their Sanskrit originals, the author seeks to enculturate the Gospel, and at the same time maintain an unswerving loyalty to Jesus Christ.

ibid. p 314.  
H. Campbell. (trans) "Ariya Metteyya, The Buddhist Messiah ", from "The Siam Outlook" Vol.vi. April 1930 No.13. p 407.  
Bishop Salas. "Insights into the Religious Background of the Khmers" p 20.

Maung Htin Aung "Folk Elements in Burmese Buddhism" Religious Affairs Dept.`Press.  
Yegu, Kaba-Aye, P.O. Rangoon.p 131.He states " The worship of the Future Buddha,

Metteya, who is now living in the abode of the gods, has been prevalent in Burma for centuries. The details of his life and when he comes are so well known to the Burmese that he is known to them as Arit-Metteya. His images have been found in Pagan...even in Ceylon, where Theravada Buddhism has a more or less continuous history, kings set up for worship statues of the future Buddha and in all Theravada countries, devout Buddhists piously hope to be able to worship the Buddha Metteyya in person and listen to his preaching when he appears".

Refer to Thai Monograph. see Note No.21.

"Buddha & Christ" by Winai Siwakul.(R6mTdy[8ibl9N Ffp ;byp v Lb;td6])

ibid. p 203.

ibid. p 181.

See "A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality" p 4.

M.Cox . "A Handbook of Christian Mysticism" .p 25.

Exodus 33: 15-20.

ibid. p 5.

Jones, Wainwright & Yarnold. "The Study of Spirituality" p 56.

2 Corinthians 12: 13-16.

The "Dictionary of Christian Spirituality " describes "affective spirituality", as "falling in love with Jesus" p 4.

Cox. op.cit., p 46-47. This is a most important quotation for its clearly distinguishes the unique aspects of Christian spirituality.

Certain Commentaries imply this. It would not be inconsistent with Paul's quotations

from non Christians sources, (in Titus he quotes from the Cretan Poets etc.), if and

when he felt that such usage would clarify the nature of the message, or make

the recipient of the message familiar with his own hymnody or poetry. Such usage

would not imply a muddling of the message, or that it would lead to syncretism, rather

the opposite.

Romans 5: 1-3.

2 Corinthians 5: 8.

The reader is referred to the Index of modern authors on the subject in "A History

of Christian Spirituality" Bouyer. p 539. Also a "Select Bibliography" on the subject of

mysticism and related matters in "A Handbook of Christian Mysticism" p 267.

See also the definitive work: "Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth

Century" Vol. 16, of "World Spirituality-An Encyclopaedic History of the

Religious Quest" ed. C. McGinn.

Tissa Weerasingha. "The Cross and the Bo Tree" p 103.

N.A. Snaith. "The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament ". pp 11.

Oesterly and Robinson cannot conceal their biased presuppositions when wrestling

with the issue of the afterlife in Babylonian and Assyrian religions vis a vis Old Testament.

They suggest that 'the religion of Babylon was little concerned with the Hereafter ' and then

proceed to prove the opposite by writing ten pages on evidences for the firm belief in the

afterlife! They then state concerning the numerous rites rituals and ceremonies in these

religions, that "there is no indication of the things referred to in the Old Testament", but

then without objective evidence proceed to posit the reason -i.e. that "The Old Testament

has been edited, worked over by the priestly scribes of later times; and from their point of

view much which originally stood in the text has been rightly eliminated "(see p79-

97).Goldingay also makes some valuable observations, stating that there are a variety of

responses to death in the Old Testament, depending on the time and circumstances. All of the

responses are to some extent historically and culturally conditioned and therefore any one of

these should not be perceived as superior to others in the Canon. op.cit., p34 -35. See also

Gottwald's important observations (p694) "The Tribes of Yahweh".

Glaser points out that the basic word for deity per se in the ancient Semitic world of the

Near East, was El. This he says: "was also the proper name for the supreme god of the

Canaanite pantheon, and frequently appears as such in fourteenth century B.C. Ugarit

religious literature. The Israelites appropriated it and gave it new meaning, in much the

same way that the Jewish translators of the Old Testament into Greek (the Septuagint) later

appropriated the word Theos from the Greek pantheon and transformed it (not as having

shape and form as the pagans conceived god, but as pure spirit to conform to God's unique

revelation of himself. The Israelite use of El in the plural form (Elohim ), but with singular

meaning was not unique in Israel. Abraham identified Melchizedek's 'Elohim Most High'

with 'The Lord' (Gen 14:18-22). This implied a plurality of powers, of attributes and of

personhood, and did not imply a deity that was intrinsically monistic" from "The Word

Among Us " p 36. A further valuable contributor to the debate, is Shorter, in his "Toward a

Theology of Inculturation" see esp. pp 107 - 112.

B. Nicholls. "Theology of Gospel and Culture ". p 46.

ibid. p 46.

ibid p 47.

H. Wheeler Robinson. "Religious Ideas of the Old Testament" p 45.

H.H. Rowley. "Worship in Ancient Israel ".p 30.

Arthur Glasser. "Theology of Mission " Lecture Notes, Fuller Seminary.

R. DeVaux. "Ancient Israelite Life and Institutions " pp 47-48.

"Illustrated Bible Dictionary". I.V.P. London. 1980 pp 1137.

It is also interesting to note the striking parallels in form between the Sinai Covenant

(which is the heart of Israel's religion) and the international covenants of the second

millennium. Kitchen illustrates this in his book "Ancient Orient and Old Testament " pp.

