On Knowing Humanity Journal

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Creating a Christian faith-based approach to anthropology, incorporating insights from theology into ethnography and analysis, and allowing religiously committed anthropologists to speak freely of the ways in which their commitments inform their theory and practice. Raising new questions and lines of research on subjects such as: the significance of humanity's unique calling in nature for personhood and the construction of culture; the underlying reasons for humanity's destructive behavior toward self, others, and the environment; and the role that divine redemption and hope play in human lived experience and practice. Reincorporating teleology, in the sense of purpose, into scientific understanding, inviting dialogue between anthropologists and theologians of all persuasions into a deeper understanding of the human condition, and encouraging the doing of anthropological research and writing through the eyes of faith.

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Africans in America: Ghanaians in Dallas, an Illustration and Study of the Impact of Roots, Ritual, and Religion

Erin C. Kincaid

The Ghanaian community of Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, demonstrates the human expressions of meaning in historical connections, dignity and honor, and religious/spiritual and ethical living. My ethnographic research in this community explored their worldview, patterns of behavior, and rituals. Unknown genealogies, the lack of roots, lack of spiritual and moral compass, and absence of a healthy family system/structure all have a devastating and adverse effect on a community. But these are not present in the Ghanaian community of North Texas. This is an example of a community that has overcome adverse experiences by creating social structures and living out Christian beliefs and practices that contrast with these negative elements. I provide here a glimpse into a group that has faced hardships such as life transition, migration, oppression, and economic difficulties . . . and overcome.

Introduction

"Do not follow the path. Go where there is no path to begin a trail." Ghanaian Proverb

When I began my fieldwork with the Ghanaian community of Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Texas, it was not with a singular theory or question in mind. I did not *go in* seeking one truth. I entered my fieldwork believing only one thing: There was/is an uncanny, uncharted, and mysteriously intriguing energy, which encouraged my research choice, to this Ghanaian community. It was in starting without any path ahead of me that I discovered the most hopeful of trails, one that provided a sense that many of the answers about life, love, honor, and unity could be found in a people who have encountered difficulty with grace.

What began as a desire to investigate their proverbs, both historical and present, to explore the notion that these proverbial statements may still hold truths which have value in their present daily life and community, ended in a much broader view of what life with connection and meaning looks like. What I did not expect was the effect and impact this fieldwork would have upon my own worldview and understanding of life, faith, and community. As each step forward provided more backdrop, a series of patterns revealed themselves. It was within emerging examples, truths, and patterns that the real story of modern Ghana in America came alive.

History

The history of the Ghanaian peoples, both those in Ghana and those living abroad, provided information salient to my research. From the sixteenth century forward, the people of Ghana have maintained a unique duality between themselves and their rulers, oppressors, and colonizing entities. This ability to live within two groups, to reside amid and within those that conquered their lands and people while retaining access and rights over their own leadership, is unique for most post-colonial settings. Theirs is a unique type of *social duality*. Perhaps this duality is due to the fact that the Europeans who first came to Ghana were in competition with one another to favor and protect the various tribal groups and leaders (Konadu & Campbell 2016, i). Perhaps it was the richness of the ruling tribes, namely the Ashanti and Ewe, which provided Ghanaians with an air of royalty not extinguished through conquest and colonization. Conceivably, it could be due to the Christian principles that became prominently rooted in Ghana hundreds of years ago through missionary efforts, and which gave way to common beliefs and a confident lifestyle in the present peoples.

By exploring social issues (historical connectivity, proverbial nuances, the diaspora, community celebrations, legacy building, tribal royalty living in North Texas, parenting, faith-based practices and beliefs, the data on matters such as crime, divorce, and

single parenting, cultural education, and shame and honor as tools for community cohesiveness), the differences between their community here in the United States and those in the homeland, along with the changes or losses they have experienced when assimilating into the American landscape, I was able to view a micro-community which day by day presented a positive response to the macrolevel of American society. By taking an in-depth look into the history and culture of these Ghanaians, we bring forth the character of this community and discover why and how they retain and perpetuate high values, ethical standards, and morals within an increasing population of migrant expatriates. In addition, exploration around the concept of being Africans in America, as opposed to African Americans, produced important statements on the uniquely Ghanaian set of behaviors, attitudes, life choices, community belonging as well as social, educational and cultural expectations.

Ghanaian history is about strong leadership, abundant gold, fertile soil, productive trade markets, sophisticated social and cultural orders, an uncanny ability to live within two worlds—retaining peace and leadership with other ruling nations, and an aptitude to overcome adverse historical difficulties. These ingrained historical understandings, beliefs, and behavior systems have trickled down over the years to influence the lives of present-day Ghanaians in DFW.

For many cultures, history this far back may be known but not recognized in present-day activities or everyday behaviors. But with Ghanaians it is different. They are aware, proud, and well-integrated into their backstories and history, their past being unmistakably present in contemporary worldview and behaviors, as is evident in their activities, speech, and celebrations. What is prevalent in this group is how historical roots appear at every turn within daily activity and community character, which includes: borderless languages, middlemen leadership, a proverbial mindset, fluid travel and movement between homeland and foreign land, extensive knowledge, and beliefs about past historicities (Conrad 2005, 120). This knowledge of self, this connection to the deep, plays a significant role in their ability to succeed and overcome difficulties along the way. In particular, the form and example of connected genealogy is in marked contrast to an opposite experience that I term, *blank genealogy,* and the harm it has caused the African American people.

Ethnography (Abridged)

"When you are sitting in your own house, you don't learn anything. You must get out of your house to learn." Ghanaian Proverb

Finally, the Truth

As she approaches, I stand and shift my notebook to the left hand so that I may offer her my right hand in a handshake. She waves my hand away. Shaking her head, she declares, "No, no, we don't shake hands. We hug." Her outstretched arms move almost over my head as she wraps them around me and pulls me into her chest. She squeezes me tight, lets out a little grunt of satisfaction, and pats me on the back with one hand. When she has embraced me long enough, or maybe I have hugged her to her qualifications, she pulls back slowly, running both her hands down my now lowered arms, her hands finding mine.

"I am the hug lady. All the children tell me I give the best hugs. So, everyone calls me the hug lady," she proudly announces through a very big, beaming smile. "Now, where is *your* family?" She asks directly and looks into my eyes, waiting for my response, as if I have a story to explain as to why I am here, in church, alone. I explain that I am a student anthropologist and give her my purpose for being in her church. I promise her that someday my family will join me, as I *really* want them to see what I experience when I visit, but for now, it is just me and my notebook.

"When?" she presses, wanting to know when my family will attend. "After the summer, when my work is done," I reply. She seems content with this answer but does not let go of my hands. It is as if there is no one else in the room but us and as if she has been waiting a long time to ask me these very questions. Her intentionality both alerts me to my own presence yet calms me with hers. She tells me that she knows me from the Facebook comments and posts I have "liked" and that her husband is "Pastor." Once I know who she is, I call her by her married name, Mrs. Afuom. She tells me there is no need for that, and I may use her first name.

"Why do you do this work?" she asks me. "What is your purpose?" I tell of how I came to know this community through the "Asante Gold" exhibit at the Dallas Museum of Art. She nods in recognition of the exhibition.

"So, what *is* your *purpose*?" she repeats, drawing out the word in a slow open sound that only the Ghanaian accent can master, making it very clear she wants to know my ultimate goal. "It is emerging," I reply. "I can see there is something extraordinary here in your community. I am struck by the level of dignity, the respect of the generations towards one another, the almost magical quality of the energy within the cultural events, and of course, the proverbial nature of your culture." I tell her about the proverbs I saw painted on the walls of the museum and how these mesmerized me. I explain that when I learned royals were living in the DFW-area, I had to know more about how the

Ghanaian community lives in North Texas and still rules, reigns and thrives so far from home. I share that a sense of dignity seems to emerge from within the community, that I recognize a story here to be shared with other communities who struggle to find peace in letting go of anger toward the past, that the theme of the African in America experience, in contrast to the African American experience, is part of what emerges during my observations.

She lifts my hands to the area between our chests. She presses my fingers in her palms. "Good. I am happy you tell the real Ghana story. We are tired of people only ever recounting stories of poverty. The poverty aspect is done," she states firmly. "We have so much more to our homeland and here in our community. We *are* so much more. I am glad you do this work. God bless you and God speed."

I reply, "Thank you, and I agree. I feel there is so much more to Ghana."

She replies with only a firm, "Yes."

What I Wear

A group of women lingers outside of the ceremony. All are dressed in formal Ghanaian dress, two in long, snug-fitting skirts that flair at the bottom. One wears a knee-length tight fitted skirt. Each outfit is matched with a fitted top. Yellows, pinks, oranges, blacks, greens intertwined with glistening threads and rhinestones adorn their garments. I approach them and explain who I am, requesting if I may take their picture. They oblige with smiles that are agreeable yet revealing no surprise at my request.

After they pose, I ask them if the cloth patterns in their dress have meaning. They tell me the patterns represent different things for each person; It can represent a person's tribe or background. One explains that she is in traditional Kente cloth because her family is of the Asante tribe, and she is descended from an Asante King. She says this as if this is already known by all those around her and as if she is teaching a young child. Her explanation is paced, enunciating every word. I sense she does not want me to miss any of her clarification.

I continue asking, "What do the designs mean? Do they represent anything in particular? Are the colors in the weaving significant, or do they symbolize something special?" One replies, and quickly I realize she speaks for all three of them, and possibly for every woman at the event.

"The colors of Ghana represent the rich soil, the blood of our people, and the color of our tribes, but we wear what we *feel.* No one tells us. No one has a say. We wear what makes us feel beautiful and what represents each of us."

I take one more picture, they each smile, brighter now than at first. I thank them and watch them as they sashay away.

Going Home

The table I choose has two couples already seated. I ask if I might join them, and they welcome me warmly. Upon removing my camera from its large multi-pocket bag and placing my black Moleskine and recorder on the table, the older of the two women ask me if I am with the press. I tell her that I am not, rather I am there to do anthropological research on the Ghanaian community in North Texas. They explain they are not Ghanaian but that they each have a connection to the community. One of the older women is married to a Ghanaian man. The older man next to her tells me that he and the second lady are friends and that he is American. The second male, in his fifties, is Nigerian and married to a Ghanaian. As we go around the table greeting one another, each of them sharing their connections and their background, I remark that they each have a link to the community who is not at the table with us. They nod at my observation, informing me that two of their spouses are somewhere helping with the event, and two are not here tonight.

The older woman declares, "We come to everything the Ghanaians do. They are wonderful, *won-der-ful*, people!" She says, shaking her head and moving her hands to emphasize each syllable. "They are so warm, so, so wonderful!" The others nod and smile in agreement.

"So peaceful. So joyful! The music, the food. I love it when my husband tells me we have to come to something with them. Tonight, he is not here, but I could not miss this event. I called my friend," she gestures to the man to her left, "and told him to pick me up and bring me to this celebration!" The man to my left agrees with her again. The conversation then turns to issues of serving in the community, of immigration at our southern border, and of being black in America. The speak freely with me, each building upon what the other says on a particular issue.

They ask me what I think about each of these sensitive subjects; I am careful to stay neutral when providing a response. But I decide to share with them my budding theory on the historical roots of a displaced people group, how this may be a critical difference between this community and the African American community. I tell them about the difference I have recognized in the way that the two groups of people behave, and in their attitudes and worldview. Shifting in his seat to face me directly, the man to my left begins sharing his background, the story of his family, and of Ghana.

"My name is Max, and I am the son of slaves." He opens poetically, his voice thick with a southern accent. "My great-grandmother, who I knew as a child, remembered stories of her grandmother's life in slavery. She did not talk of it very often, and so I only know bits and pieces. It was painful, and she didn't like to share the past too much. My mother would tell me what she could, but it wadn't much. My great-great grandmother knew where her family came from, but she didn't say where exactly. All we knew is she came from West Africa, somewhere in what is now Ghana."

"Not knowing was a hard thing. Family gotta know where they come from. This is something I made my peace with many years ago. But I have always wanted, *needed,*" he emphasizes this word with a pause, "to go to Ghana, to make my peace with this last part of my journey here on earth. It was for me and my family. And last year, I did. I went home to Ghana."

I comment on his age, that he does not look old enough to be in the "last part of his journey here on earth," and he reveals that he is, in fact, seventy-eight. We banter for a bit over my needing to know what he has been drinking all these years and how time has surely been good to him before he returns to his story.

"For a month, I went home to Ghana. I am an author. My wife, who passed away, was not from Ghana, but she was always supportive of my dream to go. I didn't go while I was married to her, and that is something I regret. But, I went this past year with a friend who has visited before. He is also not Ghanaian, but he comes here too, sometimes." (By here, I see that he means the church where we are now.)

"How was your experience?" I asked.

"It was everything I dreamed of." He smiles, nodding his head and tapping the table with his fingertips. From the look in his eyes, the expression on his face, I can tell the memory of Ghana floods his mind. "I did not find family, as I hoped. This is near impossible to do, but did I find things I did not know I was looking for. I saw different parts of me within the people. I discovered that Africa was in me all along. It is very easy to stay angry at the past, and if you don't know what you come from, it's hard to move forward. Going to Ghana helped me to make my peace." He continues on, reminiscing about the food and the people and the lighter sides of his trip home.

"Are the people of Ghana like the Ghanaians here?"

"They are a bit the same and a bit different. Maybe kinder here. But I know them here. In Ghana, I had to learn the people."

"Learn the people?"

"Yes, I had to learn the way they think about us and how to find my way around there."

"Did that take a long time?"

"No, they were very helpful. They like Americans, and they did not seem to mind us. But it helped to have my friend who knew his way around." Mack proceeds to tell me about the man he traveled with to Ghana, how he was asked to be an elder-advisor of a tribal community due to his Asante-kinship, and how he was even able to buy a plot of land while there. He tells about the places he visited, about standing at the shore where his ancestors would have boarded a slave ship and of the deep sadness he felt during that part of the journey. He shares with me that Ghanaians "like to have American connections and American money." He chuckles when he says this. I asked him if he finds Ghanaians to be very focused on money? He replies, "No, no. They are humble, and they are okay with having very little, but they also promote aggressiveness within their own personal success."

"Aggressiveness?" I ask.

"Yes, not aggressive in a bad way. They do not climb over other people to get places in life, but they are personally aggressive with what they want to achieve. Here, in Dallas, they are very focused on their success. They are very educated, and they get very good jobs. But it is not all for money. Their success is for the community. And family is always first."

"In what way do you mean 'for the community?'"

He explains, "They go to school but always return home to help the family. Or, they send their money home to Ghana. And, they work within the community to help others have success."

"I see what you mean. It is a different, non-harmful type of aggressivity?" I ask, attempting to summarize his statement.

"Yes, it is a non-violent aggressiveness, so a person can succeed, and everyone benefits."

"That's beautiful." I smiled.

"Yes, that is why I had to go back. I have always felt a connection to Ghana through this community. They have the same values as I do. And I knew that my family comes from this."

"Do you mean that every Ghanaian has the same values or just those you know from here?" He chuckles, "That is a good question. I will tell you this, the people that I know from here are much of the reason I wanted to go home to Ghana. I have known the pastor and his wife for over twenty years. I found the people in both places very agreeable. They are people, and they live by the standards of what they believe and, they make you feel so welcome. They love on everyone. They make everyone feel at home. We in the South like to say we have hospitality, but we don't hold a candle to these folks. It was the people here that really made it possible for me to go and visit. They had friends I was able to connect with. I didn't know a one of 'em, but they welcomed me like family, just like here."

"I see how that could make everyone want to visit Ghana," I say. "It sounds like you had a wonderful experience, and I am so happy you had the chance to know them on both sides of the ocean." He finishes our talk by telling me that the people here are "a little piece of Ghana and a little piece of heaven, right here in Dallas." I tell him that I could not agree more.

Mother Mary

I sit in the middle of the pews awaiting the service to start. This event was unlike the others I had attended, as today was very special. Today was Baptism Day. This was to be an ecumenical service between the congregants of the Ghana community church and the long-standing local Presbyterian church. I did not know what to expect in terms of this cross-cultural group nor what the attendance would be for such an occasion. Only being able to compare the Baptism attendance from the churches I had attended in my own experience, I did not expect it to be much larger than the regular attendee count with maybe a few extra friends and family included.

How wrong I was.

Not only was this celebration very well attended by the regular members, but there were many Ghanaians from around the community who came, and from what I learned later on, other churches and faith-backgrounds. Bringing up young people as future leaders in the community begins with bringing up the young in the faith. This appears to be a central and imperative theme for this entire community. Baptism is no small occasion, and the ceremony and celebration afterward proved that. I would spend that afternoon with hundreds of individuals who participate in and make up a good portion of the Ghanaian-DFW community. My semi-structured interviews and casual conversations would reveal a world of confident women, well-educated adults, faith-focused children, successful community members, and a faithful community of believers. But on that day, before I was allowed to exit the sanctuary to head to the celebration, I would learn what it means to be a parent, a mother, and a grandmother (*Nana)* in Ghana-Dallas families.

I met Mary. Nana Mary. She told me I could call her that. Standing together at the back of the sanctuary, I learned that she had been watching me with my black notebook, and she wanted to know what I was writing down. I asked her about her attire, letting her know I recognized the pattern in the fabric as Kente cloth. I told her my reason for being there, and after answering her qualification questions regarding my own faith, whether I was a mother and if I was married (to which she also inquired as to why my family was not with me) we stood and talked for a long while before going over to the celebration.

While I stood and took notes, she talked and taught. I learned that she is a matriarch in the community, and by her own account, she is the one that everyone comes to for advice. She has raised many babies, she said, and so the mothers and fathers come to her. She told me, proudly, that all of her own babies have grown to be great women and men of God and have now given her many grandchildren, which she still helps to raise.

I asked her what she thought the reasons might be that the Ghanaian community here in North Texas did not seem to struggle with the same issues of broken family relationships, crime, and demoralization as other African communities and as African Americans often do.

"Because we know how we are." She says while waving a finger near my face. "We know the shame and the pain we bring upon our families if we do something to bring us to jail. We do not do things that will bring shame to our families, our parents, or to Jesus. We raise our children to know who they are in Jesus from when they are born. We teach them the ways of the Lord before they can speak, so they always know whose they are, and who they are."

"I have seven grandchildren. Seven!" she says proudly, emphasizing the second seven so that I understand her pride and accomplishment in that number. "When my daughter had my first grandchild, we spoke of Jesus in her family and over her child. I taught her how to raise them to know Him and how to not live shamefully, but instead to glorify Jesus in all that they do. She can only raise her children to know Jesus because this is the way to harmony within the family. She reads Scripture every day and teaches them Scriptures because that is what I did for them when they were in my home."

"What happens when a child is wayward, or someone in the community has a child who gets into trouble?" I ask. She ponders for a moment and tells me, "this does not happen very often as they know the shame they bring to the family." I press her to think of a person or a situation where this *has* happened so that I can ask my question again. She instead tells me that "In Ghana it is different. There is crime, though not bad crime. It is petty crimes, but it is safe to travel down the street. But here, when you come to America, it is not like this here. We must live better here than we do at home." She leaves it at that to tell me more about the raising of children and grandchildren in the Scriptures. I make a note to find others to ask about wayward children and adults who may have brought shame upon the community.

"They must learn the Scriptures," she says. "This is what guides them to not make shameful decisions. Ask any child here," she makes a gesture with her arm as to say I should challenge any child on the property to prove her wrong, "and they will tell you the Scriptures.

They are taught to them their whole lives. This is how we are. We are people of Jesus Christ, and we know him for all our lives. We raise our children to know Him as Lord and Savior, and so they have good lives and make a good way for their family."

I cannot count the number of times her conversation has brought up Jesus as the antidote to shame and shameful decision making. While we are talking, there are others nearby, some listening to our conversation. I look to their faces to see if they agree or show signs that she is an outdated old woman who does not know what is really going on with the young people of her community. Many of them nod, when she makes a point they agree with, and as we end our time together, we hug. As we do, a lady in her mid-thirties shimmies in between the rows of pews where we are standing. She has a baby strapped to her back in a bright and colorful African print cloth. She is dressed in Kente cloth skirt and blouse, as well. A young toddler clings to her leg and a young man, I estimate at about age eleven, walks behind them, his long fingers touching the top of each chair as he approaches behind her.

"This is my daughter," Nana Mary says, her smile beaming from ear to ear. Her daughter smiles and shakes my hand but shows no further interest in the conversation she has previously overheard. She says something to her mother, her tone changing to show she is talking about something logistical and pragmatic. The young toddler presses into her mother's skirt and makes a little stir. Without a word, the pre-teen boy exits his row in the pew, comes down into the row in front of where this woman is standing, and scoops up the toddler; No instruction from her, no fuss from the child. He walks away, cupping her in both arms and talking to her and another youth as he walks by.

"What a good boy your son is," I say to Nana Mary's daughter.

"Oh, he is not my son. He is only the son of a friend."

"Wow, he is a natural with children," I reply.

She looks to where the boy is walking away and makes a small "hmmm" sound as if she is thinking. I get the strange feeling she has never noticed that his behavior may not be the norm for youth his age. We both watch him exit with the toddler and several other children in tow.

I look to Nana Mary and realize she is watching me closely, "See, *this* is how we raise our children." *Point taken Nana Mary.*

The Coronation

Trying to apologize in hushed tones to everyone that I pass, I attempt to show the utmost respect for my tardiness and for disturbing the event. I try to bend low as I walk by and hustle to stay close to my guide. We are nearing the front of the room. I begin to feel a slight panic when I see there are only twenty more chairs or so until the end of the front row. In just a few more steps, I will be at the very front of the event where tribal royalty is seated and who I think I recognize as two Asante chiefs. It is just then when my guide begins to slow down, turns to me, and shows me to the man I am to be seated next to, my translator and guide for the evening, the man who is also holding the microphone and at the center of the event. My informant is the coronation emcee and host. I feel the color drain from my face as my guide waves to the emcee, indicating he should stop what he is doing and come over and meet me.

Which, he does. He pauses his narration of the event and walks straight toward me. When he reaches me, I smile and thank him profusely, apologizing for my tardiness, which he waves away as if to say it is no matter at all. Here, while a coronation is taking place behind us, he greets me as if I am a long-lost friend. The ritual of the ceremony continues on, the waving of the feathered post, the bending and prostrating men in the center that never stops, and after the emcee moves me by the hand to my seat, only a handful of seats away from the front of the stage and tribal royalty, he returns to his duties.

There I sit, in one of the biggest cultural events of the year, with what I estimate to be at least seven hundred and fifty people, maybe a thousand people, in the room (I quickly calculate that this room is holding 10-15% of the entire North Texas Ghanaian population), and I am seated at the very front, facing them all. I am wearing a semi-formal dress and say a silent prayer of gratitude that I listened to my informant when he told me the attire was "black for Ghanaians, but I could wear whatever I like." I was in black.

Members of royalty are adorned from top to bottom in headdresses and head wraps, yards of black cloth, and bejeweled with gold. The women are striking in dress and stature, and the men hold themselves with such ease, yet regal regard. Posture is rampant in this room as people rise and sit between the various stages of the ritual. They walk as if they are *all* kings and queens.

There are several men, the soon to be crowned princes' royal advisors, who must come before the chiefs to pledge loyalty and to be approved as such. With each, there is a procession: a royal umbrella, bending and prostrating, a series of bows and speeches to demonstrate the loyalty of the heart of the man in question. Then, each completes his tasks and is approved by the leaders, who confer at the front of the room on the temporary royal dais. There are more drums and hearty handshakes, more processions, and buckets of baby powder sprayed on the backs of the now accepted and approved advisors by the royal

women in the crowd. This happens four more times before the prince is ready for the coronation and the final procession of the night. I marvel at how they have made this Dallas wedding and event venue feel like I am actually in Ghana.

As we proceed through more chanting and drumming, dancing, and powder, it is finally time for the big moment. All of the procession steps are the same as the previous; only they move slower, more intently, and with much more fanfare. More people crowd around the prince as he appears, brought into the room from the back center doors, framing him under an even larger ritual umbrella. He, too, is in all black, rich, thick cloth with a sheen fit for royalty. Yards of fabric are wrapped around his waist and thrown over the left shoulder as he proceeds through the crowd to his place before the dais, facing the tribal elders. He slips off his slippers, like each of the men before him, prostrating himself before the rows of men and women on the stage. Following the ritual formation, he is led around the open area in a series of movements and choreographed actions. He declares his character in several speeches and completes the ritual phases with large sticks and feathers and more prostrating. I capture all this activity on page after page, recording every sound and movement on camera, when something happens.

From the stage, an elder is up off his chair. He speaks directly at the prince in a foreign tongue. He sounds angry. His voice quivers but grows with volume. His hand points angrily at the prince as he fires one question after the other. The emcee, my translator, is communicating what is taking place as fast as he can, often relaying to the audience what is being said. The prince listens respectfully, and when the old man is done, he pauses a moment before he answers in refute. He never raises his voice as he speaks. I almost jump when the old man stops him at the end of his humble retort, shouting at him and raising his hands as if to say, "Off with you!" He is loud, and I am astounded at the anger and sudden outburst. The emcee is watching the situation but no longer translating. I look around to the royalty seated near me and see that some are nodding with the man as he speaks, some are stone-still, and a few of the women lean in toward one another, whispering out of the sides of their mouths.

I ask my informant about what is happening. He tells me, "The elder has a problem with the honor of the prince because he makes choices that are unsavory for our people. He has doubts as to whether he will make a good leader because of his choices."

I wonder what these unsavory choices are, and my mind begins to wander. He is a large man, not overweight, but built like an athlete. He is handsome and looks to be strong. I think he must have cheated on his wife or had a family scandal of some sort. *That must be it*, I think, *for all this drama.* My mind imagines all sorts of scandalous scenarios as I watch this vehement exchange between the old man and the young prince. After a few more minutes of the old man shouting and pacing as best as his aged body will allow, and the young prince answering with a steady, unwavering response, the man shouts once more, bangs down his staff on the back of his chair and leaves the platform. He walks down the steps right past the men surrounding the prince, storming out of the room, all the while muttering under his breath.

No one chases after him, and oddly, the room quiets down quite quickly. I am astonished at how little reaction the crowd has had to this situation. Some have smug looks on their faces, others nod to each other as if in solidarity. The host, still seated next to me, watches the rest of the royal leaders as the ritual proceeds. There is more discussion and conferring than with the previous men, but in the end, the drums sound, the powder flies, and the prince is crowned.

When my informant has slowed his celebration of dancing, shaking hands, and embracing the women and men throughout the room, I ask him what the situation with the chief was about. I steady my pen and paper to capture the story, just knowing this will be the crack I have been waiting for in what seems to be a people of perpetual goodness.

"He is angry at the boy because he did not complete a contract with him for a piece of land." I find it odd that he calls this grown prince a boy, and I ask him about this. "He is a boy because he has known the elder for his entire life, and he is knowing his family as well. They are family, they know each other many years, and their families go back many years," he explains.

"So, that is all that he did? He only skipped out on a contract on some land?" I realize my disappointment makes my response sound crass.

"No, he did not 'skip out.' He did not purchase the land, and he gave his word that he would."

"So, he changed his mind?" I ask, sounding more doubtful than I intend to.

"Yes, but he gave his word," he retorts with a tone, settling slowly on the phrase 'gave his word' that informs me that there is a lesson here.

"And so, when he was defending his character in the ritual, this was a problem because there was this issue of his character," I say to show that I understand his emphasis.

"Yes," he replies, "it is an issue of honor for a man to not do what he says he will do."

"Why were the people not upset with the chief's outburst?" I asked. "Would it have been possible that he would not have been crowned if the leaders resisted as a group?"

"No, this would not happen. The *hene* (leader) was just taking the opportunity to show why it is important

to be true to your word and to tell the community that this has happened so that we may be watchful for future issues . . . and the community of his council, the men who will advise him will know he has this weakness." I hope to speak to him longer on the subject, but he informs me it is time to change our clothes into our white attire so that the big celebration may begin.

"Now, you must get ready in your white dress and come back so that we can show you the food and the way we party in Ghana." Just like that, a coronation, celebration, and a life lesson all co-exist.

Patterns Revealed

What occurred at my first visit within the walls of the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church would set the tone and stage for the rest of my research. With each new interaction, I recognized patterns which, though rooted in Ghanaian teaching and culture, evolved into a unique reproduction of group identity for those living abroad. These patterns are the influence that genealogical and historical roots have on a group's temperament. Identity, the understanding of life and community when a sense of belonging arises from one's ancient past, leads to unity and dignity as a path to peace and joy, and is expressed through the network of associations, churches, and cultural events.

In every church gathering or community event, these patterns were highlighted in behavior through their reappearance and repetition. The recognition of these patterns, and their distinguishing nuances, illustrate what one might come to know when immersed and living in a foreign place. The following is only a sample of such patterns:

Gender Equality. Time and time again, I saw a demonstrated equality of leadership with regards to gender. Yes, women grouped together to serve food, but it became apparent this was as much a structured time of social life as was the men's work of setting out the tables and chairs—which I saw both children and women assisting with as well. Several times, it was made known to me that a man had made the dish his wife or sister was serving. I did not observe subservience or gender stratification. If a person spoke and he happened to be male, his authority as pastor and community spokes-man was the supreme reason, not his gender. In many associations, women served as equals in rank, position, and voice. There is a comfort between the genders that is respectful and honoring— it is respect for the gender, yes, but even more so, for the person. Women do assume dominant female-centric activities, yet it was common to see the hand-off of childcare to a male partner or male teen without so much as a request for help. Babies and toddlers slipped from hand to hand when a change in care providers was needed or when the mother had to remove herself for a time. I never once saw an infant or toddler cry for their mother when this hand-off took place. This leads one to believe that this is quite normal among parents. I was informed by both men and women that there are roles they fulfill, not out of obligation, but out of natural proclivity, yet there is never a problem with asking the opposite sex to step in. This is never more apparent than with the number of teen boys I witnessed as caregivers for young children. It was more than common to see a teen boy with a baby on his hip. The gender walls are invisible amongst the youth as well. Girls did not congregate only with girls, nor boys with boys. At all times, all children of all ages moved freely about both in play, childcare, and in tasks and chores at events and services.

Relationships between tribal affinities, economic status, and educational/career attainment followed this same rule of thumb. In the high structure of association meetings, which held to not-for-profit rules of order, there were positions such as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, etc. Even here, women and men served where they were needed and had a natural propensity. Where there was not yet a skill, as with the young, the older children helped the younger children to learn it. I observed several older teens instructing and guiding younger teens with a variety of tasks such as caring for a toddler, setting up a room for an event, cleaning the kitchen, and preparing the sacred objects for the altar before a service.

Missionary Mindset. There is a sense of celebration, a piece of "heaven here on earth," that only those who know what it is like to live outside of their homeland community will understand. Having lived outside my own country for many years, I have experienced this unique situation when one meets a fellow countryman in a foreign place. I witnessed this same joy in the Ghanaian community, at their events, time and time again; It is as if they are greeting one another in heaven, every time they meet. Their enthusiastic and heartfelt joy is shared as if the friend has long been lost. Their praises to God, their sharing of Scripture in everyday conversation, and their sheer delight when a new or fellow believer is in their midst was usual business.

References to Ghana. In every conversation, every sermon, every speech, Ghana is there. It is not an impression through nuance or a background reference. No, it was always prominently placed and referred to as often as possible. I began to count the number of times in which Ghana was referred to within sermons. On the low-end, there were three references. The winner was nine. And each time the reference was well placed within the context, expressed seamlessly within the

message. These references are often met with head nods and affirmation through the group's body language; and a couple of times there was a "hallelujah" or a "Yes, Pastor" in reply. I asked one of my informants about this, and he shook his head as if he agreed with me. "Yes, it is always Ghana, all the time. We will not lose her."

Academic Interest. I was struck by the number of times and by the variety of people who asked me about the theme and thesis of my work. This level of academic inquiry is unusual in large groups. I was frequently asked by individuals, ranging in age from mid-twenties to late eighties, about the purpose, finding, and thesis theme of my research. Most of the inquiries accompanied a suggestion of a dissertation, paper, or a professor's academic book I needed to read. This rare phenomenon, rare due to this population not being directly tied to an academic community, led to a wealth of information, and many of the reading suggestions became the literary foundation for my research. The contributions furthered my information intake process, meaning that I sought out dissertations and research that I otherwise may have overlooked or not been aware of, and the academic atmosphere altered the depth of my interviews, as well.

Duality. In most everything I experienced within this community, there is a duality at work. This is not a duality of opposition, but a symbiotic relationship between two worlds, two eras, two parts of history. As can be said for all people groups, Ghana is not Ghana without its past. Yet, Ghanaians, unlike many peoples, are not haunted by the repressive, dark layers of their history; it is a past that is worn on their sleeves, but not one bridled by anger and discontent. It is as much a part of their character as anything else. The irony is found in the way that they do not hold the two worlds, past and present, in a negative or positive light. They carry all that makes them who they are as just that: the fibers of their being, something to build upon, and remember, yet neither to be heralded nor scowled upon.

Where other peoples have felt the weight of their fettered chains for hundreds of years, the migrant population of Ghana recognizes the oppression of their past within their story, and lives alongside and within the freedom from this oppression as part of a 'beauty-from-ashes' narrative. There is no call to rise above, to shed the past, or to break away from the shadows that haunt them, for they are not haunted. The things of the past have affected them profoundly, yet they have found a way through, and they are who they are today because of these influences—fully Ghanaian with all of its markings, color, and scars. There is no easy way to explain this phenomenon, yet within it lie great lessons to be taken into further anthropological study and other research fields.

Spatial Diaspora. Immigrants normally live in a spatial diaspora that fosters mythical or utopian images of both places (Canaporo 2006, 6.) But there is an understanding in this community that Ghana is different for them now that they live overseas, and it will be different for their children who know of Ghana only from the stories, short visits to the homeland, and community gatherings. Gupta and Ferguson suggest that, "remembered places have often served as symbolic anchors of the community for dispersed people. This has long been true of immigrants who . . . use memory of place to construct imaginatively their new world. 'Homeland' in this way, remains one of the most potent unifying symbols for mobile and displaced peoples, though the relation to homeland may be very differently constructed in different situations" (1992, 376). It appears, at first glance, that homeland is the connector within the community and rightly so—they are Ghanaian, this fact connects them. Yet, what is missing from this construct is a sense of longing, of desperation, or a clinging to a past with which they can no longer participate. This 'need to remember' is not founded on the threat of loss or displacement that Gupta and Ferguson identify.

Ghanaians have known travel to other lands as part of their history. But they leave not because they were threatened or displaced, rather for their own cultural and economic development. The experience of leaving Ghana to learn, to work, to visit, may be so ingrained that the model of creating the new longed-for place that Gupta and Ferguson describe is not part of their immigrant experience. Yes, they educate their young, along with the outside community, about Ghana, but it is not to create a new world here or a utopian view of the homeland. They live very much within the American lifestyle participating in Western activities and the larger economy. Their teaching about Ghana is designed to provide cultural history, knowledge, memory, and herald the homeland, and it is open to everyone, not just the immigrants themselves. That openness to all is a significant point of difference from other communities who reside in North Texas as a result of displacement. DFW-Ghanaians seek opportunities to bring outsiders into their festivities and to partner with local entities in those efforts. Their concept of building community is not exclusive in nature, but collective.

Ghanaians don't view themselves as exiles from conflict or displacement. Instead, I was informed often and regularly, that "America is the dream," "the land of prosperity," and since "Ghana is not a war-torn country like other African countries . . . we can easily come here to make a better way for our families and ourselves."

They view themselves as being in transition, and they find a way to live and thrive in the DFW Metroplex while not sacrificing the cultural elements they know represent Ghana. In line with the duality-principle mentioned above, work, social placement, education, and profession success, are just as important as family, cultural values, and language retention.

This duality demonstrates a response to anthropological questions of interconnectivity, space, and belonging, but it is also arguably the result of the importance of the roots of Christianity in Ghanaian life. For this group, national identity is part of the community framework, but Christian values and beliefs are more important. The influence of Christian belief and practice is evident both with those within the community and with those looking for connection to the community.

Collectivism vs. Individuality. Cross-cultural psychologists study the similarities and differences between individualistic and collectivist cultures. One study, conducted by Ma and Schoenemann (2010), found that while 60 percent of Kenyans (a collectivist culture) described themselves in terms of their roles within groups, 48 percent of Americans (an individualist culture) used personal characteristics to describe themselves. After reading this study, I spent much time looking for this polarity within the Ghanaians I observed. Yet, it confounds me to say that instead of confirming the research and typical traits of Westerners vs. Africans, my subjects showed a true duality once again: they are both collectivists and individualists.

In listening for linguistic cues of "we" versus "me", I could not find a pattern of dominant speech. When my interviews were mainly with male church leadership, I thought I would discover a difference from when I spoke with the women, both in leadership and non-leadership roles. Instead, I found the same patterns: "We" was reserved for the descriptions of the group, their heritage, their customs. "I" was used when speaking of the reasons a person left Ghana to move to America, what they felt about their job, and how they spoke of their families, children, and parents. This dichotomy was apparent not only when talking about self or the community but also in discussing their politics back home and values for their community here.

This sense of personal identity in collectivity, of knowing who one is and to what one is attached, as well as knowing one's place and influence within the community, is an exceptional quality in the cultural patterns and personalities of the people I studied. The ability to know one's place, and to make efforts to ensure that the young people in the community have a place and a chance to develop both within that community and within themselves, is crucial to any person developing into a healthy member of society. Generativity (Erik Erikson's term for concern for the next generation) is strong in the Ghanaian community and reflected in the knowledge of self, the knowledge of the community, and then the knowledge of self with and without the community, as well. The Ghanaians' success at achieving this balance could be due to the level of careers and education the community members attain. As well, a sense of personal independence allows for the choice for community to be made freely, and not forced. In most studies and research on high generativity and identity certainty, the individual experiences a well-balanced perspective on life and of the self. There is usually low anxiety, little fear about the world around them, and low personal crisis or at-risk behaviors (Santrock, 2018). It was interesting to me to witness this en masse within a group that embodies these principles.

Historical Influence on the Present. This has proved to be the most difficult element of duality to describe, not to mention that the burden of proof can only be discovered and witnessed within the space of ethnographic involvement. Yet, I will attempt to trace the links between past and present in terms of Ghanaians' principle of duality as it has expressed itself in their history.

Before the colonization of the country we know as Ghana, there was a realization that the colonists could not manage the warring tribes and their relationship to the colonial representatives. Ghanaian leadership, therefore, presented themselves as collaborative leaders to colonial authorities, suggesting that they manage their own people for the colonial kingdoms that had claimed the land. This method of shared leadership was implemented, and it brought forth elements of colonialism not experienced in other parts of the colonized world. Yet, this was not the first time this strategic move was made in Ghana's history.

Ancient tribal history tells tales of collaborative leadership within tribes in sub-Saharan regions as well as intertwining the management of the Ghana, Mali, and Songhay empires (Conrad 2005, 11-23). This pattern of convincing ruling nations to allow tribal leadership played a part in trade revenues, gold distribution, Islamic influences, tribal rivalries, and more. Sadly, this same mindset played a large part in the slave trade of the Gold Coast as well, when Ghanaian and rival tribes contributed to the sale of conquered humans to their colonial counterparts.

Still, one cannot deny the astute political craft Ghanaians employed to gain and retain some sense of ownership of their own lands. One of my informants, a highly educated woman with a role in leadership within the community, told me that this is one of the reasons that Ghana does not see war in their country as often as

the rest of the world, nor do they perpetuate war. For the sake of this paper, a deep dive into this untested theory is not possible. Still, it represents the recognition that they are aware of their place within a leadership structure and how it affects the outcome they desire, despite perceived or real limitations.

To better explain the situation, a comparison is required: In many Texas-based Protestant churches, it is not uncommon to have a *secondary church* community—for example, a smaller Black, Hispanic, or Asian church—rent or lease space when it is not in use by the leading congregation's activities. This is not what is happening in DFW-Ghana church partnerships. Ghanaian groups are accepted as part of the larger community within which their ministries and community activities reside; they are not just lessees on a rental agreement. They have utilized the historical pattern of their past in partnering with present-day congregations and larger church campuses to bring them into shared leadership. This might be seen as an anomaly if it was just one or two of the congregations, but in every church I visited (if they were not owners of their own property), this cohabitating relationship was the norm. When I brought the recognition of this pattern to their attention, all of the lead pastor interviewees agreed they had had the same experience. One stated it best, "You are right! There was never a time when I felt as though I could doubt their belonging here on our campus. Pastor Paul made a case for their being here so compelling that our church knew it was a no-brainer, and now we lead worship together, often."

Kinship and Tribal Affiliation. As I presented my questions on tribal affiliation to my first few informal and formal interview subjects, I sensed they answered my questions as if they were checking off a box. Quickly they'd tell me their tribal connection or affiliation and then move on to other information they deemed more vital to our conversation. Tribal roots are important, but not to the extent that they dominate the choices made within the community. One does not move according to kinship or tribal affiliation. Job placement, housing costs, and schools are more important in affecting the outcome and location of residency. The distance from the group or parts of the group is not as determinant as proximity to their jobs or churches is. They stay connected to those with whom they share a language or regional affinity through associations and community activities. Thus tribal affiliation does not limit one's involvement in other communities; as one person put it, "It is not uncommon to eat a meal at a table and not know what they are saying." It seems boundaries are crossed with ease here.

Another pattern emerged when asking about their tribal history. Almost all would tell me if they had Asante, Ewe, or Ga roots, but they never told me if they were royalty or not. Someone else would inform me later, and they would do so without much fanfare as if it was almost an afterthought. During many of my conversations and interviews, subjects made a point to inform me if they had married a Nigerian, an American, a Jamaican, or another outsider. There was something important about this part of the discourse, as if the idea that they know who they are, yet they do not deny themselves the world when it comes to love and life, was an important factor. "My name is Hope. I am from Ghana, from the capital of Accra. You know, Accra? It is in the southern coastal region. My husband is from South Africa . . . " Never stated with pride, but more as if they thought this information would add layers of understanding to the information they were providing me. "Are you connected to a specific tribe, Hope?" "Oh, yes, I am Asante." It was Hope's female companion that told me later that Hope was an Asante princess.

Knowledge of their ancestral roots is important to who each person is, how they express themselves within the community, and to outsiders. Yet, that same reflection is turned inward in the attempts to live within several African or other cultural affiliations. There was a humble pride when they shared their mixed family relations. What is most interesting in this revelation is how the Ghanaian portion of each coupling did not lessen or become dormant.

Unity. The concept of unity permeated the Ghanaian community. Though that unity starts within the family that left Ghana, it also extends beyond it. Yet, the acceptance of all peoples is important to their personal statement of who each person is and how that reflects upon the community as a whole. Though their community celebrations and worship groups are predominately Ghanaian, the feeling of being welcomed and accepted is experienced from the first step through the door, as if one had always been in their midst. This welcome is the basis for the greater sense of unity. Kinship is important, but unity between one another as human beings is a crucial element.

Character. "A diseased vulture never parts company with the rubbish heap." Ghanaian Proverb. Theirs is a modest and pious approach to life seen in *each* man, woman, and child. Never did anyone exhibit any sense of shame or a devalued state of being because of the color of their skin, their impoverished and often struggling homeland, or their slave-ridden past. And though they bestow an unassuming peaceful demeanor, they carry their heads held high, have eyes that are bright with life, smiles that are strong and engaging, and a hand that is offered first, in every encounter. No sense of fear is found in the presence of even the youngest person, as even the children appear comfortable within

their space, and form and exhibit a tangible trust in the community, and even with strangers like me. *Why* this comfort and ease? *How* this pride and confidence? Is this because they know, or believe, they are descended from a people known to have had unmatched power and wealth? Do they retain a sense of regality because their history impresses upon them the empire they are descended from? Is it this knowledge of their ancestral history which gives them a sense of who they are, even when they live among strangers in a foreign land? With all they have been through, slavery, oppression, government upheaval, and colonialism, they move freely within their new homeland with confidence.

Geertz recognized there were only a few decolonized, though not completely, populations that did not live caught within the tension of post-colonialism (1973, 240). This very rare phenomenon occurs, he said, because tensions of past and present do not "[invade] every aspect of national life" (240-241). I am convinced that the subjects of my fieldwork provide evidence that this is so. In fact, Geertz recognized that Ghana was one of these principalities (238-239).

When I compare other communities who feel they descend from that kind of power, prestige, and divinity, there is a sense of pride and ethnocentrism. But one does not recognize any kind of self- aggrandizement in these emigrated Ghanaians. The proud Ghanaian is not putting on airs, for they have known who they are for centuries, and their circumstances, for better or worse, do not change that reality. Nor, do they fight that history. They are descendants of kings, of one of the greatest empires on earth. It does not matter that they were conquered, uprooted, sold, divided, or ruled, for they survived and overcame time and time again. They know who they are descended from, and their proud spirit is not derived from the power of others or from proving to the world who they are. Instead, this knowledge of self is demonstrated in a calm and collected manner.

A sense of knowing who one is, where one comes from, and a shared collective meaning beats at the innermost heart of culture throughout history. Though the history of the Ghanaian people has been contested within archeological and historical circles, they themselves know their history (Conrad 2005, 17-22). It is both an oral and written history, with the oral being the more dominant of the two. It is this 'knowing' that is the key to their success compared to others in similar circumstances and to their ability to adjust to life in America. Robben states, "people must first make sense of their own culture and then find the right discourse to explain it to a foreign ethnographer who lacks any lived experience in the community under study" (Robben 2012, 514). What I found with my subjects, though, was a completely relaxed approach. I did not experience my subjects striving to explain themselves through strained discourse. Their approach to an explanation was through example, story, and a matter-of-fact approach to answering my questions. They simply have nothing to prove, and though they profess a belief in Jesus Christ as a passion point in their lives and community, even this was shared through example instead of forceful persuasion.

What is missing from the subjects I interviewed and within the community was resentment, anger, fear, anxiety, or distress. Passionate conversations and loud voices of protest at association meetings and coronations are not silenced as they are often voices raised to protest issues such as the lack of character of a soon-to-be tribal leader or on subjects such as sex education tainting the young minds of Ghanaian children both in Ghana and in the United States. The most common and passionate outcries were attached to calls to action in reminding the community of their role in raising young men of character and in teaching the ways of Ghana to the young in their community.