92. Further study concerning the sacrificial system of Israel and its parallels among

surrounding cultures would be most interesting. This would be beyond the

parameters of the present Thesis. Any good Theological Library would provide

adequate resources for such study. See extensive Bibliography in Goldingay

"Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament".

Rowley."Worship In Ancient Israel ". p37. W.F. Albright also mentions nomadic

Arabs having portable "Tabernacles" parallels to both the OT Tabernacle and the Ark of

the Covenant. see "From the Stone Age to Christianity " .pp 266.

" I.V.P. Bible Dictionary " pp 1137.

Edmond.J. "Theology of the Old Testament ". pp 199-200.

ibid. p 200.

"I.V.P. Bible Dictionary " op.cit., p 1151

Kitchen also writes extensively on the Architectural origins of Solomon's Temple in his

book "The Bible in its World " pp 54. See also Matthiae O R-44 pp 345-6 and fig 3

(p347) for the Hazor Temple cf. Y.Yadin, "Hazor, The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel

of the Bible " p 96ff.

R. Bauckham "Using the Bible to do Politics".

ibid. Bauckham.

I am indebted to Rev. Tim Marks (Moorlands College) for these insights

from an unpublished article entitled "Contextualising Taoism Today".

H. Ringgren, "The Impact of the Ancient Near East on Israelite Tradition" in

"Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament ". D. Knight ed. p 36.

For a discussion concerning the use of "redaction criticism" and the use of 'midrash' as

genre and hermeneutical tool, see "The Historical Reliability of the Gospels", by Craig

Blomberg.

Hollenweger earths the message of Corinth into its social and cultural matrix

by developing what he calls 'narrative exegesis'. He states "It is well known

that the writings of Paul are not merely theological documents, if in fact such a thing exists at all. His theological ideas are inseparable from the so-

called non-theological traditions and concepts of his culture. That in fact is the

case in all theological struggles from Marcion to the Reformation and Northern

Ireland. They always have been at one and the same time theological, political

and cultural struggles" see "Conflict in Corinth " p 66.

For a discussion concerning the nature of 'holiness' (hagiotēs, hagiōsmos and hagiōsynē)

and its usage by Paul in the Corinthian epistle, see Ridderbos "Paul: An Outline of his

Theology" p 263. The cultic significance has little relation to Paul's usage, where the

concept carries with it more the sense of being morally clean, pure, innocent, chaste. etc.

There is now debate whether or not Paul really was writing to refute Gnosticism, but this

does not alter the fact, that he was writing into a context that was essentially different from

the Galatian context. See H. Berkhof, "De katholiciteit der Kerk ", 1962, pp 61ff. I.J. Du

Plesis, "Christus as Hoof " pp 116 ff. from Berkhof op.cit., 391. O'Brien suggests Paul was

refuting a Pythagorean worldview. "the Colossian 'philosophy', which Paul was seeking to

correct in his letter, had been influenced by Pythagorean ideas in which cosmic speculation

about the elements had been ethicized. The elements exercised power in much the same way

as the law did. Purification of the soul took place by abstaining from meat, etc. To behave in

accordance with these elements was a matter of life and death, but in fact led to a kind of

slavery to innumerable legalistic demands" See also Chapter 7 footnote No. 9.

Erickson. "Theology and Mission." p 71.

Hesselgrave observes "the four categories mentioned in Acts 15:20 correspond

to regulations in the Old Testament law against the pollution of idols (Lev 19:4

cf 1 Cor 10:20-21) fornication (Lev 18:6-18), eating that which has been strangled, and

eating blood (Lev 17:10-14). These are obviously issues of dietary or ritual cleanness and

not primarily ethical matters. That omission seems to have been considered by some early

interpreters. Accordingly variant readings (most in the "D" or 'western group' of texts) of

the admonition in 15:20 include the prohibitions against idolatry, fornication and

murder, and a negative formulation of the Golden Rule (see Didache 1:2)

"Contextualisation, Meaning, Models and Methods" p 11.

Erickson. op cit., p 72.  
ibid. (quoting Bruce) p 73.  
Dr. Chris Wright . An article entitled "The Christian and Other Religions, The Evidence" "Themelios" Vol. 9. No.2. Jan 84.  
Roy Joslin. "Urban Harvest". pp 160-161.  
See "Perspectives of the World Christian Movement" D. Richardson article entitled "Finding the Eye opener" p 424.  
"Themelios" op cit., p 8.  
Tissa Balasuriya "Planetary Theology" London. SCM 1984 pp 3-10.  
Hesselgrave, Kraft, Hollenweger, and others have raised serious doubts about the superiority of the Western way of thinking, especially from the Biblical point of view.  
See Hesselgrave op.cit., p 228.. Although some of the New Testament is couched in more Western thought patterns, clearly the Old Testament and the Synoptic Gospels bear the stamp of non-western ways of thinking. "It seems quite clear that the Hebrews can be classified as concrete relational thinkers. The Hebrews never developed a systematic theology, and it was not until the time of Moses Miamonides in the twelfth century AD. that any doctrinal statement was drawn up, and it never gained universal acceptance". See H.D. Leuner "Judaism in The Worlds Religions". ed. J.N.D.  
Anderson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1950, p 59.  
W.J. Hollenweger "The Future of Mission and the Mission of the Future", p 9.  
George.W. Stroup. "The Promise of Narrative Theology".  
Hollenweger. op.cit., p 10.  
Wan op. cit., p 141.