As a Caucasian woman, I press into my final thoughts with a humble stance, not as one who holds the answer to the difficult issues of the race relations which plague our nation and the world right now, but as one who has been afforded the blessing of insight into underlying matters around the race issues we face through the observation of this community. Through my research, I garnered enough trust and connection to allow me to inquire about the issues of race, racial mistreatment, and inequity in the different experiences of Black Americans and of Africans in America (specifically the DFW-Ghanaian community, though I recognize that other African immigrant communities have their own unique experiences which deserve representation). In asking my informants about this difference, I obtained a composite answer that goes back to this issue of roots and the knowledge of who one is. It leads to a belief and theory I call, *blank genealogy*. Migrant Ghanaians, though hailing from a country whose past and present are plagued with extreme poverty, multiple administrations, political coups, and an atrocious slave history, do not carry with them the same heaviness as their stateside contemporaries. Somehow, they have found a way to live within their tragic, marred past without denying their history or the loss of so many of their people. And from within this space, they move forward in positive and constructive ways. I suggest that their understanding of personhood, being connected to a systematically supportive community, is cemented in a pragmatic understanding of historical roots and religious identity. Theirs is both a teleological and deontological existence of purpose and ethical choices that are shaped by their past but not held captive by the darker side of history. The historical, genealogical timeline of non-migrant

Black communities in the United States tragically stops on the shores of the Gold Coast. The generational trauma of being ripped from and stripped of one's roots leads to a profound sense of loss and demoralization that has produced rage, long-term trauma, and desperate acts to have one's voice acknowledged, valued and heard. This blank genealogy of many African American people has led to a very different experience from that of Ghanaians in North Texas.

In addition to the split in historical timelines of a once connected people, I believe the commitment of DFW-Ghanaians in and to the values and purpose of a professed Christian lifestyle has shaped their dual existence and brought about a sense of identity that is rooted in a greater historical connection than only to one's homeland. "Moral life is not comprised of beliefs plus decisions; our moral life is the process in which our conviction forms our character" (Hauerwas 1983, 16). The connection to their history and link to their faith have produced a character in the Ghanaians of North Texas that can have significant implications for the church and its role in helping to heal our broken nation.

Implications for the Church

Roots. My research and subsequent discourse around the example of the well-led lives of DFW-Ghanaians leaves much more to be discovered and addressed. If left only to anthropology, these discoveries and implications might remain as fieldwork peculiarities, warm-hearted and lovely, but still only characteristics of a particular people. Yet, the perspective that I have offered here, as opposed to some of the standard anthropological views, is in part to make my point that there are implications for the church and the global body of believers. Intended as a *prescriptive anthropology*, of sorts, this fieldwork can help to bring about, on a much broader scale, some of the positive qualities recognized within the habits and lifestyles of DFW-Ghanaians.

As previously stated, I am a Caucasian woman raised within the confines of that description. I am one who can look into a black community and understand only as deeply as my intentions, and my efforts at an unbiased mind, can take me. My experience will never connect fully to those who have been oppressed due to their skin color and past. Yet, what I have witnessed within this community, that graciously allowed me into their midst, is a message I feel compelled to deliver to others, especially to the church.

The difference between the Ghanaian community and that of the African American experience is *not* a result of differences in character or attitude towards the past and present; it lies specifically in the knowledge of one's roots. Roots and connection are at the core of the human experience for everyone. Humanity is nothing without its history and story, and people without the full knowledge of their past are both debilitated and handicapped. It is the worst kind of generational trauma. Not knowing where collectively one hails from leaves the soul of a people impoverished and broken. This statement does not mean that the Black slave-rooted population of the Americas has not risen to its own level of dignity and wholeness; I merely, and humbly, note that parts of their history are forever-lost due to the tragic impact of the slave trade and that this has had impact on their sense of confidence in who they are (Hartman 2007). Still, living with a blank genealogy has a damaging effect that a knowledge and an understanding of adoption into God's family can remedy.

The church has a unique gift to offer the world with the story of redemption and unity. Through being grafted and adopted into a larger family, one belonging to God, we find connection. This is the story of humankind, as Christianity tells it, and it calls out in response to the need for roots and connection that lost and displaced peoples throughout the world have experienced. Specifically, for this community, roots, as being grafted into the Body of Christ as adopted sons and daughters, is what gives the deepest of connections. Knowing one's history in Him, when one's past is unknown or rejected by society, makes it possible to live within a settled, unified, and peaceful sense of identity, both collectively and individually. Church leaders can focus messages and teaching around this subject of adoption, of being chosen by God, of freedom to develop and grow as a unified people when ministering to displaced and genealogically disconnected persons.

Future: Who people should be. How we should portray ourselves. How we should live as men, women, and children. This is the 'stuff of sermons' heard all over the world. Yet, among my research subjects, this conversation is not reserved only for the pulpit. It is normal conversation at every junction. How we choose to represent ourselves and our community, how we love and serve and live within the unity of spirit is rightly within the church's vocabulary, *but does it permeate every gathering? Does it seep into every conversation parents and grandparents have with their children? Does it allow for adults to hold one another to task when one has fallen short of the values in life?* In this community, it does. Where we might err on the side of being afraid to talk about proper religious behavior too much, Ghanaians living in North Texas speak of it all the time. There is a sense that they are all missionaries within their own spheres of influence.

One can safely assume this may be a reason they experience the benefits of closer family connection, less crime within their localized community, fewer mental health issues, and a greater sense of connection to the

community and the goals of the community at large. The church can learn a great deal from this pragmatic and constant approach to reminding its members of how life as a believer should be lived.

Hauerwas states, "We are destined to discover ourselves only within God's history, for God is our beginning and end" (1983, 29). Ghanaians in North Texas see themselves, both as individuals and as a collectivity, within God's story: from beginning to end, biblically and historically unto the present day. They see their purpose and meaning within the timeline of God's history. Undoubtedly, this larger view has impacted their community for the better. The church can, and rightfully should, recognize this 'back to the basics' mentality, as it could provide church leadership with what has been missing in dwindling Western congregations. The faith of these Ghanaians, not based on congregational programs or an entertaining display of the Gospel, is a living example of knowing their purpose within the story the Gospel and of living this out through deed and word throughout the entirety of the population. It is the individual choice and action of each Texas-Ghanaian, compelled by a personal commitment to Christ, and an example of the community to the larger Christian church.

Contrary to many an anthropologist of religion, I cannot subscribe to the theory that religion's purpose in this community is simply to be the structure that brings about more cohesiveness or morality to the arrangement of social relations. The religious beliefs and lived-out examples of steadfast faith within this group are not tools of a well-functioning social machinery. Rather, it is their commitment to Christianity that gives this group a story with both a past and a future.

Mission Mindset. Realizing that there may be social differences between the group of Ghanaians living in North Texas and those they left behind in Ghana, it is possible that migration requires a specific mindset. It is my observation that there is a certain mission-mindset which prepares hearts to go, and also attracts particular types of individuals to the idea of moving. Crime is unbiased. It travels well, and it travels across borders every day. Yet, this issue, along with other adverse societal problems, is not prevalent amongst this population. One should not assume that this land of the free compels right and ethical behavior, as statistics would prove otherwise. I believe that the call to move, to garner gainful employment, and to thrive in North Texas is found in the type of mission minded persons who are attracted or compelled to make the move overseas. The high rate of Ghanaians who are involved and regularly attend a Christian church in North Texas would seem to support this possibility (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Conclusion

As a Christian anthropologist, I find the study of violence prevention and peace perpetuation vital to the work to which we are called. When I entered into the world of Ghanaians residing in North Texas, I believed I was about to commune with an ancient migrated tribal community, one which would provide me with the elements my anthropological texts prepared me for: stories of ancient civilization, pottery samples, food tastings, kinship, tribal charts, symbolism, social structure, trade, and economic understanding. Instead, I found a community that removed all my previous understandings and provided me with a glimpse into the world *as it could be*. As a result, I am now developing theories and exploration around blank genealogy and prescriptive anthropology.

There is a love of nation, yet a break from the societal norms of exclusive nationalism. There is a remembrance of oppression and violence, but it is not a weight that limits their positive experience moving forward. There is a call to unity, shown through the continual respect for self and others, which dignifies every member of their group, from young to old. This mindset gives each person standing within the community, and they know their personal responsibility and what is involved in that role. Living in the Texas landscape helps not to create a utopia, but a community that chooses to live with the highest of standards and set an example of a well-lived life for others. These people hail from strong religious backgrounds, rooted in Judeo-Christian beliefs. A missionary mindset, one of sharing the message and values of Jesus and the story of God's hand in humanity, is a critical marker. The knowledge of where they came from, in whom they are rooted and connected, both in faith and ancestry, is the most significant identifiable factor in their strong community life.

This example of connectedness through unity, equality through dignity, and peace with the past sets in motion future conversations and discourse over subjects which less favorable societal circumstances have rendered difficult. There is much to learn in the example given by this community of Ghanaians. Further fieldwork might discover, and uncover, more information about how to replicate and share that which is working so well. Giving new and further voice to the leaders and members of this group would help to perpetuate many of the positive qualities they exude. The *church* should take heed and inquire as to why this community radiates much of what is taught on Sunday, in their daily lives. The *world* should also look and listen to the Ghanaians of North Texas to see what is working and inquire as to why.

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Social Transactions or Christian Ministry?: International and Customary Adoption in Vanuatu

Kenneth Nehrbass and Daniel Nehrbass

The recent surge of Western interest in international adoption has arrived in the South Pacific. Yet the Christian faith, despite disparate views about adoption, has required both expatriate and Melanesian families to consider, or sometimes reconsider, their own parameters for the adoption or placement of children. Orphan care has become a top social issue especially for Christians in recent decades. However, international adoptions are costly in terms of time and money, and are often at the nexus of these diverging values and conceptualizations. All parties involved can find the process frustrating and disillusioning, even if the end goal is noble and satisfying. In fact, adoption "as a norm" in Vanuatu can positively shape western understandings of adoption. In some ways, ni-Vanuatu conventions regarding jural inclusivity and exchange are closer to biblical ideas of family, kinning, and adoption. This article should familiarize people from "receiving countries" with customary adoption in the Pacific, and should help Melanesians understand the hurdles involved in international adoption. Hopefully, a path can be forged for international adoptions to be arranged such that the best interest of all parties is served.

Introduction

"I would like you to adopt our youngest son. Doing so would cement our relationship," John, a ni-Vanuatu pastor suggested to his long-term missionary friend George Chesterton. On the one hand, George and Briana, who came from the USA to serve as Bible translators on Tanna Island, found John's offer to be flattering and even tempting. Yet they realized that expatriate adoption also presented a number of difficulties. While adoptions are arranged on Tanna to forge meaningful relationships, for Americans, taking in a ni-Vanuatu child would involve jumping through legal hoops, filing immigration papers, and saving for the child's college tuition and other costs of raising a child in the USA. But more significantly, the Chestertons have deeply embedded cultural norms which tell them that, in general, only orphans are eligible for adoption.[1] George argued that a biological mother and father should raise the child God gave them. "Besides, what would that child feel when she got older about why mom and dad sent her off to be with these white people? And when we did make visits back to Tanna, how would she be received, and how would she relate to her biological parents?"

Chesterton was expressing a primary concern about what Howell (2003) has called "kinning"—the process of making an adoptee into a relative. How will a ni-Vanuatu adolescent adjust her personhood as she balances her ethnic identity with her fictive social identity (466)? In an absence of shared history how will she become part of her biological family (472)? All of the westerners I (Kenneth) interviewed in this study, including Chesterton, consider the process of adoption to be sufficiently disruptive that it should be reserved only for those who "really need it." They also all saw adoption as a way of living out their Christian faith. Yet in Melanesia, adoption—including expatriate adoption—is generally considered to be a desirable social transaction, and is emblematic of their animistic religious background.

[1] We should mention, however, that many Americans recognize the noble choice of a birthmother to place her infant with another family for whatever reason she deems valid. For many Christians, adopting out a child is preferable to abortion; and the reasons that a birth mother has for placing a child up for adoption are rarely questioned. By extension, perhaps one can assume that women in other countries can also be entrusted with the same capacity.

Purpose of the Study

Having worked in Vanuatu from 2002 to 2012, I (Kenneth) observed several ni-Vanuatu approach expatriates to propose transactions in international kinship. These stories of expatriate involvement in adoption reveal a vast disconnect between Western and *kastom* (traditional) conceptualizations of adoption and fosterage. They also call into question theological questions about the role biological parents should play in raising their children. The purpose of this research is to understand the ways in which Westerners differ from Melanesians on the topic of adoption so that future transactions in kinship can be positive, enduring and biblically sound.

Research Methods

In addition to prolonged observations in the field, my colleague Daniele Smith and I (Kenneth) interviewed ten ni-Vanuatu families who were willing to participate in a study of divergent practices in adoption on these the islands of Tanna and Rah in Vanuatu.[2] I also interviewed three expatriate families who lived long term in Vanuatu, and who successfully adopted children from there. As we analyzed the data from the interviews, we discovered some emergent themes that describe the discourse of "*kastom*" adoption as well as "expatriate adoption."

Significance of the Study

Westerners—often with one or more birth children—are increasingly aware of what Elliott (2012) has termed a "global orphan crisis". Orphan care has become a top social issue especially for Christians in recent decades, and the interest appears to have significant staying-power (D. Nehrbass 2012, 18). Yet a conflicting message is also prevalent. Visitors to orphanages abroad often discover that many of the children are not legally available for adoption. This raises the challenge that not all children who are colloquially referred to as "orphans" are actually in need of a new permanent family, thus making the scope of the orphan crisis difficult to gauge. This article broadens, socially and theologically, the terms orphan and adoption, to demonstrate the multifaceted nature of fictive kinship.

Findings

While some families in Vanuatu adopt children for practical reasons (aging grandparents need a helper, or a couple is infertile), many ni-Vanuatu prefer to arrange *kastom* adoptions precisely because such practices embody local ethno-linguistic identities. Adoption has become a symbol of *kastom* itself. And embracing *kastom* in a post-colonial setting is a way of asserting identity and agency (Tonkinson 1982). So adoption in Melanesia is not as much about reproduction of the family as it is about asserting agency (Brady 1976; Carroll 1970; 2008, 155; Goody 1969). As one woman from Rah Island put it, "Adoption is good because it is a practice that dates from long ago" (Smith 2012, 7). For those who participated in this research study, adoption is about being "man Rah", or being "man Tanna." Within *kastom,* it is every bit as natural to exchange children with close family members as it is to cook taro, forge a canoe, or speak a vernacular. These are all indicative of what it means to be a person from Vanuatu.

Adoption on Rah

Anthropologists have disagreed about the extent of influence that birth parents have in the lives of adoptive children in the Banks Islands (including Rah). Rivers (1914) argued that birth parents had essentially no meaning in Mota and other Banks islands. Much later, Scheffler (1970) argued that birth parents obviously have a great influence on their biological children. Perhaps the disjunction between Rivers and Scheffler can be explained through a cultural shift over the decades, partially due to Christianization and Westernization. With the movement away from strict non-disclosure, biological parents are increasingly asserting themselves. One mother, Vivian, became upset on several occasions with how the adoptive family, the Dengs, disciplined her biological child. Vivian's family required the Dengs to make reparation with a pig and cash (Smith 2012, 12).

Adoptive relationships are common in Rah. Of the ten families interviewed in 2012, seven had adoptive children, and five of the ten had more than one adoptive child (Smith 2012, 1). In one case, the maternal grandparents adopted a child, similar to the practice on Tanna Island of returning a child to the wife's parents, since a human being (i.e., the wife) has been removed from the clan. Many other social relationships permit a family to instigate adoption.

In two cases on Rah, the adoption was arranged when the child had lost at least one parent. One case

[2] In the interest of confidentiality, all names are pseudonyms.

involved infertility. One child was adopted out because of a "taboo relationship." In other cases, the ostensible reason for adoption was that the prospective parents "saw the child and liked him." Fena, the youngest of the Wolon family, was adopted by an infertile couple. When the couple heard about Fena's birth, they sent an intermediary to negotiate an adoption. Fena's father was not interested, but her mother felt empathetic toward the infertile couple, and eventually persuaded the father. When Fena was two months old, the infertile couple carried out the *kastom* rites to obtain custody of the girl (Smith 2012, 12).

While adoption is enthusiastically touted as a way to perpetuate *kastom*, it is also accompanied by more negative discourse. Smith noted that five of the ten couples she interviewed offered negative feelings about adoption. Some feared that the adoptive children did not receive the same level of care as other children. Others decried that the divvying up of land through adoptive relationships imperiled their own access to resources.

International Adoption on Rah

Expatriate adoption has reached the Banks Islands. Smith (2012) also observed two cases where adoptions involved both *kastom* and the national legal system. An Australian couple is in the process of adopting two children; and a Caucasian politician with Vanuatu citizenship arranged an adoption from there as well. Working within the *kastom* framework in addition to the legal system illustrates how nuanced adoption can be, and how adoption is at the nexus of the legal system, as cultural identity and religious identity.

Adoption On Tanna

The term on Tanna island for "adopt" is a transitive verb which literally means "to yank; to pull down" as in "to yank a tooth" or "to pick a mandarin." It connotes the initial difficulty—or even pain—in taking a child away; she does not depart without some tugging. More significantly, Tannese do not use the more common verbs "give" or "take/carry" for adoption, as they would with other exchanges. The discourse of adoption also contains many other metaphors and indirect locutions: "She is watching/caring for him;" "He lives with them;" or "She breastfeeds him." The practice of "child exchange" also falls under the more general rubric of "exchanging/returning/avenging" which is the same term for the movement of women in marriage.

Other cases of adoption may seem like more familiar cases of adoption to expatriates: In the case of infertility, the male's classificatory brother may adopt out one of his own sons (typically not the firstborn) to the infertile couple. And in the case of a mother's death during pregnancy, the newborn is adopted out to the wife of a classificatory brother who is still nursing.

As with Rah, adoption is also common on Tanna. For example, around 67% of the males in Yanemilen village between the ages 30 and 50 had adopted a child either in or out by 2012.

The *exchange* of children is the modal type of adoption. In terms of frequency, exchanges among siblings, or "gifted" adoptions that are arranged purely to increase social bonds involved seven cases. The other eight cases involved collectively: death, illegitimate children, or infertility.

Adoption due to Death

Kata's wife Nalpao died in childbirth, triggering Kata to find a wet nurse. He decided to adopt out his son Pita Job to his paternal grandfather's brother's grandson, Tion. Tion's wife Naka, who had just given birth to a daughter, Rachel, so she could also nurse baby Job. Note that Job was raised by Tion and Naka, but there was no transfer of land, because Kata and Tion both lay claim to the land that belonged to their shared great-grandfather. Keeping the land in the family informs who will be asked to serve as a wet nurse for a child.

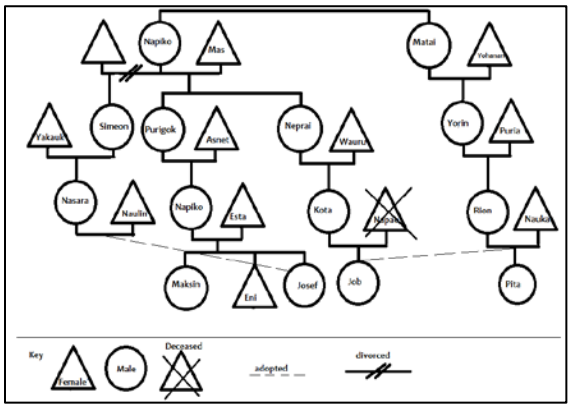
In some cases, when a mother dies after childbirth, the child will then go live with an in-law (+1 generation). Jonny's wife Yaulko died, so he sent baby Linda back to her mother's parents, Nowiwə and Nakiə. Being a girl, there was no discussion of land rights in Linda's transfer.

Adoption due to Infertility

Nasara and his wife Naulin are infertile. Nasara's paternal grandfather's grandson (by a previous wife) is Napiko. Napiko and his wife Esta had five children, and adopted out their youngest son Joseph to Nasara and Naulin. The gift may be reciprocated much later. For example, Napiko told me that when Joseph marries and has several children, he may adopt out one of his own daughters to care for Napiko and Esta in their old age.

The genogram below (Figure 1) shows the adoptive ties created among several nuclear families due to infertility and death.

Figure 1
Adoptive Ties in Yanemilen, Tanna



Adoption due to "Taboo Relationships"

In contrast to a prototypical *kastom* adoption, the commitment to care for children born out of a "taboo relationship" is not accompanied by speeches, land, exchanges of crops and mats. Instead, custody is given through an informal relationship, with more plasticity in the rites and rights. Linda left her husband, but had two children by him: Roy and Vini. Linda surrendered her boy Roy, sending him to live with her brother Nowa. But Linda continued to care for her daughter Vini. Later, when Linda began cohabiting with Tom, Tom became the *de facto* foster father of Vini.

A Theological Critique of Six Variables of Adoption in Vanuatu

As we compared adoption in two settings in Vanuatu, we focused on six variables of adoption that seem particularly pertinent to the global discussion of the placement of children: Disclosure, jural inclusivity, land rights, permanence, reciprocation, and the exchange of goods. We show below that these six variables embody idiosyncratic adoptive situations throughout Vanuatu. But more significantly, the adoption norms are so divergent from international adoption that the two institutions remain largely incompatible with each other. Adoption through the courts in Vanuatu is one thing; *kastom* adoption is another convention all together.

1. Disclosure

Is adoption shameful? Should it be secretive? Adoption conventions vary widely in terms disclosure. Participants on Rah described the ideal *kastom* adoption as an arrangement carried out when the adoptee is still an infant, so that she will not know her birth parents. The version of *kastom* on Rah imposes fines of pigs and cash on anyone who subsequently discloses the names of the biological parents. "It could even happen that someone, usually the adoptive family, would pay a *kleva* [diviner] . . . to 'poison' the informer, causing his death by black magic" (Smith 2012, 3). Participants on Rah indicated that the secrecy was necessary for averting potential jealousies or disputes over inheritance.

Two participants on Rah indicated that the highly secretive nature of adoption is *amag* (antiquated). This cultural innovation of openness also means the child may know his birth parents' identity. A shift toward openness challenges *kastom* sensibilities about respect. One participant learned of her birth parents' identity but "kept it secret until the death of her adoptive parents, out of respect for them" (Smith 2012, 3). A consequence of the recent willingness to openly identify the birthparents has been the antiquation of *kastom* fines for revealing the names of the birth parents. While there is a discourse of fining people for revealing the identity, the recent laxity toward secrecy rules has made it unlikely that any fine would actually be imposed.

On Tanna, however, adoption is usually arranged well after the child has been weaned; and the arrangements are quite open. Subsequently, the adoptees regularly visit their biological parents, and continue to call them "mother" or "father."

Disclosure has been a sensitive topic in Western nations. Until the 1980's, it was possible for adoptive parents to withhold the fact that their children were adopted from coworkers, extended family, and even their adopted children. Sometimes, this lack of disclosure was justified by saying it was better for children not to know. Today, that notion has been almost universally abandoned by child welfare workers. What's more, the hope of withholding such information has become a vain wish, with the advent of DNA testing websites and services.

Scripture also has a perspective on the sensitivity of adoption. In five instances, the New Testament highly esteems adoption by employing the use of *hyiothesia* as a metaphor to describe the relationship of the people of Israel to God (Rom 9:4) and our new identity in Christ (Schoenberg 1964, 51). Ephesians 1:5 claims, "he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will" (NIV).

Romans 8:15 contrasts "slave to sin" with "adoption to sonship" through the Spirit. And Romans 8:23 compares our "adoption to sonship" to our regenerated bodies in the *parousia*. In these passages, adoption is not conceived of as a last resort, nor are the children abandoned or unwanted. To the contrary, Schooenberg argues that *hyiothesia* is primarily about fulfilling a promise to care for someone (55). Indeed, God's plan

all along was to adopt us into His family. In fact, adoption is not only "disclosed" in this passage, it is celebrated!

Galatians 4:5 uses the same metaphor: Christ redeemed us "that we might receive adoption to sonship" (NIV). Mundhenk (2008) points out that in this passage, the connotation of *hyiothesia* is that the sons waited to be legally recognized as proper heirs (170). There would be disclosure—but in one sense, God's redeemed needed to wait until the proper time of disclosure.

This celebration of adoption—this disclosure of our true position as God's children—fits into a wider biblical principle of protection and nurturing, especially of the most vulnerable. As Miller (2015) pointed out, nature contains

> clues to redemption and to God's own outreach to strangers, outcasts, the fatherless and motherless, and sinners. God calls the little creatures and implants within their instincts the tendency to care for and defend young who were not born to them nor even to their species. Then surely God has placed in the human heart the capability and desire to take a child by choice into the family relationship and make it one's own . . . Adoption is not the exception; it is not strange or unusual. It is built into nature and has its roots in God's heart. God offers us, with arms wide open, a welcome into his family. (17-18)

Adoption is not an incidental metaphor in the Gospel: it is a central theme with multiple teaching angles: We are born into a natural family—a family of sin where our inheritance is death. But we are reborn into a new family and are given a new Father, a new name, and a new inheritance. The acceptance into our new family is permanent and has legal consequence: we are loosed from the curse and our debt is paid.

2. Jural Inclusivity

Jural inclusivity—sharing parental responsibilities between the biological and adoptive parents—raises concerns for Western Christians, especially when the adopted children may be raised by parents who are not believers. Therefore, missionaries often prohibited *kastom* adoption throughout Vanuatu, to ensure biological children of Christians were "equally yoked" (2 Cor 6:14) with Christian parents. In fact, Paul's use of adoption as a metaphor suggested a complete break from the "fleshly" family. Those who have been adopted do not have any further relationship with their former slavemaster! (Rom. 8:15). Note that while Roman adoption conventions may have involved emancipation from the biological father, some scholars think it is unlikely that adopting a slave would effectively change the status of the slave (Kim 2014). Paul, then is upending Roman conventions of adoption.

Obviously, if the identities of the biological parents are not disclosed, the parents cannot be overtly involved in the care of their child. Therefore, *kastom* adoptions on Rah require jural exclusivity, whereas Tanna's *kastom* adoptions—arranged in the open—involve a lifetime of jural inclusivity. Elma, a mother on Tanna, adopted out her daughter Wai; but Wai would return to her parents' hamlet for weeks or months at a time. The biological parents are often involved with the mundane and important aspects of life as the child grows up: They are expected to help pay for school fees, and are involved in selecting a spouse among eligible cross cousins.

In the United States, adoptions involving jural exclusivity are called "closed," and those with inclusivity are "open." Nearly all adoptions in the United States were "closed" until the 1980s. It was assumed by judges and child welfare workers that a closed arrangement was better for all parties—giving all parties closure and allowing them to move on with their new lives. That assumption has been largely abandoned as many children adopted in the 1960s and 1970s began searching for their biological families. This search has often been accompanied with testimonies of pain and longing. But with the advent of legalized abortion, adoption attorneys and agencies also needed a further promise to women facing crisis pregnancy that they had the option to be somewhat involved in the child's life if they placed the child for adoption.

In fact, open adoption is now the standard in the United States, and child welfare experts are in near-unanimous agreement about the benefit of this practice for adoptees. But with the arrival of 23&Me, Ancestry.com, and other such agencies the notion of closed adoption has become a vain hope anyway: Adopted children are finding their birth families through DNA testing even when their adoptions were closed.

Despite concerns about being unequally yoked, by the end of this article, it should be clear that the missionaries were in error to proscribe ni-Vanuatu from adopting out their children. Adoption is at the core of *kastom*. And Christian parents in Vanuatu have discovered that jural inclusivity allows them to continue to influence their biological children whom they have adopted out.

3. Land rights

In Vanuatu, *kastom* adoptions inevitably intersect with land rights and consequently naming (see Lindstrom 1985). Inheritances are traced patrilineally in both Rah and Tanna, and the land must be shared by classificatory brothers. Therefore, when an adoption

is arranged, the classificatory brothers are stakeholders, and may have an interest in blocking the adoption for fear the land will not have the carrying capacity to sustain the addition of a family member.

On Tanna, ideally, a man would adopt out his son to one of his own brothers, so that there would be no future dispute over land. The son would continue to cultivate the same land as his brothers, regardless of whether he was raised by his biological father or paternal uncle (who is actually a classificatory father). A paternal uncle has the privilege of naming the boy at age one or two, further linking him to one of several plots of land traced through patrilineal descent.

However, adoptive relationships, in reality, are not always this clear cut. Families find themselves for one reason or another deviating from the *ideal* adoption norms in *kastom.* For example, a man in Imayo village adopted out a son, Ron, to his cross cousin in Isaka village. When Ron married, he began to cultivate the land of his adoptive brothers as if it were his own. Soon, some of these brothers argued that Ron had no right to cultivate their land. However, some of Ron's biological brothers also argued that he had no right to return to the biological brothers' land. It seems that the nature of full disclosure on Tanna foments such land disputes. If adoptions were arranged secretly at infancy, as they are ideally done in Rah, the adoptive family would be prohibited from disputing the son's legitimacy to the land, as a claim to land would require disclosing the boy's biological parents and *kastom* imposes heavy fines on those who let out the secret.

Many Americans recognize the right of inheritance as inextricable from the decree of adoption. Every US state confers the right of adopted children to inherit from their adoptive parents, and most states even confer the right of adoptive parents to inherit from their adopted children (Katz & Katz, 2012). When my wife and I (Daniel) adopted one of our children, the judge asked for a verbal affirmation that we understood our adoptive children would have a right to inherit our property. This type of change in legal status is commonly referred to "as-if" status. Adopted children receive the rights they are due as if they were born into the family.

We do not have the space to get into the theology of land ownership in the Old and New Testaments, but Brueggemann's (2002) thesis is insightful when it comes to adoption and land permanence. God's works in history upend common sense notions of land ownership: When the people of God actively sought to obtain land, they lost it; when they were selfless, they received the land. Who could be more disen-franchised—more "un-landed"—than the legal orphan? When adopted children receive the gift of permanent land, they are living examples of how God turns worldly concepts of land and inheritance upside down.

It is also worth looking briefly at how Paul connects adoption and land permanence:

> As long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. [3]So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. [4]But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. (Gal. 4:1–7, NIV)

While it is unclear how much adoption carried with it the legal status of inheritance in the Roman world (Kim 2014), Paul saw adoption as a fitting metaphor for the Christian's change in legal status with God, and of the way God's adoptive children possess an inheritance.

4. Permanence

Adoptions also vary in terms of permanency, and Christian theology also informs our understanding of the indissolubility of adoption.

Adoptive relationships on Rah, arranged in secret, are ideally permanent. There are, of course, less immutable arrangements where a child must live with a caretaker due to death of the parents, or when the child is born as the result of an extra-marital affair. These cases are not permanent and do not entail land rights, since land is still traced through patrilineal decent. It is also possible on Rah to reverse an adoption, and to reinstate the biologically-traced inheritance. The biological and adoptive parents must negotiate a price representative of the care that the adoptive parents have given to the child. Smith (2012, 4) noted that the Seton family adopted out an infant, but after a week they requested for him to be returned. The adoptive family returned the child and accepted a small payment as the terms for reconciliation.

While there is jural inclusivity and full disclosure of adoptions on Tanna, families expect the arrangement to be permanent. Adults who have been adopted refer to their adoptive parents (as well as all classificatory parents) as "mother and father", and to their biological parents as "straight mother/father." There are also the numerous cases of less-permanent arrangements for "fosterage" such as death or an illegitimate birth.

What is of particular interest about the permanency of adoption is that this is the one variable which especially resonates with international conventions.

While adoption is conceived in many different ways throughout the world, a semantic *sine qua non* of adoption (and not fosterage) seems to be its permanence.

In the United States, social workers and family courts establish plans for children who enter foster care. These plans are called "permanency plans." In other words, the central value of child welfare is permanency. Whether the placement is permanently reunified with biological family, or with an adoptive family, the Western system reveres permanence.

The Apostle Paul underscored the permanence of adoption in his metaphor of redemption. In Romans 8:23 we read, "Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies" (NIV). Such "redemption" was efficacious precisely because it was irrevocable.

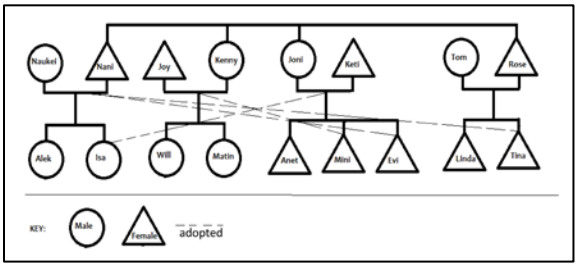
5. Reciprocation

Reciprocation is an essential component of Melanesian logic (Trompf 1994). In Tanna, a gift of a child must be reciprocated at some point in the future. The open nature of adoption on Tanna allows for such reciprocation. If the names of the biological parents were kept secret, as they are on Rah, it would be impossible for outward displays of reciprocation to be the central focus of an adoption exchange.

While conducting fieldwork on Tanna, I (Kenneth) collected case studies where families exchanged children (either in or out) for various reasons. Participants indicated that they experience tremendous pressure to adopt out the firstborn girl and give her back to her mother's parents, so that she will provide care for them in their old age. There is also pressure, according to *kastom,* to exchange a son for a daughter (or vice versa) with siblings. These cases are also referred to as *nərpinien* "exchanging"—the quintessential exchange in a reciprocity-based economy.

In contrast to the discourse of adoption practices at the international level, *kastom* adoption does not involve a discourse of "the child's best interests" nor particularly the parents' desire to fill the home with children or even out the sexes within the nuclear family —though four families used such discourse when they recounted their adoption stories. Instead, the main impetus for the *exchange* of children is the intense social pressure placed on families to reciprocate their most valuable "assets", thereby strengthening kinship ties. This social pressure comes in the form of chiefly speeches given in the *nakamal* (the village center, or kava drinking grounds). For example, Kami, a man in his mid-fifties, died after a long struggle with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). He was survived by two unmarried daughters in their late teens or early twenties. As the village and extended family met for the next several weeks to discuss the cause of Kami's death, a prevailing theme emerged: Kami had refused years earlier to adopt out one of his daughters into his mother-in-law's family, in reciprocation for his own wife. The scorned in-laws argued that this unreciprocated gift would continue to cause disaster unless the daughters married cross cousins in the mother-in-law's lineage. So while adoption can be a practical matter (placing a child in an infertile home, or finding a wet nurse for a recently orphaned child), more commonly the placement of children is a fundamental part of delineating potential marriage partners. And discourse of adoption can be tied to the discourse of disaster. Figure 2 depicts the adoptive relationships in one clan on Tanna.

Figure 2
Child Exchange in a Village on Tanna



While the concept of reciprocity/retribution is endemic to Melanesian logic, a conservative hermeneutic of the New Testament is consistently inimical to this worldview. To be sure, retribution is a biblical theme notably found in the imprecatory psalms. But imprecation and retribution are best understood in the Old and New Testaments as a prerogative and action of God, in His timing and by His own mysterious methods. Dependence upon the promise that God "will get revenge and pay them back" (Deut. 32:35, NET) removes the need for humans to take retribution into their own hands (D. Nehrbass 2013). Due to the New Testament's ethic of grace (that is, free gifts), many missionaries proscribed the practice of child-swapping (K. Nehrbass 2012, 159). And, of course, God initiated no "exchange" with Satan when He adopted us into His family.

The tension between biblical "turning the other cheek" (Matt. 5:39) and "giving the extra tunic" (Matt. 5:40) on the one hand, and the Melanesian ideal of reciprocity on the other, produces continual cognitive dissonance for Christian families on the Island. As the *exchange* of children is discouraged, some families have been innovative in finding alternative "payments" to the wife's parents, but to varying degrees of success. Since the gift of a human being is never fully reciprocated without an adoption, hostilities toward the denomi-

national rules about "child swapping" remain latent; and they are resurrected in times of crisis, such as sickness, death or hurricanes (K. Nehrbass 2011, 460–461).

The notion of "child swapping" also severely challenges global sensibilities. The Hague Convention explicitly requires that "The consents have not been induced by payment or compensation of any kind" ("Hague Convention"). It is with this deeply embedded taboo of reciprocity that many Westerners approach the subject of adoption.

6. Exchange of goods

Just as "child swapping" is highly desirable in Vanuatu, but highly suspicious in many other contexts, perspectives of any other gift-giving at the time of adoption can vary greatly depending on cultural patterns.

The ceremonial arrangement of adoptive relationships is accompanied by an exchange of goods in both Tanna and Rah. On Rah, the birth parents give small gifts to the adoptive parents. "The prestation includes *natamage* or *natabobo*—a cloth for carrying the infant—as well as soap and some cash . . . about $5 US" (Smith 2012, 2). Since the responsibility of the birth parents ends at this point, there are no future exchanges focused on the adoptive relationship. Social life continues to involve exchanges of *kastom* goods, but they are not outwardly displayed as being in relation to the adoptive relationship that was formed, as this would jeopardize the anonymity of the birth parents.

On Tanna, the adoptive and biological parents exchange gifts of kava, cloth, mats and baskets. More significantly, the gift-giving continues on special occasions for years, as the biological parents maintain an open relationship with the adoptive parents.

Such exchanges of goods at the time adoptions are arranged should not be surprising: Gift-giving is essential to *kastom* in Melanesia. The reason that exchanging of goods enters into a discussion of international adoption is that international law and court-arranged adoptions in Vanuatu strictly forbid the exchange of goods. When ni-Vanuatu families see international adoption as an extension of *kastom* adoption, they understandably foresee one or more opportunities for exchanging goods as a way of sealing the deal. However, paradoxically, such an exchange would automatically endanger the adoption from a legal standpoint. When Australians Warren and Judy appeared in court to adopt Josiah from a Tannese family, the ni-Vanuatu uncle asked the couple for a truck in exchange. The judge explained to the uncle, "We don't swap children for a truck." What seemed logical to the court was illogical within *kastom*, and vice versa.

Expatriate Adoption in Vanuatu

We have established that norms for establishing adoptive relationships in Vanuatu are widely divergent from practices of expatriate adoptions. Our thesis is that these norms are very divergent because the fundamental *purpose* for adoption in the Pacific is at odds with western purposes. Traditionally, adoption in the West has been a mixture of resolving infertility and caring for children who have no parents, as well as protecting children from abusive or neglectful parents. However, in Vanuatu, those are marginally recognized purposes for adoption compared to the central purpose of strengthening social relationships. While western and ni-Vanuatu purposes for adoption are divergent, they both have biblical basis. Scripture calls us to care for the orphan (Psalm 10:14; James 1:27). Scripture also encourages the strengthening of social relationships like Pastor John, in the beginning of this article, wished to extend toward George and Briana Chesterton. Ni-Vanuatu conceptualizations of adoption are meant to foster scriptural values such as unity (John 17:23; 1 Cor. 1:10), peace (Matt. 5:9), trust (Prov. 11:13; Col. 3:9–10), and, in fact, love (1 John 4:7–8).

Therefore, if expatriates and ni-Vanuatu wish to successfully arrange adoptions, they will not only need to align the norms, but also learn to see the value in each other's purposes for adoption. Specifically, expatriates would need to view adoption not as being about social action or mitigating infertility, but as a pathway for fostering stronger bonds with South Pacific communities. And Pacific Islanders would need to understand that Westerners are particularly motivated by caring for the children who are "most in need."

A case of adoption from Tanna which the Vanuatu supreme court called "inhumane" serves to illustrate the disconnect between *kastom* and western conceptualizations of adoption. In November 2013, a taxi driver on Tanna noticed a rolled-up mat obstructing the road, but decided to drive over it rather than avoid it. Tragically, a seven-year-old girl was asleep in the mat. A man who was riding in the front seat of the truck was a relative of the girl, and he later adopted out one of his children to the bereaved family (Ewart 2013) as "restorative justice". The court and news agency expressed surprise that the taxi driver himself (a father of six) did not relinquish one of his own children. But in this case, the transaction was between relatives, so it did not entail the removal of a child from her social network, just a slight repositioning within her network.

We have shown how ni-Vanuatu adoption and inter-country adoption vary in multiple ways. Table 1 (below) gives a summary of how the six variables we have discussed in this article vary not only within Vanuatu, but also contrast with internationally sanctioned norms for adoption.

Table 1
Comparing *Kastom* Adoption to Expatriate Adoption

	Disclosure	New Land Rights	Permanent	Exchange of Child Expected	Jural Exclusive	Goods Exchanged	Hague-Eligible (need)
Kastom Tanna	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Kastom Rah	-	+	+	-	+	+	-
Transferred wet nurse (death of mother)	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
Transferred (infertile)	+	+	+	-	-	+	-
Surrendered (divorce)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transferred to + 1 Gen (death of mother)	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
International (eg. Hague)	+/-	+	+	-	+	-	+/-

As expatriates engage in discussions about adoption with ni-Vanuatu, and as the national courts work out legislation, they must be aware of how *kastom* adoptions differ from western ideals. Specifically, western Christians are increasingly seeing adoption as a ministry.

Adoption as a Ministry

Many Christians refer to their motivation to adopt as a sense of calling from God. For some, this calling is an emotional or intuitive experience that is deeply personal (i.e, "I feel called to adopt"). Others recount their decision to adopt as a broader requirement for God's people. They see in Scripture a "biblical mandate" to care for the orphan, which includes adoption. Below are some key verses that underscore this biblical mandate (all quotations are from the NIV):

1. James 1:27
   Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world

2. Deuteronomy 10:18
   He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.

3. Deuteronomy 24:17
   Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.

4. Deuteronomy 27:19
   "Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

5. Job 29:12
   I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them.

6. Psalm 10:14
   But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.

7. Psalm 10:18
   . . . defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

8. Psalm 68:5
   A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

9. Psalm 82:3
   Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

10. Psalm 146:9
    The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

11. Isaiah 1:17
    Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

12. Jeremiah 5:28
    Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not seek justice. They do not promote the case of the fatherless; they do not defend the just cause of the poor.

Why does the Old Testament advocate so consistently for the orphan? Scholars are not in agreement on this. Wolterstorff (2008) believes the plight of the orphan implicates perversions of the legal system. To care for the orphan is to subvert these perversions. Van De Wiele (2016) believes caring for the orphan is a way of enacting *chesed* "loving kindness." Both positions are partially true. We would also add that the orphan has inherent dignity, and it is worthwhile to care for orphans, without needing to draw on any additional biblical motifs.

In my (Daniel's) experience with interviewing adoptive parents, they describe their sense of "calling" to adopt as:

1. The desire to make a difference in the life of a child.

2. Fulfilling the Great Commission (making disciples of all nations, by bringing children from another nation into your family, where you disciple them).

3. Fulfilling the Great Commandment to love one's neighbor (loving a child as oneself).

4. An act of obedience to the commands above (biblical mandate to care for the fatherless).

5. An eschatological vision, evocative of Isaiah 43:6-7, "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made" (NIV).

6. A re-enactment of the gospel (God adopted us into his family, and we re-enact this by adopting children into our family).

While the number of international adoptions into US families has sharply declined in the past decade, the *interest* among Christians in adopting from abroad has not waned. Annual international adoptions numbered over 22,000 in the US in 2004, and by 2012, the number was down to just over 8000 (Voigt & Brown 2013). By 2018, the number further declined to 4059 ("Intercountry Adoption"). However interest in international adoption as "social action" has simultaneously risen dramatically. Many westerners (including all western participants in this study) see international adoption as a way to get involved in the fight against violence, illness and injustice. The typical adopting family from the United States[3] is no longer described as "the couple, who have tried unsuccessfully for many years to have children of their own, who finally, with considerable misgivings, have secured a child of unknown parentage from an institutional intermediary" (Carroll 1970, 4). More and more, couples that inquire about international adoption see adoption as a way globally to fulfill our responsibility to love our neighbor. Westerners—often with one or more birth children—are increasingly aware of what Elliott (2012) has termed a "global orphan crisis". Orphan care has become a top social issue especially for evangelical Christians in recent decades, and the interest appears to have significant staying-power (D. Nehrbass 2012, 18). For example, by 2012, US citizens had finalized 756 adoptions through Uganda (a ratio of one adoption per 46,000 people), and 2,894 adoptions through Haiti (a ratio of 1:3,500). This indicates that in the twenty-first century, engaging in international adoption is as much about child welfare as about filling the home with healthy infants. Consider the numbers for six US adoption agencies between 2011 and 2013:

- Of 118 adoptions processed by New Beginnings, 85 families (72%) had biological children at the time of adoption (Renae Vallas, pers. comm.).

- 28 of 38 (74%) of families who adopted with Hope's Promise had biological children (Beth Woods, pers. comm.).

- Children of All Nations reported that 50% of adoptive families had biological children (Snow Wu, pers. comm.).

- Christian Adoption Services processed 61 adoptions through the Philippines, and 74% of the families already had children in the home. Only

[3] This may be different in Europe. Howell (2003), for instance, noted that between 1998 and 2003 in Norway, "almost every adoptive parent" she interviewed dealt with infertility, and adopted to "become a normal family" (469).

13% reported that they were infertile (Jenica Cannella, pers. comm.).

- Nightlight Christian Adoptions reports that of 186 adoptions finalized through my (Daniel's) organization between 2011 and 2013, 89 (48%) parents did not have biological children at the time of placement, and 97 (52%) already had biological children.

- Generations Adoptions reported that 21 of 35 families (60%) already had children at the time of adoption (Cathy Sones, pers. comm.).

The families I (Kenneth) interviewed who adopted from Vanuatu fit this demographic. They are evangelical Christians who have already confirmed their own fertility. Their discourse of adoption has more to do with their faith and sense of religious calling than with a *need* for receiving a healthy infant to call their own. In one sense, they have chosen to adopt from Vanuatu because they have strong ties to ni-Vanuatu families. However, in another sense, they have assumed that the orphan crisis equally affects all parts of the developing world, as they draw on stories of unwanted babies in the world's least developed countries who have no safety net.

However, tying the global orphan crisis to international adoption can be problematic in Oceania. First of all, children who have lost both parents in Oceania typically have many other classificatory parents who will care for them. Secondly, Pacific Islanders conceive of adoption in entirely different ways than the westerners who would seek to adopt from there. The customary adoption within Oceania does not involve taking a child out of his or her social network, it means keeping the child within it. True, there are occasionally children in Vanuatu who lack basic needs because their extended families neglect to provide care. And the court system and international adoptions can play a significant part in alleviating that care deficit. But it would be erroneous to see adoption in Vanuatu, on the whole, as an institution which exists to meet the needs of orphans or neglected children.

However, there are some places in Oceania with a fomenting orphan crisis. The Pacific Island nation with the most orphans is Papua New Guinea, where one in eight children are orphaned (Mottram 2009). Overall, though, while international adoption *as social action* is sensible in places like Haiti or Sub-Saharan Africa, it is rarely necessary as an act of child welfare in the Pacific (even if, ironically, that is the primary motivation of certain potential adopters). Adoption, and inter-country adoption, is still certainly viable in the Pacific, but it may not be accurately described as social action.

This may explain why US adoptions from Oceanic nations are quite rare in a time when international adoption is increasingly linked to social action. In fact, the number of children adopted from Oceania by US families is disproportionate to other regions of the world. Table 2 shows US State department figures on finalized adoptions that were classified as "international adoptions" from independent nations in Oceania since 1999. Note that adoptions by expatriates from these nations which were completed as "domestic adoptions" (after long residence periods, described below) are not counted.

Table 2
Number of Finalized Adoptions in the US by Country in Oceania 1999 -2019

Country	Number of US Adoptions Finalized	Ratio of Adopted to Population
Federated States of Micronesia	0	0
Fiji	0	0
Kiribati	1	1:100,000
Marshall Islands	73	1:700
Nauru	0	0
Palau	0	0
Papua New Guinea	5	1:1,400,000
Samoa	121	1:1,600
Solomon Islands	0	0
Tonga	35	1:3,100
Tuvalu	0	0
Vanuatu	2	1:125,000

(Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2019)[4]

Case Studies in Adoption:

American Couple Adopts a Baby from Ambrym

Beau and Anna describe adoption in Vanuatu as a Christian ministry. They had heard several stories about the births of unwanted children at Port Vila's Central Hospital, and became alarmed. An expatriate in the

[4] https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/adopt_ref/adoption-statistics-esri.html?

capital city learned of their concern, and connected them with an employee at the hospital who would identify one of these babies in need of care. Within months, they heard of Susan, an unmarried woman from Ambrym, who had become pregnant while living in Port Vila. She planned to use the hospital's support system to place her child for adoption.

Beau and Anna met Susan, and discussed adopting the baby. They filed the paperwork with the court and waited. The main obstacle that Vanuatu's legal system presented them was establishing the name of the biological father, and they were ultimately unable to do so. Seven months after paying a small court fee, they had a court date. Beau said that the judge's main concern was to make sure the mother knew that she would "never see the child again." That is, the court assumed permanence and jural exclusivity; but the ni-judge likely understood that within *kastom*, adoptions are not necessarily permanent or exclusive. (In reality, since Beau and Anna are residents of Port Vila, they have maintained a casual relationship with Susan and her extended family).

The judge also asked Beau and Anna, "Has there never been any exchange of goods?"—another sharp contrast to the *kastom* adoptions. Beau confirmed that there had been no payment. At that point, the court produced a single-page adoption notice, and the judge informed Beau and Anna that they could give the child a new name.

Australian Family Adopts Three Ni-Vanuatu Babies

Warren and Judy are Australians who have lived in Vanuatu on two occasions over the past nine years—both times they stayed in Vanuatu for about three years. As with Beau and Anna, Warren and Judy are motivated to engage in adoption as a way of mitigating social problems. Warren told me,

> There are many babies in Port Vila who are unwanted by their mothers, but who have a safety net. But some mothers leave their babies in a pit toilet. Others are left in the ocean. I've heard many stories like this. The Daily Post said that 80% of the women in jail are there for killing their own children. One woman on Santo had five or six kids, and killed her seventh.

Warren and Judy have been active in this arena. They have completed the adoption process through the Vanuatu courts for three children, but are still establishing Australian citizenship for all three. Warren explained to me,

> In all three cases, the parents approached us. Actually, we've been asked [to adopt] six times, but we said no three of those times . . . In each case, we asked the mother and her extended family, "What was your motivation? If your motivation is because you want to get something, we're not interested. We're not going to buy you a truck. If you want your child to have opportunities that he wouldn't have otherwise, that's why we would like to adopt."

Warren and Judy's first adoptive child is Jeremiah—a boy from Tanna whose mother was unwed. Their second is Ariela, whose mother is also from Tanna. The father was from a different island, and refused to claim responsibility. Ariela's mother lives in Port Vila, and visits Warren and Judy and Ariela every four to six weeks. Their third adoptive child is from Ambae island—a girl named Milani. Warren and Judy already knew Milani's mother, because she had served as their maid before giving birth. She continues to see her mother regularly. Warren told me,

> We maintain contact with the families . . . if they get older and want to stay connected with their birth family . . . Jeremiah is legally ours, but we want to maintain a contact with the family. But if the family says, "You have to do this" we politely say "No, we'll make this decision."

Adoption—an action which so easily embodies *kastom* as the most precious exchange of resources, changes definition and significance when expatriates enter the picture. A taxi driver warned Warren and Judy, "You know you have to give Jeremiah back if the extended family asks for him." I (Kenneth) don't think the taxi driver was negating the legality of Warren and Judy's adoption; he was advising them that they have crossed cultures, and ni-Vanuatu views of adoption, while not homogenous, are bound to differ from the views of Australians. The taxi driver's unfamiliarity with the jurisdiction of the court underscores the clash of views.

Conclusion

We suggest that the main reason intercountry adoptions from Oceania are rare is neither political nor financial; rather it is rooted in competing ideals regarding the purpose of adoption. There is a serious divide between "stranger adoption" practiced at the international level, and the "relative adoption" found in Oceania. Westerners tend to desire a bit of anonymity in everything they do; they also expect jural exclusivity; and they require the adoption process to be finalized. In contrast, when ni-Vanuatu enter into adoption negotiations, they hope that the process will never be completely finalized (which would mean the death of

the relationship). The process is meant to create a relationship, not conclude one.

Kastom adoption is way for ni-Vanuatu to assert their identity, as it is tied to land rights, strengthens alliances, and encompasses the most precious exchange of resources. Interestingly, engaging in international adoption is increasingly a way for Christians (as those who participated in this study) to assert their own identity, as adoption is *the* ideal symbol of Christian concepts like rebirth and second chances. In fact, international adoption in many church contexts is not carried out solely at the family level. Church bodies are identifying with the orphan care movement as they collectively fund international adoptions for one or more families within the congregation.

While the ambiguities and competing ideals regarding adoption at a local and international level pose a challenge, expatriates and ni-Vanuatu are successfully negotiating adoptive relationships. Some expatriates who have deeply established ties in Vanuatu find the possibility of adoption to be intriguing, but also express concerns that the process of kinning would lead to a crisis of identity for the adoptee. The two expatriate families who have adopted children have not had custody of their adoptive children long enough for them to report whether these concerns about kinning have become manifest for their own adoptive children.

The bifurcation of stranger adoption and relative adoption can be extended to many other parts of the world. Christians who engage in adoption as Christian ministry need to be aware of the variegated perceptions and expectations related to adoption.

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Theorizing Pentecostal Experiences Among Church of God (Cleveland, TN) Adolescents

Christopher Fraley

This article describes and theorizes the liturgical contexts in which adolescents have Pentecostal experiences such as "speaking in tongues" and being "slain in the Spirit." It is based on ethnographic research done at a Pentecostal church affiliated with the Church of God (Cleveland, TN). I begin by offering a snapshot of modern Pentecostalism in order to demonstrate the framework that informed the context of the current study. Then I describe six factors of the liturgy that facilitate Pentecostal experience in adolescents: the language of encounter with God, the use of music to build emotional intensity, the prominent role of the body, the participatory nature of worship, the call for salvation, and the alter call as culmination of the liturgy. My analysis reveals that adolescents are more likely to have positive experiences if they have been educated in a Christian environment, had a prayer partner, have experienced a sense of distance from God, have accepted a biblicist approach to Scripture, and have a common bodily experience. I argue that Pentecostal experiences are ultimately beneficial and that a thorough analysis of their underlying factors is essential towards the construction of healthier forms of religious experience.

Introduction

In the century following the Azusa Street Revival, the phenomenon of Pentecostalism has taken the world by storm.[1] Its rapid growth has made it the world's fastest growing religious movement (Alexander 2011). Despite its growing popularity, however, there is still much left unknown about this movement which has only begun to attract the attention of more detailed study in recent decades. In particular, attention given to adolescent experiences of Pentecostalism in scholarly literature is very limited. Due to this lack of scholarly attention, and fueled by my own personal experiences of growing up within Pentecostalism, I set out to study adolescent experiences of Pentecostalism. What emerged from the data was the centrality of spiritual experience for Pentecostals which caused me to examine the factors leading to distinctive Pentecostal experiences being transmitted. Thus, through my fieldwork I was able to uncover pertinent themes prevalent within Pentecostalism that uphold its ritual framework and create an environment where experiences of the divine become commonplace.

Pentecostals, despite their emphasis on spontaneity, in fact employ the use of strongly ritualistic elements to centralize encounter with the divine at the heart of the movement. They portray a radical intimacy with the divine absent from many theological traditions and as such represent a unique phenomenon in the face of modern religion. Pentecostal emphasis on divine encounter serves as the focal point of the movement and is the lens through which all other ethnographic data needs to be interpreted. One cannot begin to understand the intricacies of Pentecostalism without first understanding the strong impulse towards divine encounter permeating the movement. With this in mind I set out to explain the occurrences of Pentecostal

[1] The Azusa Street Revival, beginning in the spring of 1906 and continuing to 1909, served as a catalyst for the worldwide Pentecostal movement. It occurred in a former African Methodist Episcopal church building located at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. The primary leader was the evangelist William J Seymour, who came to Los Angeles from Mississippi to preach the apostolic faith, a teaching that combined the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, such as was experienced in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. It was notable because of the racially integrated nature of its worship services which attracted the attention of local media outlets. The event became a launching pad for many Pentecostal missionaries.

spiritual experiences amongst the Pentecostal adolescents whom I studied.

In what follows I will present a survey of my research on Pentecostal adolescent spiritual experiences. I will begin by giving a very brief introduction to Pentecostalism in order to provide an overview of the defining characteristics of the movement which inform the specific cultural context that I observed. I will then describe the context of my fieldwork and give a description of the methodology I employed before presenting specific data points in regards to the spiritual experiences of my informants. After establishing the context of my research and presenting the data, the remainder of the article will provide a thorough analysis of the data and articulate a compelling explanation for the spiritual experiences of the adolescents I observed that avoids simplistic reductionism and remains sympathetic to the claims of my informants.

I will first highlight six themes which form the foundations of the framework by which Pentecostal experiences are able to occur. I will then describe the differences in liturgical contexts that caused the adolescents observed to only have significant Pentecostal experiences in youth-specific settings and not during the primary liturgy of the local church. Lastly, I will present five themes derived from the informal interviews with the informants who experienced significant Pentecostal encounters as a way to more fully describe the psychological and social factors undergirding the Pentecostal experiences that occurred. I will argue that there are clear patterns of cultural construction surrounding such experiences that can be observed to predict those who will likely have significant Pentecostal experiences. At the same time, however, I will assert the validity of these experiences and go as far as to argue that they are beneficial to the psychological and social development of adolescents when properly understood and integrated into one's life experience. One needs to understand the construction of these experiences so that traditions that encourage their occurrence can move away from unhealthy elements surrounding their construction and present a paradigm that encourages the psychological health of their participants.[2]

A Snapshot of Pentecostalism

Before proceeding it is important to establish a basic understanding of the development and distinctives of the Pentecostal movement. Pentecostalism finds its roots in the Holiness Movement of the 19th century and its notion of sanctification that came to be interpreted as a distinct event known as Spirit Baptism. Believers would speak in other tongues with accompanying signs as was the case at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles at the turn of the 20th century (Synan 1997). From the beginning of the revival, Pentecostalism quickly began to spread across the globe (Robbins 2004, 121). Missionaries were sent out to evangelize the world under the power of the Holy Spirit (Synan 1997, 133) with the fourfold pattern of Pentecostal theology: Jesus Saves, Jesus Heals, Jesus Baptizes with the Holy Spirit, Jesus is Coming again (Dayton 1987, 19-23). Pentecostalism is a conversionist religion in which the baptism of the Holy Spirit serves as the unveiling of a new way of being in the world (Johns 2010, 92, 95). Since its inception it has become "the most dynamic and fastest growing sector of Protestant Christianity worldwide" (Cassanova 2001, 435) with two-thirds of its adherents living outside of the Western world (Barret & Johnson 2002, 284).

The average Pentecostal uses a common-sense approach to interpreting scripture, rarely relying on interpretive tools such as allegory, and believing that the Holy Spirit will illuminate scriptures to enable interpreters to properly understand it (Stephenson 2013, 16-20). Drawing on the account of Pentecost found in the book of Acts in the Christian New Testament, Pentecostals developed the doctrine of Spirit Baptism as a distinct experience subsequent to one's conversion in which the individual will speak in other tongues as a sign of the infilling of the Spirit who is given to empower and equip believers for Christian life and service (see Horton 2004, 47-94). This emphasis has caused Pentecostals to give priority to the altar experience where leaders will commonly pray and lay hands on those earnestly seeking God for the experience of Spirit Baptism as evidenced by speaking in tongues (Tomberlin 2010). The prominence of glossolalia, better known as 'speaking in tongues,' in this tradition has produced a sort of Pentecostal elitism (Alexander 2009, 47) due to the cathartic dimensions of tongue talking which functions as a protest for those marginalized (Smith 2006, 93). Pentecostals historically have not been well educated, so they have relied on the sign of tongues as validation for the experience and perception of God that is espoused by the movement (Alexander 2009, 47).

With an emphasis on spontaneity and authenticity, Pentecostals condemn ritual as too routine and even unspiritual (Robbins 2011, 50), however, despite

[2] What follows is a reworking of original research done for my master's thesis. For a more detailed treatment of the Pentecostal experience of adolescents, including various trajectories suggested by the findings of my research, see "The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: The Construction of Pentecostal Experiences Among Adolescents and the Inspiration to Reimagine Ecclesial Practices" (Fraley 2020).

emphasizing the leading of the Spirit , "Pentecostals do in fact engage in rituals, though they often call them by other names: 'worship services,' 'Spiritual practices,' and 'Pentecostal distinctives'" (Albrecht 1999, 21-22). Robbins sees the prominence of Pentecostal ritual as the underlying reason for its global spread and institution building capacity (2011). The anti-ritualism that Pentecostals participate in is itself ritualized (Pfeil 2011). For Pentecostals, "the entire ritual field and the drama that emerges within the ritual matrix is aimed toward an encounter. Pentecostals speak of 'meeting God'" (Albrecht 1992, 110-111). In the Pentecostal tradition, the ritualizing of divine encounter teaches people how to live and behave as Christians rather than structured verbal catechesis (Albrecht 1999, 205).

In constructing the ritual field, Pentecostals use sounds, especially music, which functions as an auditory icon (Albrecht 1992, 111-112). Pentecostal music is appealing because it dramatizes and intensifies feelings, and with the prominence of call-and-response patterns, it elicits the full participation of those present (Alexander 2009, 31, 36). The presence of music is a fundamental aspect of the Pentecostal ritual encounter. Singing stimulates emotion through lyrics, loud, emotive tones and outwards expressions of praise and joy (Wellman et al. 2014). Certain bodily manifestations such as goosebumps are produced by the spike in dopamine naturally occurring when someone is listening to pleasing music (Blood and Zatorri 2001; Salimpoor et al. 2011). The emotional energy produced during the Pentecostal worship experience is given a spiritual meaning through specialized vocabulary (Inbody 2015, 340) which is learned over time from spiritual experts (Luhrman 2012, 111).

Also, the presence of fellow worshippers engaging their bodies in an act of worship becomes a visual icon to those present which expands the ritual field (Albrecht 1992, 112-113). For Pentecostals the body becomes a site where the divine presence can be experienced as evidenced by the prevalence of glossolalia and the experience of being 'slain in the Spirit' (Singleton 2011). Pentecostals share a set of bodily practices such as arms lifted in praise, hands laid on in healing, tongues speaking in prayer, and voices lifted in song (Robbins 2011, 56). Further, "all church members are qualified to initiate and participate in ritual performances. The clergy has no monopoly on ritual. Everyone participates, and whomever the Spirit moves can initiate rituals in most settings. There is no need to have formal training or possess church office (Robbins 2011, 56)." Believing God is intimately involved in the lives of his faithful allows ritual to infuse all domains of social interaction (Csordas 1997, 109).

Context and Methods

Since I have given a brief overview of the framework which informs the practices of the Pentecostal church I observed, I now turn to describe the specific context of my research and the methods I employed to gather my data. My fieldwork took place at a Pentecostal church that was a part of the classical Pentecostal denomination, the Church of God (Cleveland, TN). The site was in suburban New Jersey in an upper-middle class area with primarily Caucasian residents. While situated in a primarily Caucasian community, the church itself was very diverse ethnically and socially. There were approximately 600 members of the church, however, on any given Sunday there would be approximately 350 people present. I was on staff at the church during the time of my fieldwork, which took place over the course of a year, and had been at the church for two years before starting fieldwork. I worked as the Student Ministries Pastor at the church and oversaw all the discipleship programs from nursery to college age in the church. Although I administrated programs for all these age groups, I was most involved with the church's youth group which was comprised of students from grade six to grade twelve. As such I was responsible for facilitating the weekly youth group gathering and biweekly youth service, also organizing social opportunities for the youth.

As a result of being a staff member, I had a great deal of familiarity with the members of the congregation, particularly the youth, before starting formal fieldwork. This gave me a distinct advantage since I did not have to work hard to build trust with my informants. This familiarity allowed me to retrieve data that I likely would not have been able to uncover if I had no preexisting relationships with the subjects of my study. Instead of having to spend time building relationships and cultivating trust, I was able to focus my attention on participant observation which gave me the ability to fully capture the story I saw unfolding. In addition to participant observation, I conducted semiformal interviews with various youth group members to compile my data. The primary criterion I used to determine whom I would select for an interview was if that individual had experienced a significant Pentecostal encounter during the period of time which I was on staff at the church, however, I also interviewed several students who did not have such experiences.

The focus of my study was on adolescents and their spiritual experience, however, in order to do that it was necessary to develop an understanding of the broader ritual framework of Pentecostalism which necessitated that I observe the congregation as a whole to note the underlying patterns and practices of the church. This was done during the weekly worship gatherings occurring on Sundays and Wednesdays. The primary

liturgy occurred on Sundays at 9:00 and 11:00 AM and I would be present for the duration of both services which were more or less identical in content. In addition to Sunday services, there was a weekly Wednesday chapel service that occurred at 12:00 PM which I attended as well.

The majority of my time was spent with the youth group and I observed them in a variety of settings. At the church there were approximately 50 students connected to the youth ministry, however, the number that were actively engaged beyond participation in Sunday services was about half of that. Every Wednesday night we would hold youth group and about 12 to 15 students would be in attendance. The meeting was for one hour and was loosely structured to include a time to hang out around food and drinks, a group game, and a devotional time. The students who attended this meeting were the committed students who took their faith more seriously than the average youth in the church. As I led this group, it gave me time to get to know these students on a deeper level and several of the students became the primary informants for my study. As their teacher, I was able to learn special insights from their questions and comments which helped me to understand their experience. I oversaw a biweekly youth service held on Sunday mornings where youth played an active role in the construction of the liturgy. I would offer the sermon most of the time, however, after I was done I would break the youth into small groups of four to six people to go over the content of the sermon. This gave me the opportunity to hear the youth actively wrestle with the content of their faith in a setting without parental influence to shape the course of their conversations.

There were two sites where I spent an extended period of time with the students apart from the local church. The first was at a campground in New York for the annual denominational summer camp and the second was at the annual winter retreat held at a convention center in upstate New York. The youth camp was for a period of five days with students from other churches present. In this setting I was able to observe the youth interacting with peers and taking part in spiritual events that were specifically targeted towards them without any parents or family members there to influence them. The same goes for the winter retreat which took place over three days. Each of these settings was specifically designed to engage youth so I was able to observe the similarities and differences between these targeted settings and the local church context. It is important to note that it was in these settings where I observed students having Pentecostal experiences and that no student had such an experience while at the local church.

Presenting the Data

Having briefly described the context and methodology I employed during my research, I turn to present the data pertaining to adolescent Pentecostal experiences that I retrieved throughout the fieldwork. Although no students had significant Pentecostal encounters at the local church, 12 different students had experiences common within Pentecostalism while attending Youth Camp and Winterfest. This is out of a combined total of approximately 25 students who were present at either of the two settings. Eight of the students who had these experiences were educated in a Christian environment and two of the remaining four had parents who were highly involved in the local church. Only two of the students who had Pentecostal experiences were educated in public school and had parents not heavily involved in the church. Further, there was no racial distinction between those who had experiences. I have chosen to use the umbrella term of "Pentecostal Experiences" to be more inclusive of experiences that do not necessarily meet the defining criteria of Pentecostal distinctives such as "baptism in the Holy Spirit" or being "slain in the Spirit," but which were still deeply impactful experiences where students perceived that they had encountered God.[3] For my purposes here, Pentecostal experience refers to experiences in which the individual perceives that they have encountered God bodily, as this perception of a direct personal encounter with God is a defining theme within Pentecostalism.

First in regards to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, three different students experienced this phenomenon. Within Pentecostalism there is some debate as to the exact definition of baptism in the Holy Spirit, however, the church where the fieldwork took place adhered to the interpretation that baptism in the Spirit is signified when an individual speaks in tongues. If tongues are not present, although the experience may still be

[3] I distinguish between three categories throughout this article. First, 'baptism in the Spirit' refers to an event in which an individual speaks in other tongues that finds expression as a prayer language not resembling any sort of formal linguistic system. The individual remains conscious during this event, however, it is reported that there is a feeling of passivity when the phrases and syllables are being uttered. This differs from the experience of being 'slain in the Spirit' which occurs when an individual literally falls to the ground after receiving prayer and enters into a trance like state where they are only partially conscious of the events that occur around them. Lastly, the general term of 'Pentecostal experience' refers to experiences where an individual will have certain bodily manifestations and sensations which often accompany being Baptized in the Spirit or being Slain in the Spirit but that do not contain the more definable features of those experiences as discussed above.

considered valuable, it is not defined as baptism in the Holy Spirit. All three of the individuals mentioned had the experience of speaking in other tongues during either Youth Camp or Winterfest.

Several characteristics were present in the accounts given by the students who shared the experience of Spirit Baptism. All three students described feelings of warmth and heaviness throughout their bodies during the experience. Each of the students described intense emotional outbursts where they were uncontrollably sobbing. In all three accounts of Spirit Baptism there was a prayer partner who was actively praying over the student while speaking phrases in tongues. Each student described the feeling of being "free" or that a burden had been lifted off of them. When describing the experience of speaking in tongues, each student noted that they felt as if they were not in control of the words they were speaking. One student described it as, "God using my mouth to speak through me." Each student described being at a sort of crossroads in their walk with God and feeling as if they needed to recommit themselves to God.

In regards to the experiences themselves, there were common features within each type of Pentecostal experience. Students described sensations of warmth and heaviness in their bodies. Further, emotional outbursts, such as uncontrollable crying, were cited by every student except for one as a marker of their experience. And perceptions of being "free" or of a weight being lifted were cited by students who experienced all different types of encounters. But also, 8 of the 12 students indicated that the experiences were hard to describe and 3 described a feeling of certainty that they received from these experiences. Of the 5 students that experienced either Spirit baptism or being slain in the Spirit, a prayer partner remained with each individual throughout their experience. Of the 7 who had general Pentecostal experiences, only 2 cited having a prayer partner with them during the experience.

Of these experiences, being slain in the Spirit bore the most striking differences from the other accounts. While the two students who experienced this phenomenon both described uncontrollable emotional outbursts, sensations of warmth, and feelings of heaviness these things were only present before the actual experience of being slain in the Spirit. After being slain in the Spirit both students described a trance-like state in which they were only semi-conscious. One student described the experience as follows:

> I had been praying and crying in the altar for a while before the speaker came over to pray for me. As he started to pray for me I began to cry more intensely and as he laid his hand on my shoulder I began to feel heavy. Before I knew what was happening, the speaker took his hand and placed it on my forehead while speaking in tongues, and as he did I felt my whole body go limp and fall backwards to the floor. I don't remember someone catching me because I was already out by the time I started falling. While lying on the ground it is a hard experience to describe. I could hear things going on around me but it was as if I wasn't actually there but was somewhere else. My body felt like it was floating and I didn't even feel the floor underneath me. My mind was just sort of blank. I didn't have any thoughts, I was just lying there very peaceful without being aware of time passing. Eventually I started to gain more awareness of the room and started to feel the ground underneath me again. Eventually the feeling wore off and I felt like normal again.

Both students described feeling different after the experience occurred. They noted feeling care-free and as if a weight had been lifted off of their shoulders which was described by students who had the other types of experiences as well.

Developing an Understanding of Adolescent Pentecostal Experience

As I turn my attention to analyzing the ethnographic data I will make three moves. First, I will highlight the dominant elements of Pentecostal liturgy that arose from my observations of the various liturgical contexts. This discussion will be profitable inasmuch as it highlights the ritual framework which makes significant Pentecostal experiences possible. Second, I will discuss the prominent differences between the liturgy of the local church and that of the Youth Camp and Winterfest in order to explain the occurrence of adolescent spiritual experiences at the youth-specific settings exclusively. Lastly, I will return to the data retrieved through informal interviews with my informants regarding their spiritual experiences to further emphasize the underlying factors that were at play that created an environment in which significant Pentecostal experiences could occur.

The Dominant Elements of Pentecostal Ritual Framework

From my observations of the various liturgical contexts observed during my fieldwork I have categorized six dominant themes that comprise a typical Pentecostal liturgy. Although there were significant differences observed between the liturgy of the local church and the youth-specific settings such as Youth Camp and Winterfest, these six themes were prominent in all the settings observed suggesting a

general framework for the Pentecostal liturgy. The first theme that I observed is the emphasis on "encounter" language throughout the liturgy which is ritually reinforced through prayer and exhortation. By this I mean statements such as, "press in and seek God," "meet with us in a special way," and "show up in a powerful way." Throughout the liturgies such statements were commonplace and were ritually reinforced through prayer. As Albrecht notes, the entire ritual field of the Pentecostal is aimed towards having a divine encounter (1992), and this purpose was clearly evidenced by the language used by those leading the liturgy.

Prayer not only became a way to encounter God but also a way to redirect one's attention towards God throughout the service. The emphasis on prayer developed a mutual focus of attention that served as the first building block of a successful interaction ritual (Collins 2004). It was common to have an organized prayer performed an average of six times throughout the liturgy. Prayer would be used to open the service, to close out the worship time, to bless the offering, to prepare for the sermon, as a means of completing the sermon and offering an altar call, and as the conclusion of service. Constant repetition served as a reminder that individuals were encountering God and as such could be described as the "cultural kindling" (Luhrmann and Cassaniti 2014) of the experiences had within the service. Through these reminders participants became more susceptible to having an encounter as the prayers served as an element that trained individuals to be more disposed to absorption—the mental capacity common to many spiritual experiences in which an individual gets caught up in ideas or images; it is the capacity to become focused on the mind's object and allow it to increase while ignoring outside distractions (Luhrmann et al 2010).

The second element was the use of music to increase an emotional build-up alongside the role of the worship leader as a "spiritual expert" guiding participants along in their experience. Music is one of the most prominent ritual elements used to construct the ritual field performed through the liturgy (Albrecht 1992, 111-112) and it served to dramatize feelings and elicit the participation of all those present. The act of singing has been found to stimulate emotions (Wellman et al. 2014) and cause certain bodily manifestations as a result (Blood and Zatorri 2001; Salimpoor et al. 2011), which may explain the sensations described by various informants. The worship leader guided individuals in these experiences and helped them to attribute the bodily and emotional sensations which they were experiencing to divine agency, a process known as "metakinesis" (Luhrmann 2004). Also, worship leaders used their own bodies to model for participants how to worship. In effect, they were training individuals to make their body more receptive to a spiritual experience. As Luhrmann notes, if the mind is trained to be open to supernatural experiences, an individual has a propensity for absorption, and if they are "trained" in absorption through the practice of prayer then they will experience an unusual sensory experience given the right set of circumstances (2004).

The third element is the prominent role of the body throughout the worship experience. Pentecostals do not just think about their experiences, they feel them in a visceral way. The body became a place where the individual radically encountered God whether manifested as goosebumps, feelings of warmth or heaviness, bouts of crying, speaking in tongues etc. It is clear that my informants felt these experiences. Further, observing other students having these experiences encouraged their occurrence as worshiping bodies served as a visual icon to encourage the experience in others (Albrecht 1992). Through bodily practices such as kneeling, lying prostrate, crying, etc., the individuals present achieved a high degree of emotional entrainment with one another which, added to the mutual focus of attention developed around the idea of divine encounter, qualified these experiences as successful interaction rituals (Collins 2004).

The body has a central role within the Pentecostal liturgy as emphasis is repeatedly placed on concrete physical experiences. Singleton notes that the Pentecostal emphasis on "outward bodily experiences reflects the consumerist and body-oriented tendencies of advanced capitalistic society" (2011, 386)." Contemporary consumer society places emphasis on activities that are pleasurable to pursue and places the body as the grounds for these activities to occur (Featherstone 1991, 170). With this in mind we can assume the students present were already disposed to seeking pleasurable physical experiences, and Pentecostal experience carries this type of appeal to those who experience it. The religious ecstasy described by my informants clearly qualifies as a pleasurable physical experience, and their descriptions of these experiences were in keeping with other accounts of similar spiritual experiences (Hood and Williamson 2011). All seven students who had Pentecostal experiences at the Youth Camp also had similar experiences at Winterfest. Once they experienced those feelings, there was stirred in them a desire to experience again the type of divine intimacy that they once felt. Understood in another way, it was after feeling the emotional energy generated by these successful interaction rituals that students were encouraged to return for subsequent experiences as the energy itself is a motivating factor for such experiences (Collins 2004). Through feeling God in these bodily manifestations my informants cultivated a sense of

intimacy with the divine. It was not the propositional statements about their faith, but rather the direct encounter with the divine that confirmed their beliefs for them. God was not some distant entity uninvolved with the day to day lives of my informants like in the moral therapeutic deism described by Denton and Smith (2005); instead God was intimately involved in their lives and could be felt and experienced.

Fourth, there is the participatory nature of the worship service. My informants were not just casual observers of the liturgy but were active participants in the events that were needed in order to make each encounter a success. This became clear through the way worship leaders would exhort members to "press in and seek God" and the way the speaker would highlight their responsibilities through the prayer before the sermon. In this way, the liturgy itself became an avenue for individuals to experience social belonging and love which may have motivated their actions throughout the worship experience. In these liturgies, individuals found a place where they could belong without fear of judgement. All who attended were there for the same purpose, to encounter God, and the things going on in the outside world did not matter during these times. The Pentecostal liturgy is a communal affair where all those present have a role to play in the community experiencing the presence of God. It is only through full participation that God's presence is made manifest in the service. This allows individuals to feel empowered to carry out the ritual through employing their bodies as instruments of praise and worship. They are instruments of the divine as much as they are receptors of the divine and can help others to experience the Spirit through the laying on of hands and praying over individuals in tongues.

The fifth element is the call for salvation offered at the end of the Pentecostal liturgy. The opportunity for conversion or recommitment is essential as it paves the way for the culmination of the Pentecostal worship experience which is the altar call. The call to salvation opens up a liminal space that offers new possibilities for all who may decide to participate in it (Turner 1967). By offering the call to salvation, the minister allows the participants to reflect and take inventory of their lives in order to note things that are necessary to change. If there is any sin in an individual's life that is separating them from God, it must be confessed and dealt with in order for the individual to once again experience the working of the Spirit. Therefore, sin functions as a psychological barrier separating an individual from God, and as such it is necessary for the individual to receive absolution from this sin. In my observations, ministers tended to play on this feeling of separation and would even exaggerate descriptions of such separation by emphasizing the eternal consequences of not being "right with God."[4] By placing cosmic significance on an individual's choice towards reconciliation, stakes are raised and an enormous amount of pressure is placed on the individual to "get right with God." Therefore, by confessing and repenting from one's sin a real weight is lifted from the individual which allows them to experience freely the Spirit during the altar time. This transaction fulfills the individual's need for moral affirmation which is one of the six motivating interests that drive human action, but also it confirms the individual's place within the group and thus fulfills his or her need for social belonging (Smith 2015).

Thus, we arrive at the sixth and final theme: the altar call as the culmination and fulfillment of the Pentecostal liturgy. Everything that happens throughout the service is in anticipation of the moment when the altar call is offered. The altar serves as a visual icon representing the place where the divine presence can be experienced and felt, but it also is a place where new possibilities can be encountered. As Pentecostal theologian Daniel Tomberlin states, "God does not need altars, but humans do. Humans need a sacred place to meet God, because humans are creatures of time and space" (2010, 2). The altar call becomes the time and place where God can be encountered in a tangible way. Not one of my informants had a Pentecostal experience that was not directly tied to an altar call experience.

Although they may have felt various emotions throughout the worship services, it was specifically during the altar time that these students perceived that they had encountered God. For the students involved there was the anticipation and expectation that something would happen during the altar experience which made them more disposed to having a vivid spiritual experience. As Luhrmann and Morgain argue in their attentional learning theory of spiritual experience (2012), by having such an expectation and paying more attention to the shifts in mind and body individuals increase the likelihood of such experiences happening. Also, the presence of "prayer partners" during the altar call serving as spiritual experts to guide individuals on their way towards an experience with the divine made this time even more productive in terms of spiritual experience. Often times these prayer partners were adults who were respected and admired by the students which may have encouraged them to further seek these experiences in order to receive the affirmation of their role models. There were, however, many instances when the students themselves spontaneously began to pray for one another during these times which deserves some further exploration.

[4] For a detailed description of these events see the ethnography within my master's thesis (Fraley 2020).

Through the liminal space opened by the call to salvation, *communitas* emerges during altar call experiences. *Communitas* is understood as a temporary state suspending hierarchical relationships and in which participants stand on equal footing under the direction of the ritual leader (Turner 1969). *Communitas* emerges in the Pentecostal altar call experience inasmuch as there are no existing barriers that prohibit one from experiencing the divine. Instead, all who are willing can come partake and participants devoid of authority prior to the ritual become empowered to guide others through the liminal process. This is evidenced by the way in which students took initiative to pray over one another during these altar call times without any clear direction to do so. Although leaders were still present at the altar, students assumed the mentoring role indicating a subversion of typical hierarchies.

Differences in Context that May Explain Spiritual Experiences

Thus far I have listed six dominant themes from Pentecostal liturgical contexts. However, as I noted, no students reported having a Pentecostal experience during the regular weekly services at the local church. All students who had these experiences had them at either the Youth Camp or Winterfest, so it is important to examine the different elements that these contexts offered which made these spiritual experiences possible. I will highlight four key differences that I believe contributed to this discrepancy in experience between the various contexts.

The first difference is observed in the structure of the environments. Whereas at the local church, the sanctuary looked like a traditional place of worship, the environments at both Youth Camp and at Winterfest were set up in way designed to build maximum youth engagement. At Youth Camp the setting was small which forced participants to be in close contact with one another, and coupled with the presence of a large sound system, created an environment that felt like being at a concert, something the students there were all familiar with. Winterfest more directly mirrored this concert atmosphere with the elevated stage, fog machines, stage lights, the dark auditorium and powerful sound system. If one were to walk in during the worship set it would be hard to tell the difference from a typical concert other than the content of the music.[5] These environments would have felt familiar to the students present and as a result may have lowered their defenses.

Second, being removed from their typical context, and thus removed from friends and parents, may have also made the students more disposed to having significant spiritual experiences. Students were "unplugged" from their normal routine and forced into environments where they had to actively engage and reflect on their own spirituality. This was especially prominent at the Youth Camp as there was little to no cell phone service there, so students were left no choice but to engage in the camp activities.[6] Also, at the Youth Camp all seven of the students present had a significant spiritual experience, whereas only about half the students present at Winterfest had similar experiences. This suggests that the more removed, or "unplugged", individuals are from their normal context, the more likely they are to have a significant spiritual experience. Further, it appears that students associated these removed contexts as places where significant spiritual experiences occurred. Having the idea that significant experiences happened in these locations prior to participating in these contexts disposed students to having such an experience.

A third difference is in the age of those leading the worship service. Whereas at the local church most individuals involved in leading the service were in their forties and fifties, at both the Youth Camp and Winterfest the facilitators were in their twenties and thirties and had a contemporary look. At the local church facilitators wore dresses and suits, but at the Camp and at Winterfest they wore jeans and t-shirts. They looked like the students and thus gave the students a visual icon which they could connect with and emulate. These were not your typical adults; they were young, hip and fresh. As such, these "leaders" garnered the respect and admiration of the students thus serving as role models for how to engage in their own spirituality. The presence of these visual icons may have made students feel as if they were given license to participate in the liturgy in a greater way than in the local church context where the youth subculture did not find any noticeable expression in the liturgy.

Fourth, the method of delivery between the local church and the youth contexts was drastically different. At the Summer Camp and Winterfest, the music played was contemporary and was highly engaging whereas the music at the local church was more in line with the tastes of their parents. Also, various cultural mediums were used to convey theological themes and to build

[5] For a discussion of how Christian environments mimic secular environments see "Creating an Idyllic World for Children's Spiritual Formation" by Karen-Marie Yust (2006).

[6] For a more detailed discussion of the unique features of Christian youth camps see "The Fundamental Characteristics and Unique Outcomes of Christian Summer Camp Experiences" by Jacob Sorenson (2018).

engagement before the services such as dances, skits and spoken word performances. Again, those performing these aspects of the service were young and relatable for the students present. Also, the sermons offered lively illustrations and used examples common to youth subculture with which the students could connect. Even more, the use of props and acting out scenes from the scriptures made the sermon content come alive for the students. Everything about the delivery of the content was catered to their specific needs and as a result it elicited favorable responses from the students present.

Interpreting Data from the Informants

Having discussed the main themes of Pentecostal liturgies and the differences that arose between the various contexts, I move to interact directly with the data received from my informants through informal interviewing. From the data, there emerges an explicit link between students who were educated in Christian environments and the students who had Pentecostal experiences. Of the 12 who had significant spiritual experiences, 8 were educated in Christian environments. This confirms the hypothesis that a student's school context will determine how important or active their own faith is (Regnerus et al. 2004, 35). Further, 10 of the 12 had parents who were highly involved in the local church and had experienced Pentecostal experiences in their own lives. This confirms the findings of Denton and Smith (2005) that the most religiously involved teens typically have parents that are highly involved, and their experiences and beliefs mirror one another. All the teens observed had experiences common within Pentecostalism which confirms that individuals have experiences typical of their religious tradition (Smith 2003; Luhrmann and Cassaniti 2014).

Second, there emerged a link between the presence of a prayer partner and the occurrence of the more definable Pentecostal experiences of Spirit Baptism and being slain in the Spirit. All 5 of the students that had these types of encounters had a prayer partner who remained with them throughout the duration of their experiences. These prayer partners functioned as spiritual experts (Luhrmann 2012) who were present to guide the students through their experiences. They modeled for them the way to pray and seek God, but even more they encouraged the students to press in and seek God for themselves. They were role models for the students to emulate (Smith 2003; Denton and Smith 2005) whose presence may have encouraged more active participation on the part of the students as they were likely motivated to seek the approval of those praying for them.

A third common theme is feeling distant from God prior to having a significant spiritual experience. With 7 of the 12 articulating this notion it suggests that there is a strong correlation between having a desire to draw close to God and experiencing a type of Pentecostal experience. This confirms that when individuals focus their minds on experiencing the divine they are more disposed to having experiences attributed to divine agency (Luhrmann et al. 2012). In connection with this, there was a fear of not being right with God which motivated several students towards their spiritual experiences. Three students explicitly listed their fear of not being right with God as their reason for seeking such a spiritual experience, with three more hinting at this idea as well. With these underlying fears present, speakers were able to play on those fears and position altar calls in a way that pressured students into making an emotional decision. The students wanted to be in right standing with God and experiencing God in a tangible way served as a signifier that they achieved that goal, thus the absolution felt from the experience is itself a motivating factor.

Fourth, there appeared to be a clear distinction between students who had Pentecostal experiences and those who did not that centered around the way that they viewed scripture. Ten of the students who had Pentecostal experiences adopted the biblicist approach[7] common to the church which emphasized the Bible's "exclusive authority, infallibility, perspicuity, self-sufficiency, internal consistency, self-evident meaning, and universal applicability" (Smith 2011, viii). The church espoused the notion that the Bible is a handbook for Christian living that could be readily understood by all those who open its pages and as such should be used exclusively to guide one's faith and practice. The issue with this view is that the Bible is not always clear and consistent on theological and ethical matters, which makes its application a daunting task and leads to the pervasive interpretive pluralism seen throughout the various expressions of Christianity (Smith 2011). Students who did not view the scripture this way tended not to have significant Pentecostal experiences as they expressed a fair degree of skepticism that such experiences were legitimate. This is an interesting distinction that warrants further investigation in the future.

The fifth and final theme was the similarity in the descriptions of the Pentecostal experiences my informants had as well as the positive effects these

[7] For a detailed description of this approach to scripture see Christian Smith's *The Bible Made Impossible: Why Biblicism is Not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture* (2011).

experiences had on them. There was a high degree of consistency in descriptions of the physical sensations experienced by my informants suggesting the universality of the nature of these experiences. As mentioned previously, the descriptions of these sensations bore marked similarity to a previous phenomenological study of Pentecostal experience (Hood and Williamson 2011). There is a consistency in experience that emerges in those who have Pentecostal encounters regardless of the underlying motivating factors. Further, there is existing evidence which supports the experience of my informants. My informants described the sensation of not being in control of the words they were speaking when they experienced Spirit Baptism and the overall ineffable nature of these spiritual experiences. One study found that those who engaged in glossolalia exhibited greater activation of the right cerebral hemisphere processes, which has been historically more associated with mystical states than during a discursive reading activity (Mueller and Philipchalk 2000). This study supports the notion that those engaging in the practice of glossolalia through the experience of Spirit Baptism are entering into a mystical state of consciousness. Another study confirmed two hypotheses in regards to brain activity during glossolalia. First during glossolalia there was a decrease in parietal frontal lobe (PFL) activity when compared with singing, as PFL is involved with willful behaviors, and there were no significant decreases in the superior parietal lobe (SPL) when compared with meditation, as the SPL has been shown to deactivate with the experience of a loss or altered state of consciousness (Newberg et al. 2006). Finally, a more recent study indicated that during glossolalic speech the participant entered a stage of brain activity resembling light sleep (Reeves et al. 2014). These findings support the claims of Pentecostal glossolalists who indicate an element of passivity during these experiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my informants clearly underwent concrete physical experiences that were interpreted as significant religious experiences which had an immediate impact on their own mental wellbeing. Although there are clear patterns of cultural construction surrounding these experiences, that should not cause one to simply dismiss the claims of those who have such experiences as invalid without first hearing how these experiences have impacted them on a personal level. The noted difficulty in describing these experiences as well as the feelings of certainty derived from these experiences is in keeping the noetic and ineffable qualities of mystical encounters described by William James (1982) and is also in line with the findings of Hood and Williamson (2011) from their phenomenological study of Spirit Baptism. As I have mentioned, there is existing evidence that supports the mystical and passive dimensions of experiences such as Spirit Baptism and glossolalia. What my informants experienced were clearly mystical encounters that relieved anxiety and tension and caused many of them to describe the feelings of being free or having a weight lifted off of them later. It is my belief that these experiences had an overall positive impact on the students who had them, and in the case of some informants, directly helped them to change undesirable behaviors that they had previously exhibited. In this way I believe that these experiences are valuable and when understood in a healthy way can lead to positive life changes in those who have them.

The beneficial role of religion and religious experiences in the lives of adolescents has long been noted. Adolescents who fall into the "Devoted" and the "Regular" categories suggested by Denton and Smith are more likely to avoid problems typical of adolescence and to achieve positive life outcomes (2005). Evidence has shown that healthy spirituality can increase resilience in adolescents (Esquivel and Kim 2011). Spirituality may facilitate resilience by helping build attachment relationships, by opening access to sources of social support, by guiding conduct and values, and by offering opportunities for personal growth and development (Crawford et al. 2006). Further, religion functions as a meaning system and provides life purpose in the face of highly stressful situations (Park 2007). The religious context promotes a sense of identity that promotes a concern for the social good and as such provides a unique setting for adolescent identity formation (King 2003). Although a sense of purpose can be developed outside of a religious context, many individuals find meaning through religious faith which sustains them through difficult situations (Esquivel and Kim 2011). This sense of meaning found in those with higher religiosity correlates to less of a likelihood of adolescents using substances including alcohol, tobacco and marijuana (Johnson 2008; Sandy et al. 2003).

With this in mind one should avoid the temptation to dismiss these experiences using simplistic reductionism. Instead focus should be shifted towards how knowledge of the construction of such experiences can be employed to create healthier, more sustainable forms of religious experience that can serve to ground the religious identity of adolescents so that they can partake in the positive life outcomes associated with a healthy, vibrant spirituality. In my research there were definitely aspects of the construction of these experiences that bordered on manipulation and had negative psychological effects on the students themselves. Specifically, the role of fear of "not being

right with God" as a motivating factor needs to be addressed. I have written elsewhere on the inadequacy of the theological paradigm presented within the tradition I observed that portrays God in a way that perpetuates such fear (Fraley 2020). For here, suffice it to say that within Christianity there are various models of God and there is no need for one to subject themselves to an antiquated conception of God that so clearly produces undesirable psychological effects.[8]

Just as from the data one is able to see that a shift needs to be made from older conceptions of God in order to promote psychological health, so too one can also see that the influence of role models in these spiritual experiences needs to be observed and regulated to ensure that undue pressure is not being placed on adolescents to manipulate a certain outcome. This was prevalent during altar call encounters I observed where youth leaders would remain with individuals coaching them throughout the experience. Although I think there is a degree to which this can be beneficial, it becomes problematic when a leader becomes aggressive both physically and verbally in trying to bring about such an experience for adolescents. Youth have respect and admiration for those who serve as their leaders and the power and privilege that comes with a position of leadership should not be leveraged to manipulate a spiritual outcome when a student clearly would not otherwise experience that outcome without added pressure.

Although I have discussed only two aspects of these encounters that need to be reassessed in light of the data, there are other insights that can be capitalized on as well by spiritual leaders willing to introspect on their own practices and behaviors. Therefore, I do not provide explanations of these experiences as a means to dismiss them, rather explanation is provided with the hopes that it can lead to positive changes in patterns and practices. What is clear is that Pentecostal encounters are significant experiences that can have a lasting impact on the psychological and social development of the adolescents who have them. As such they should be seen as a valuable tool to facilitate spiritual growth and development and should be approached critically in order to increase the efficacy of their implementation. Recognizing the impactful nature of these encounters takes seriously the experience of the informants and actively listens in order to learn from their experience.

An approach that takes seriously the claims of the informants is foundational to any truly engaged anthropology. Therefore, we should work to validate the experiences of our informants and listen to what they are telling us so that a trajectory can be set that involves healthy growth and development rather than allowing practices to remain stale and stagnant. In this case in particular, that involves a critical evaluation of certain practices as sketched above which will ultimately lead to a situation where a person can partake in the positive effects of religious experience without being subjected to its negative consequences.

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[8] For examples of how theologians have explored alternate conceptions of God see Sallie McFague's *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (1987), as well as Elizabeth's Johnson's *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (1992). Both authors present alternative visions of God that deviate from the model of God portrayed in the context of my fieldwork.

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Paul's Resurrection in I Corinthians 15:33-54 in Contradistinction to Reincarnation in Igbo Cosmology

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This article examines Paul's concept of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:33-54 in contradistinction to reincarnation in Igbo cosmology. The approach has been analytical or qualitative. The historical-critical method and contextual tools are used in the interpretation of the Bible text. Paul sees resurrection as a miracle, a one-time event that is not repetitive, with a body that is not only in continuity with the original body but also new, transformed and glorious and is not subject to earthly limitations. These stand in sharp contrast to Igbo cosmological notions of reincarnation where the phenomenon is a natural process, repetitive, non-identical with the former body and where the new body is subject to all the earthly limitations. Reincarnation in Igbo cosmology runs contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures. This therefore has theological implications for Christian ministry for the Church in Igboland.

Introduction

The Igbo of Nigeria believe in reincarnation, which, as a religious belief, affects their openness to certain Christian doctrines especially those concerning death and the afterlife. This belief is mixed up with other beliefs like the cult of ancestors, belief in the spirits, and the cult of *Chukwu* (God). The belief in reincarnation affects Christians at many levels ranging from belief, experience, and ritual relation to their ancestors (Obilor 1994). The levels are intrinsically bound together and cause great harm to the Igbo Christian, especially when conversion to Christianity fails to address experiences in everyday life. Continued adherence to the beliefs and practices of traditional religion that reveals belief in reincarnation has not only weakened the Church but has also given rise to syncretism. For instance, in certain cases of child illness, when medical expertise appears not to proffer a solution, an elder would come in and ask the question: "Has the ancestor who came back in this child been determined?" ("*Agbaana nwata nke a agu?*"). In many such cases, the parents, on being questioned, would go in search of a *dibia-afa* (fortune-teller) to find out who came back in the child and subsequently to welcome such an ancestor with appro priate honours. In some cases, the sickness appears to subside after the rituals. Some Christian families unfortunately get involved in this act. It is an open secret that when a case becomes a matter of life and death, Christianity is often put aside and the traditional religion takes over in the life of some Christians who would aptly assent that "*Ije-uka adighikwa na nke a*" ("Going to Church will not limit ones action in this matter").

There is a phrase commonly used among some Igbo Christians which gives credence to reincarnation, and that phrase is none other than, "*N'uwa m ozo*" ("in my next world"). For example, "*N'uwa m ozo m ga-abu nke a ma-obu nke ozo*" ("In my next world, I would be this or that"). A prominent Church leader, was heard to confess in one of his preachings, "*N'uwa m ozo nghaghi abukwa onye isi Ojii*" ("In my next world, I would not be an African"). That is the crux of the matter. If some Church leaders are doing or saying things suggestive of reincarnation, do we then expect the congregations to do less? This, of course, is contrary to the biblical teaching that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death comes judgment (Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

This therefore reveals a gap in knowledge among some Igbo Christians who are being converted from traditional religion to Christianity. The Igbo Christian is so fundamentally bound to these indigenous beliefs as to present a stiff resistance to key Christian contentions such as resurrection.

The author is concerned that the problem of reincarnation has become such a hot topic and has assumed such different forms in the present times that it can no longer be treated as an ancient belief of "pagan peoples". Ezeaku (personal communication, August 8,

2019) saw it as a "challenge to Christianity". Kasper, (cited by Obilor 1994) spoke about the dangers to faith of the theories of reincarnation. According to him, it is necessary to respond to "this syncretistic vision of the world and of life" (111). This article therefore will show that, in the light of 1 Corinthians 15:33-54, the Igbo belief in reincarnation stands in marked contrast to bodily resurrection. The article is qualitative or analytical in approach. The historical-critical method and other contextual tools were used in the interpretation of the biblical text.

Exegetical Analysis and Discussion of 1 Corinthians 15:33-54

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-34, Paul discusses Christ's resurrection; the resurrection of Christ as the basis of believers' resurrection; the resurrection of Jesus and its universal implications; and, pointing to baptism on behalf of the dead, Christian suffering and the beast of Ephesus as evidence from Christian experience. In 1 Corinthians 15:33-54, he turns his attention to the nature of the resurrection body. The underlying theme in 1 Corinthians 15 is that the bodies of the faithful will be raised, transformed and be made like that of the Lord's resurrection body. The nature of the Lord's resurrection body therefore forms the backbone of Paul's discussion on the nature of the resurrection of the believers. Pannenberg (1968) expresses the view that Paul must have had the mental image of the resurrection of Jesus in this passage because he describes the resurrection of Jesus and that of Christians as two completely parallel events.

No doubt Christians have long been battling over the issue of the nature of the resurrection body. How possible will it be for the dead to rise? Are they likely to rise up from the grave with skeletons and corruption and with all their associated bodily weaknesses? If so, of what value will the resurrection be? It is doubtful if the Corinthians were doubting the possibility of miracles because they had never questioned the reanimation of corpses by God. But this is not to deny the fact that they were wondering why corpses which have fallen into decay should be animated.

We have no way of knowing whether Paul posed his own question in verse 35 or whether he was dealing with a question raised at Corinth. But one thing is clear; either Paul quotes someone or uses the words he imagined any objector would use. One major problem is the correct rendering of the question: *Posegeirontai hoi nekroi?* Most Bible translators and commentators render it: "How are the dead raised?" This translation links it closely with: *Poio de somatierchontai?* "With what kind of body do they come?" Philips prefers: "How is the resurrection achieved?" Others have it translated: "Is it possible that the dead are raised?" Abogunrin (1991) argued that *alla* (but) is the writer's own words and not the objector's and therefore, "How are the dead raised?" is possibly mistranslated. He concluded that the Corinthians were saying that they could not be expected to believe what was impracticable and unimaginable. Nevertheless, "How are the dead raised?" appeared to be a better translation in that it queries the mechanics of the process. "With what kind of body will they come?" inquires as to the form they will have. Morris (1960) underscores that "these Greek sceptics having understood that a body quickly turns into a heap of decomposed rubbish thought to laugh the idea of resurrection out of court with their query about the body"(219).

In verse 36, Paul refers to them as "fools". The objectors must be foolish to suppose that the resurrection body would be exactly like the mortal body or a continuation of life on earth. The impact is really to make it clear that what Paul has been saying is not without parallels in familiar things around them. If they could only reflect on what they were doing for a moment, they would have an answer to the objections from activities they often engaged in. Paul says that it is common knowledge that new plants never appear unless the seeds first decay. In the light of this, to think that what is "dead" cannot be raised is for Wilson (1978) "in flagrant contradiction to the facts of experience" (229). It appears as if their familiarity with the marvel of harvest has dulled their sense of wonder.

For Paul, they sowed seed which was destroyed, at least in the form in which it was sown. The act of sowing (a "burial") was so similar to what follows death among humankind that Paul could refer to the grain as dying (Jn. 12:24). Stressing this metaphor further, he says that the growth that follows is a giving of new life and that new life does not come unless the grain first "dies". The seed must be destroyed if the new life is to appear. The seed which decays is rather quickened. Hence, anytime they sow, they provide answers to their objections. In other words, that human organisms are destroyed at death is not a negation of bodily resurrection. It has to be noted that Paul does not intend to discuss the laws governing the cultivation, germination and growth of plants for he foresees that such a venture would lead to wrong perception and interpretation of the process of resurrection. For Paul, the birth of a plant is nothing other than a miracle from God who not only gives each seed a body but also life. In contradistinction to the doctrine of immortality of soul, Paul sees the doctrine of the resurrection as a miracle.

Paul teaches that during the time of sowing, we sow nothing more than just a seed. Again, we notice that at sowing we observe that there is no indication of the plant with its stem and leaves and flowers. They naturally appear. A closer examination reveals that there is a beautiful combination of both similarities and

differences. While the difference between seed and plant is obvious, their identity is profound in that the seed produces that particular plant and no other.

In the same vein, it amounts to no resurrection at all if new beings that basically have no connections with the dead persons are raised. It will simply mean that God is creating new beings with no links to old ones. Consequently, Paul presents a catalogue variety of bodies in the human world. Paul teaches that just as God made different bodies of plants, animals and heavenly bodies, surely will He clothe resurrected people with suitable resurrection bodies.

The concept of "the body" is central in Pauline theology, and no aspect of his theology has generated more controversy than this. The term *soma* (body) connects most of his important themes. Robinson (1952) has remarked that apart from Paul's doctrine of God, all other tenets of his doctrine are represented in his understanding of the body. He lists them as: the doctrine of man, the doctrine of sin, the incarnation and atonement, the Church, the sacraments, sanctification and eschatology. As a result, one may ask: What is the resurrection body for Paul?

Opinions are divided. Bultmann (1965) has proposed a straight-forward thesis that Paul generally uses the Hebrew concept of body, which connotes, not the body as opposed to soul, not matter as opposed to form, but the whole person. A person does not have a *soma*; he or she is *soma*. The context of Bultmann's thesis is the problem associated with "the Corinthian's sceptics" (429) who satirically posed a rhetorical question about the dead: "What sort of the body do they have when they come back?" (1 Cor. 15:35). Brown (1974) has discussed this problem in relation to the resurrection of Christ and concluded that bodily resurrection needs a direct intervention from outside history, an eschatological context with respect to time and space.

The crux of the question is whether Paul, by his use of the analogy of the seed which dies and the new plant which springs up implies that there is no continuity between the seed and the new plant. Sider (1978) has asked whether Paul by stressing the difference between the seed and the new plant implies "as many scholars have suggested, that there is no continuity between the two". Abogunrin (1991) discusses what he calls "four antitheses" (95) to distinguish between the earthly body and the resurrection body: perishable and imperishable; dishonour and glory; weakness and power; and mental and spiritual. Abogunrin maintains that it is the body which demonstrates continuity and that it is on the body that God's initiatives are wrought. For him, this corporeal, somatic continuity is seen as persisting through a deep, radical and definitive transformation of our being: resurrection.

One must note here what Abogunrin calls somatic continuity. Marxen (1968) has said that in 1 Corinthians 15:35ff, Paul's description of the resurrection body as "imperishable" means that he intended it as *totaliter aliter* from the terrestrial body. This interpretation is wrong if we agree with Abogunrin in his "somatic continuity". Dahl (1978) also says that although the resurrection body will not be materially identical with the one we now posses, it will be what he chooses to call "somatically identical" (10). In this case, Dahl and Abogunrin agree against Marxen. Cravig (1953) believes that since Paul's stress is on "the complete difference between the two", what is important is "the body which God has chosen, not one that develops naturally from the previous one" (244). Jeremias (1955, 56) argues that what is put into the earth is wholly different from what grows up. Then, Hering (1964) is of the opinion that what Paul intends to stress is the divine intervention rather than a natural process of growth. However, Davies (1962) believes that because Paul was a Jew and because the popular Jewish view was exceedingly materialistic, even the more refined spiritual conception was "not inconsistent with the belief in the bodily resurrection" (307).

Be that as it may, *soma* does not refer to the part of the human body which perishes at death. This aspect is called *sarx* (flesh). This corresponds to the Hebrew *basar* (1. Cor. 15:50). *Soma* appears not to have an equivalent in Hebrew. *Soma* not only makes all persons into a life bundle but also into the necessary vehicle of human mediations with the external world, with other people, and even with our maker. It renders the human person from sinner to final glorification in God. Of course, the teachings of dualism that see people as body-soul are irreconcilable with Paul's idea of *soma.* Consequently, Paul could not help but reject the notion that only part of a human being will survive death in 1 Corinthians 15. For Paul, it is the entire person that survives death and it is the entire person that rises again whether one talks of *psyche* as for the Platonists or *spirit* as for the Gnostics. According to Paul, our body is at present laden with death (Rom. 7:24); mortal (Rom. 8:10f); perishable (1 Cor. 15:44-46); humiliated and humiliating (Phil. 3:21); and groans (11 Cor. 4:2,4). But then, it is capable of being changed into an imperishable, spiritual, glorious body. When we are raised up by Christ, our bodies will be transformed to be like that of Christ's, whom God raised up gloriously. This act of God will constitute God's triumphant act of conquest in Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul points out the nature and extent of continuity and discontinuity as we have it in the seed and plant analogy. He affirms that our body which is subject to decay (*plethora*) is at death sown corruptible only to be raised incorruptible. By the use of the word *plethora*, Paul means more than mere physical

disintegration at death. He sees corruption as a powerful evil that affects all creation as a result of Adam's disobedience. Whereas death and corruption are the aftermath of sin, victory over sin, death and corruption will result from resurrection. The body is in all respects no evil but a gift of the Creator from whom all good things do proceed. To distinguish the first Adam and the second Adam (Christ), the second Adam is to help us understand the ideas that are connected to the natural body (*psuchikon*) as opposed to the spiritual body (*pneumatikon*). Paul refers to the first Adam as a man of dust (cf. Syr. Apol. 48:42ff). However, in the place of death and corruption which came through the first Adam who was made a living being, the last Adam is made a life-giving Spirit. At present, we bear the image of the "man of dust" which will later be changed to the image of Christ, the "heavenly man" at the resurrection. Given that there is authentic bodily continuity in that it is what is sown perishable that is raised imperishable; what is sown in dishonour that is raised in glory; what is sown in weakness that is raised in power, there is marked discontinuity in that there must be a marked transformation. For Paul, the spiritual body is quite different from the material body.

In verse 49, instead of predicting what Christians would be like, Paul encourages Christians to bear the image of the "heavenly man" in this life. For the apostle, the process towards the final victory must start here and now. It appears that there are two interpretations of verse 50. One idea is that it refers to those who are still living at the Parousia and who must of necessity be transformed since they still possess bodies subject to death and corruption. Another interpretation connects the verse with those living an immoral life who have not undergone a spiritual rebirth. It is evident that three elements of discontinuity are clear in Paul: sin, death, its consequences and freedom from sin and death; perishability; mortality and immortality.

Igbo Cosmology

Like every other people, the Igbo have their own unique worldview. According to Metuh (1985) the Igbo know only one world inhabited by both visible and invisible beings. For Anozia (1968), "The Igbo world whether visible or invisible was a 'real' world in every sense of the word" (2). It is in this understanding that Uzukwu (cited in Obilor 1994) regarded the Igbo world as a world, "Where time and space, objects and persons are made sacred . . . where from cradle to grave life is moving towards fullness through dynamic interaction between the human community and its spiritual originators" (117).

This sacralized worldview also extends to commerce. Each Igbo day is a market day and is dedicated to a spirit: *Eke, Orie, Afọ and Nkwọ*. This is repeated in the same order. The Igbo believe in a three-step structured hierarchical order of the hereafter: the land of *Chukwu* (God), the land of the non-human spirits like *Ana* or *Ala,* and that of the human spirits with special reference to the ancestors. Obilor (1994) pointed out that there are three relations which maintain equilibrium in Igbo thought: cosmic, social, and religious. The three relations are viewed both from the spirit world and the world of humans. Both *Chukwu* and the gods expect a harmonious co-existence among the three. Man is said to be responsible for any disharmony or disequilibrium. Any disorder arising from any of the three relations is attributed to human negligence or transgressions. Thus, natural disaster, epidemics, famine, certain deaths, and all that is considered unnatural are attributed to human 'sin' and 'wrong doings'. These are ultimately traced to the violation of taboos, *nsọ* (abomination), *arụ* (evil) like the sin of sorcery, homicide, suicide, incest, false oath, theft, etc. In this worldview, any evil in the world is caused by human beings.

The Igbo thoughts and ideas are usually experimental, concrete, practical and inductive rather than abstract and deductive. For instance, the Igbo relate to God through His self-manifestations and approach the destiny of man through the value and reward of good life. This approach extends to their idea of reincarnation and retribution. Reincarnation is therefore not only the effort to unite the visible and invisible spheres of existence but also to give value and reward to good life by the ancestors.

For the Igbo, justice in its most perfect form exists in God. For them, justice takes its bearing from God and not from humans. Nzomiwu (1999) noted that in the Igbo thought, "All other beings are just according to the degree of their propinquity to God" (77). God is understood as the source of all justice. God has some names which indicate what the Igbo believe about Him. For example, He is *Chukwu* (Chi-ukwu, the great God), *Chineke* (Chi-n'eke, the God that creates), *Oseburuwa* (Lord who upholds the world), *Amamikpe nke ndi ikpe* (the Judge of the judges), and *Nwoke oghorogho anya* (One with very wide eyes, thereby implying that He can see all things).

From the point of view of origin and final destiny, *mmadụ* (man) for Igbo belongs to *Chukwu*. God at the moment of conception creates the spirit of the would-be person. Metuh (1985) concisely put it this way: "The spirit that will be born goes before Chukwu to receive his '*Chi*' (spirit destiny) and his '*Eke*' (reincarnating ancestor), and then the Okike (creative emanation of *Chukwu*) lets him out into the world" (40). However, I doubt whether Metuh's stance is a true representation of Igbo belief. This is because the Igbo understand God as *wholly other*. It is this incomprehensibility of the God of Igbo beliefs that lead the Igbo people to call

Him *Ama-ama amasiamasi* (One whose activities are known, yet not known). He is *Chukwu-Okike* or *Chineke* meaning the creator of all things. He stands outside all human configurations and classifications. To classify Him is to reduce Him to the level of divinities. In Igbo thought, He is therefore not one of the beings the Igbo can classify. He alone enjoys the prerogative of creation and does not need the assistance of the ancestors. While it is believed that original creation is done by God, the subsequent reincarnations are at the mercy of the ancestors. Therefore, to say that God together with the ancestors works to achieve reincarnation is a false claim.

However the two elements which come together to make up what can be called the identity of humanity must immediately be underlined. The '*chi*' not only determines one's destiny, it brings it to the proper end, and thus the Igbo would say, "*ebe onye dara ka chi ya kwaturu ya"* ("where a person falls, there his Chi pushed him down"). The 'Eke' on the other hand refers to the person's shape, character or certain qualities. According to Obilor (1994), when these qualities are derived from a similar ancestor, or any good dead person as the case may be, the Igbo say that the child is the 'reincarnation of that ancestor or the person' (p.121). If Obilor is correct, it means that what the Igbo consider as reincarnation is hereditary traits personified. However, Ekwunife (1999) and Obilor (1994) view reincarnation as the process by which certain categories of the deceased in the African spiritual world of the dead are believed to be mysteriously, but in a real way, capable of incarnating their personality traits on the physical body of a newborn child without either destroying the unique personality of the child or substituting for it.

Some people promise while still alive that they will come back after their death and show signs of their identity. They do so to assert their uprightness and firm conviction that they will not only be admitted into the cult of ancestors but also be rewarded with reincarnation. In this case, there is no doubt and people at the birth of a child can identify him or her immediately. When there is doubt, then it is the work of the *dibia afa* (diviner) to identify the reincarnated person.

The Igbo believe that humans survive after death. Death is a passage into the community of the 'living dead', a separation and not an annihilation, a bridge to another existence, a reality which is awaited with 'anxiety', *ịna ụmọ* (returning home), *ịla ala mmụọ* (returning to the land of the spirits) especially *ala nna-nna anyị* (the land of our ancestors). The Igbo believe that the dead are living side-by-side with them. One can say that for the Igbo, the dead are regarded as people who have completed their work. The wicked and the just do not share the same realm after death in Igbo thought. While the just join the ancestors or 'community of the saints', the wicked are believed to pass on to oblivion or stay at the region referred to by Isidienu (2015) as, "*As agbata ụwa na-agbatammụọ"* (111) ("the boundary between the living and the dead"). There is no general consensus about the abode of the wicked in Igboland.

Mourning for the dead is religiously observed in Igboland. The period of mourning depends on certain factors. If the deceased is a titled person, the period is usually longer. What used to be common practice in Igboland is a one year mourning period. Death affects whatever the deceased owned and renders it unclean. Therefore, purificatory sacrifices are performed. The Igbo have the practice of shaving the head or wearing mourning dress for a period of one year as a sign of respect for the dead.

The most important sphere of the hereafter is the 'ancestral community'—the community of the dead. The ancestors who are in their permanent rest are conceived to be with *Chukwu* (God) and can help the living because they are closer to the Supreme Being. This does not refer to a condition of being with God as parents are with their children. It rather refers to the community of the ancestors which the Igbo people believe to be God's community. God in relation to creatures is considered to be *completely other*. The dead are believed to return to *Chukwu* only to take their rightful place among the ancestors commensurate with the way they conducted their life here on earth. The help which comes from *Chukwu* is often believed to reach human beings through the intermediaries. The ancestors are believed to be the major intermediaries.

The ancestors admit new members and give them their rightful place. This admittance is believed to be based on a spotless life, ripe old age, founding lineages, and proper burial, as the case may be. These conditions are not within the reach of the poor, the invalids, and those who die young. The living do their best to win the favour of the ancestors and to be in line with the moral discipline of the clan. That is the reason why some of them, being propelled by their own good works, can give vent to their future possible reincarnations when they die, and which sometimes appear to be true in living people. Thus, the living are expected to live a good and holy life to enable them to get a reward of good rest among the ancestors for possible future reincarnations.

For the Igbo the hereafter in the ancestral community is the real home. It is a continuation of this life where the degree of joy is determined by the quality of life lived on the earth. The concept of the hereafter appears to control morality. The belief in reincarnation gives it its visible expression and attempts to make it relevant to practical life. This is because many strive to live up to the moral discipline of the clan so as to be

rewarded with reincarnation by the ancestors. The ancestors are leaders in this community. They admit new members and give them their rightful place. For Obilor (1994), all decisions about who will return, the shape, the form, and their qualities are taken in the hereafter by the community of the ancestors *in strict accord with Chukwu* who finally sends the person to the earth through birth. The phrase "in strict accord with Chukwu" by Obilor is rather unclear. However, the Igbo believe that God can only reach them through intermediaries. One of those intermediaries is the ancestors. They believe that the ancestors are mediating between God and the living. In that sense they can be viewed as discharging their functions in complete harmony with God. God is beyond their reach, but the ancestors are believed to be the leaders in the family of the living-dead. They are not only concerned with this community, they are equally the 'invisible police of families and communities'.

Reincarnation in Igbo Worldview

The Igbo concept of reincarnation is a complex one and is viewed in various ways. While some people such as Obilor (1994) and Ekwunife (1999) are of the opinion that we should be using the term *ilo-uwa* instead of reincarnation[1], others refer to "partial reincarnation". For instance, Mbachi (2019) noted that while some describe cyclical reincarnation with a maximum number of three to seven opportunities to be reborn, others hold to a cyclical form of reincarnation as an unending process. I therefore hold the opinion that the matter of how many times an ancestor can reincarnate is an open question in Igbo thought.

According to Onyewuenyi (1989), Obilor (1994), and Ekwunife (1999), for the Igbo, reincarnation is a phenomenon in which an identifiable personality in the Igbo spiritual world is believed in a mysterious but real way to transmit his or her personality traits on a newborn personality without destroying that personality or substituting himself or herself for that new personality. In doing so, the said reincarnate person still retains his or her complete personal identity in the Igbo spiritual world of the dead. By virtue of the power the person commands as a spirit, he or she is able to impress former traits on the newborn child.

However, I doubt whether the concept of reincarnation as shared by the above scholars is the true representation of the Igbo concept of reincarnation. In the spiritual anatomy of humanity in Igbo cosmology, *nmadụ* (man) is neither a dichotomy of body and soul nor a trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit. *Mmadụ* is a unity of personality. The Igboman, for instance, believes that *Okeke noro uwa* (Okeke reincarnated) and not an aspect or part of Okeke or his "mystical influence" (Ekwunife 1999, 21), or "life-giving will or vital influence or secretion of vital force" (Onyewuenyi 1989, 39), as the above scholars suggest. I therefore disagree with them in that one cannot reconcile the "mystical influence," "life-giving will" or "vital influence" or "secretion of vital force" with the Igbo concept of human personality. Besides, the Igbo often speak of "*ndi nmadu*" (humans) and "*ndi nmuo*" (spirits). Hence "spirits" and "humans" are both persons, as indicated by the prefix, "*ndị*". The terms, "mystical influence," "life-giving will," "vital influence," or "secretion of vital force", are in my view a distortion of the Igbo idea of personal identity. I do accept these scholars' views as approximating the Igbo concept of reincarnation, and it must be said that the Igbo are not always able to fully express what they mean by this concept. Still, from the point of view of Igbo anthropology, the ideas shared above are not only a distortion of the Igbo idea of humanity and personal identity, but also untenable in the non-dualistic Igbo concept of reincarnation.[2]

Furthermore, the ritual for identifying the reincarnated dead person is called in many areas in Igboland "*Igba-agu*" ("divining for the reincarnate person"). Only the traditional Igbo diviners (*dibia afa*) can authoritatively pronounce the name of the reincarnated person through *igba afa*. Ekwealor (2013) described *igba afa* as a means of finding out the hidden things which are elusive to an ordinary person. It is the means of finding out the thoughts of the deities and the ancestors. For Ogbuagu, Udemmadu and Anedo (2012) *ịgba afa* means gaining access to secret things that we cannot find out on our own. According to Ubesie (2003), *ịgba afa* is a means of finding any secret that exists between the living and the dead or between two or more living persons. Umeodinka (2015) understands *igba afa* to be the means through which the Igbo people

[1]The translation of reincarnation in Igbo is *ilo-uwa*. However, Obilor and Ekwunife argued that the word, *ilo-uwa,* should be used rather than its English equivalent. Reincarnation could be described as the belief in the autonomy of the human soul, which passes out of a dead person into another body different from the original body whether this body is a human being, an animal, a vegetative or moral being. *Ilo-uwa* is the belief that the qualified deceased or living persons can return to earth through birth in their grandchildren, great grandchildren or the children of their relatives within the extended family.

[2]Reincarnation proposes dualism of body and soul. Igbo anthropology on the other abhors any form of dualism. The Igbo do not talk about soul, but person. Humans are spiritual persons. The living dead are spiritual persons but superior to humans.

bring out the hidden things from the realm of darkness into the daylight of knowledge.

It is worth noting at this point that for Christians, the Scripture does not support this process of divination. In Deuteronomy 18:9-11, the verses contain a list of occult magic practices, common in the religions of Canaan, which were an abomination to God and forbidden by Him. Divination (*igba-afa)* is included in that list. Those among God's Old Testament people who practiced such things were put to death (Levi. 20:27). Likewise, the New Testament declares that those who practice such things will not enter the Kingdom of God (Gal. 5:20-21; Rev. 22:15).

Igbo people rely on experience to prove that reincarnation is real. Experience, they say, is the best teacher. They base reincarnation on what is visible or sensible or perceptible or the like. No one can tell someone that what he or she sees with their own eyes does not exist. Throughout the Igboland, people abound who are said to be the reincarnation of one deceased person or another. There are signs, marks, remembered talks and promises given when they were about to die that identify the previous reincarnation of the person in the currently living one. Of course, these claims must be backed up with the confirmatory affirmation of the *dibia afa* (diviner).

So when a child is born, during *ịgụ aha* (the naming ceremony) the *okpala* (the family head) or the father of the child or both will consult the diviner to discover the ancestor who has been reincarnated, and especially to discover his or her name and *nsọ* (prohibitions). The child must take the name of the reincarnated ancestor, but when no reincarnation has been confirmed, the patriarchal grandfather or the eldest man present has the prerogative of giving the child a name. The divination rite which precedes the naming ceremony is to establish the identity. The naming ceremony is to effect the newborn's incorporation into the society.

The Igbo Understanding of Humankind versus Scripture

In Igbo anthropology, human beings (*nmadụ*) are neither a dichotomy of body and soul nor a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit. *Mmadụ* is a unity of personality. The spiritual anatomy of a person for the Igbo is *ahụ*, (body), *nkpụrụobi* (seed of the heart) and *nụọ* (spirit).[3] According to Obilor (1994), the spirits on the other hand are made up of the spirit ancestors and the spirit deities which are invisible; the malignant spirits or attacking spirits which are visible only to the *dibia* (diviner) and in the form of *mba nụọ* (the attack by the evil spirit); and the spirit messenger (*nmụọ*). Although the Igbo are very much at home with pneumatology, the concept of Holy Spirit is strange to them. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit falls outside their belief system because they have nothing to do with a Three in One God. Be this as it may, the Igbo share the concept of humankind with the Hebrews.

Abogunrin (1991) points out that in the Old Testament a person is not considered an immortal soul temporarily inhabiting a mortal body, but rather as a body-soul unity. The Hebrews could only conceive of personhood in its totality, as the vital union of body and soul. According to ancient Jewish belief, we are a product of two factors, namely *nepeš* (breath or soul, which is the principle of life) and *basher* (body or flesh which is the complex organ that *nepeš* animates). A person may therefore be described as an animated body, but this falls short of a true description since in this regard we are not different from the animal creation (Gen. 2:19). Genesis 2:7 says: "Then the LORD God formed man out of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being"(NIV). Clark (1967) contends that human distinctiveness is based on the fact that to humanity alone is imparted the breath of life by the direct activity of God. Although the use of *nepeš* in Genesis 2:7 denotes a complete being, according to the general understanding of the Old Testament, neither *basher* nor *nepeš* alone can make a complete person. A human being is a unified person, and the dissolution of either the soul or the body means the true end of life. *Nepeš* is closely connected with blood, so the loss of blood is the tangible mark of a passing away of life. Therefore *nepeš* is spoken of as being breathed out (Gen. 2:7; 35:18; 1 Kg. 17:22). The whole of a person's intense emotions and desires are attributed to his or her *nepeš*. That is, the term is invariably used for a living self, or as a substitute for a personal pronoun.

A person also has a *rūaḥ* (spirit) denoting the invasive power of God. From the time of the exile, there was a tendency to replace *nepeš* with *rūaḥ* as the centre of aspiration and desires. The absence of rūaḥ is the loss of life and vitality, and ultimately death (1Kg. 10:5; Ps. 104:29). The return of *rūaḥ* means revival (Gen. 45:27). While *nepeš* refers to the life concretely manifested, *rūaḥ* means the hidden strength of a living person. So, for the Hebrews as well as for the Igbo, there is no division between the soul and the body.

[3]It has to be noted that although the Igbo people recognise three components of a person, yet they consider the whole person as a unit. The soul without the body is not considered as a person. For any human to attain the status of a person in Igbo anthropology, the three components must be present. This is the major difference between the Igbo notion of reincarnation and the Asiatic concept where an aspect of a person like a soul can inhabit another body for another earthly existence.

What lives in the underworld is not just the soul but the whole person. Hence the dead are not called *nepeš* nor *rūaḥ*, but *rephaim*. At death, a shadowy image of the person is detached from him or her. As long as the body exists, or at least the bones remain, the essential person still exists like a shade under the condition of extreme weakness (Job 26:5–6; Isa. 14:9–10; Ez. 32:17–32). The soul continues to feel the care and honour bestowed on the body.

Differences between Resurrection and Reincarnation

Resurrection is considered to be a miracle whereas reincarnation in Igbo cosmology is the resultant effect of a natural process of rebirth.

Again, in resurrection, there is a bodily continuity whereas in reincarnation in Igbo cosmology the old body and the new body are considered in symbiotic association.

Furthermore, resurrection is a one-time event that is never repeated unlike reincarnation in Igbo worldview which is repeated.

Moreover, Christians will possess bodies that are not only new but will possess higher powers than the ones they had before in their earthly lives. Their bodies will not only be transformed but will also be glorious. Resurrected individuals are not the causal elements that bring about transformation. They are rather the passive elements. Their transformed and glorious bodies are the direct activity of God. These bodies are no longer subjugated to earthly limitations. Although they are changed when they die, yet they remain the same. The new bodies have material continuity with the old ones. The only difference now is that they seem to belong to a different order of reality. This is not so in the Igbo belief in reincarnation where the ancestors are the active agents in reincarnation and where the reincarnated individuals still undergo earthly limitations as in the days of the past.

Finally, the most distinctive proofs of *ilo-uwa* or reincarnation are based on visible or sensible resemblance; the reappearance of marks on the body, the 'relacking' of a lacking part of the body, the facial and physical resemblance, the vocal and oratorical resemblance and all other resemblances. This is anchored on resemblance theory. This is not so in the resurrection where it is one and the same person who died who is risen.

Conclusion

That which brought the Church into being and gave it a message was not the hope of the persistence of life beyond the grave, nor the confidence that the dead ancestors will return to their immediate families and relatives, nor the confidence in God's supremacy over death, nor the conviction of the immortality of the human spirit. Rather, it was the belief in an event in time and space: Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead and His resurrection is the basis of believers' resurrection. There are stories of restorations to life, but these are mere 'resuscitations of corpses'. Jesus' resurrection, and by implication, believer's resurrection is not the restoration to physical life of a dead body; it is the emergence of a new order of life. It is the embodiment in time and space of eternal life. It is the beginning of the eschatological resurrection. It therefore stands in sharp contrast to Igbo belief in reincarnation.

An Igbo Christian lives in two worlds—the world of culture (which is inseparable from the world of former religion) and the world of Christian religion (into which he or she is baptized),sometimes without real conversion and discipleship. When such people find themselves in moments of crisis—sickness, matrimony, the birth of a child, a funeral of relatives, the construction of a house and, for students, facing important and difficult examinations—it is not rare to find them having recourse to superstitious practises of the former religion. Proper inculturation occurs when a person is alive in his or her culture and Christian faith. This is because through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures, and at the same time transmits to them its own values, taking the good elements that already exist and renewing them from within.

Christians see life as linear and sequential, proceeding towards ultimate consummation, but with a split ending in the afterlife. This is in contradistinction to Igbo cyclical notion of history as seen in their belief in reincarnation. This has significant theological implications for Christian ministry for the Church in Igboland.

The Church in Igboland needs a genuine Igbo expression of the Christian faith and a corresponding theology in order to communicate better with God and all of humanity. Here are my recommendations:

1. Given that God in Igbo religion is understood as *Chukwu* and not as Triune God, it is therefore recommended that the concept of Holy Trinity should form part of the Church's message in evangelistic enterprise.

2. The Church in its evangelistic outreach should present the resurrection of the dead as the work of the Triune God. It should teach that the resurrection is one of the events of the 'end of time' and history.

3. Sacrifice is the knife-edge on which Igbo religion rests. The fact that in Igbo religion sacrifices for the dead are intended to remove all obstacles for the dead,

including those which may frustrate one's possible reincarnation, gives impetus for evangelization. The Church should therefore use Igbo sacrifices as an inculturated teaching towards a better understanding of Christ Jesus' once and for all sacrifice for sins on the cross.

4. Christ can be presented to the traditionalists as the Universal Ancestor. Just as He not only rose from the dead but is also seen as the Life and Resurrection, so He can be seen as the Ancestor. Consequently, the Church can begin dialogue here and launch into a better understanding of the true meaning and value of the Lordship of Christ.

5. Igbo religion has no room for the Holy Spirit given that it lacks the concept of the Three Persons in One God. Nevertheless, it has ample room for spirits and thus is attuned to pneumatology. This can serve as a possible element of inculturation. Proceeding from what the Igbo Christians know through the traditional religion about the spirits in general, the Church can produce for them a serious teaching which will give the Holy Spirit a right place in the Igbo system of belief.

6. Although Igbo religion sees people as unities both in life and death, it neither addresses the question of personal identity nor considers it to be important. At best, it points to resemblance theory. The Church can take Igbo anthropology from that standpoint and lead the Igbo Christians to a better perspective of personal identity after death when Christ raises us up at the last day.

7. Given that the Easter event gives meaning to the mystery of life and death, and that it can be misrepresented through bad customs and practices, the onus of responsibility lies on the Church to continue to teach and affirm the doctrine of resurrection of the dead.

8. Admission into the ancestral cult is by the judgments of the ancestors which are based on a spotless life, founding lineages, ripe old age, and proper burial. These conditions are not within the reach of everybody. However, this belief could serve as a bridge for Igbo Christians to a better understanding of last judgment of Christ.

9. An Igbo person should see people's positive qualities as the effects of genetic inheritance, not as signs of prior lives. A Christian understanding of resurrection brings the hope of glory in the future.

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Examining Our Past Relationship with Climate to Understand Climate's Current Importance: An Exploration of Climate Change During the Little Ice Age

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From the years 1300 until the 1850's people living in Western Europe battled a terrifying and seemingly insurmountable foe, the Little Ice Age. Examining how people of this time not only survived but thrived during an era of cataclysmic climate change can offer us positive perspectives and productive mechanisms going forward in our own battle with climate in modern times. Explored are massive famines and epidemic disease, volcanic eruptions and their after-effects, specific historical events such as the Black Plague and the Irish Potato famine and how all of these devastating events overlap to create a vivid picture of human fortitude. This article uncovers the tools and ingenuity Western Europeans employed to overcome a rapidly changing climate and how those tools are properly utilized to battle devastating climatic events. In exploring both scientific theory, including anthropological works such as Anthony Wallace's Revitalization Movement, and the modern church's position on climate change, this article hopes to address the current circumstance of global climate change and provide a potential way forward for modern humans in light of scientific reason and theological discussion about our unavoidable role in the environment.

1. Introduction

Our planet Earth has had a long and sometimes volatile relationship with its own climate; but what can be said specifically about earth's climate and how that relates to humanity's existence? Much has been expressed throughout written history of the relationship between people and climate. Many major natural catastrophes have been documented that led to the downfall of civilizations or the rise of new ones. However, natural disasters are just one potential aspect of climate change. What happens when the climate abruptly changes direction, and can these changes influence patterns of culture? In taking a closer look at one particular episode in recent human history, the Little Ice Age that occurred from 1300 AD until 1870 AD, could variances in climate have changed culture in such a way as to have affected economies, for instance, through forcing people to use different trade routes and migratory patterns as a result of encroaching glaciers and heightened occurrences of dangerous avalanches produced by increased snowfall and freezing temperatures? Could it also have changed other aspects of cultural such as religion? This paper will demonstrate that the climate change brought about by the Little Ice Age not only affected culture on the more obvious economic level, but more deeply at the level of people's belief systems.

Why study the Little Ice Age now? Because climate is a primary influence on not only how we do things, but also how we perceive them, that is, our culture. The relationship between these two things, climate and culture, creates a bridge between humanity and the world we live in, each influencing the other's development. They are so intricately linked that considering one without the other can be disastrous.

Also worth mentioning is religion's role in this connection between climate and culture. In Julian M. Murchison's book, *Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Your Research*, he asks that ethnographers take on the task of "identifying the unanswered questions in the literature." This comment recognizes the need to examine the omission of important theological considerations relating to climate change (Murchison 2010, 25). There have been efforts put forth to explain the issues of global climate change in terms of the ramifications it has on culture, but very few have taken seriously how these climatic events have

changed theology and our relationship with God. My hope in this work is to address these issues and help others to understand how culture and human activity are affected by global climatic events and change, but also how these events reshape religious belief, reform, and practice, as well as how we explain to ourselves how these events come to be, whether they are God ordained or hastened by human interference.

2. Historical Ethnography

I begin this look into human relationships with climate with an examination of the first Great Famine of the Little Ice Age that began as a deluge in the spring of 1315. From the Ural Mountains to Ireland the weather changed instantaneously and unpredictability, bringing with it the first great catastrophe of the Little Ice Age. So much rain fell for so long that "dykes were washed away, royal manors inundated. In central Europe, floods swept away entire villages, drowning hundreds at a time" (Fagan 2000, 29). The crops and animals did not fare well either; many were lost in the relentless rains that lasted through to August, creating a disastrous harvest and bringing military campaigns to a standstill. Louis X of France was halted from his campaign of invading Flanders when his "cavalry trotted into saturated plain, their horses sank into the ground up to their saddle girths. Wagons bogged down in the mire so deeply that even seven horses could not move them. Food ran short, so Louis X retreated ignominiously. The thankful Flemings wondered if the floods were a divine miracle . . . their thankfulness did not last long, for famine soon proved more deadly than the French" (31, 32).

Many hoped that 1316 would provide better weather and in turn more productive harvests, but unfortunately the rains continued. Crops turned to mush in their fields, those that could be planted. "Complained a Salzburg chronicler of 1316: 'There was such an inundation of waters that it seemed as though it was THE FLOOD.' Intense gales battered the Channel and North Sea. Storm-force winds piled huge sand dunes over a flourishing port at Kenfig near Pert Talbot in south Wales, causing its abandonment" (Fagan 2000, 38). Disease followed famine as people were already compromised from hunger. Many left their homes and villages in search of relief. Beggars roamed the countryside and crime rose from thievery and desperation. There was an uptick in piracy, and grave robbing increased as people became more desperate for food and money. Stories passed along described the horrors of starvation with people turning to unusual food sources such as dogs and dung, thus weakening their condition and hastening disease.

Records of crop failure are abundant from this time. The Bishop of Winchester's mill made no profit 'because the mill did not grind for half the year on account of the flood" (Fagan 2000, 40). France did not fare well either. Downy mildew attacked the grape crop and decimated its production. What little survived was recorded as harsh to taste. Germany's production suffered most of all, not seeing a good yield of wine again until 1328 (40).

Livestock suffered as well. When farmers ran out of hay reserves for their animals, they released them to fields to forage on their own and when the sudden cold snaps of 1317/18 occurred, many of the cattle froze to death in the fields. They were also susceptible to pernicious diseases such as rinderpest that resulted in intestinal failure as well as liver fluke: a parasitic worm that attacked sheep and goat flocks reducing them by well over half. Farmers were so dependent on their livestock they named this time as "the great dying of the beasts" which continued into the early 1320s and also impacted crop yields as fewer animals meant less acres plowed and less dung available for fertilization and to burn for heat (40).

Farmers were not the only ones suffering from the rains of the early 1300s; bakers augmented their loaves with whatever supplies they could find. "Sixteen Parisian bakers were caught putting hog dung and wine dregs in their loaves" (Fagan 2000, 41). People's diet relied so much on breads that bakers tried to satisfy the need with whatever materials they could find, causing illness, diarrhea, and dysentery. People became so desperate from hunger that they took to the fields to forage for any leftover remnants of cultivated or abandoned crops.

Those that survived the Great Famine were thankful, and the weather even seemed to improve. "The early fourteenth century was relatively prosperous. Some French historians refer to this period as the *monde plein*, 'the full world'," but this tranquil period of significantly better climate and crop production did not last long for "rats carrying fleas infected with a complex series of bacterial strains known as *Yersinia pestis*, which cause the bubonic (glandular) plague" were arriving from Central Asia (Fagan 2000, 81). The Black Death entered into Italy through its elaborate port system from Mongol traders spreading through the rest of Europe. The immune systems of the populations of peoples living in Europe were already compromised from malnutrition and other ailments associated with starvation from the Great Famine when the plague arrived. The cold weather also significantly increased the spread of the bubonic plague. Many people huddled together in front of the warm hearths of their homes to stay comfortable during the bitterly cold winters of the Little Ice Age, further spreading the plague through proximity, and the rats carrying the infected fleas joined them.

Original accounts from eyewitnesses during that time described in detail the horrible symptoms the victims of the plague faced. Indications of the bubonic plague consist of fever, chills, diarrhea, vomiting, shortening of breath, unbearable aches and pains, and eventually death. Some victims went to bed seemingly completely healthy but were dead by morning. The plague was also accompanied by strange large swellings. One first-hand account reinforces the plague's indiscriminate nature as well as its repulsiveness. The Italian poet Giovanni Boccaccio describes in his work, *The Decameron*, in detail the horror of the boils found on the victims of the plague.

Many proposed origins of the disease were considered; some believed all it took to transmit the plague was a firm stare from an afflicted person. But for the most part, people turned to religion, thinking that the plague was God's wrath for misdeeds and sinfulness. "In Germany, penitents stripped to the waist and beat their backs with weighted scourges, singing hymns in loud voices. 'They sang very mournful songs about nativity and the passion of Our Lord. The object of this penance was to put a stop to the mortality, for in that time . . . at least a third of all the people died'" (Fagan 2000, 82). In reality however, these penitents were sources of transmission for the plague. As they beat their backs, migrating from town to town, they carried with them the Black Death or at the very least, the fleas that transported the plague.

By the end of the first outbreak in 1351, it is estimated that over 25 million people had succumbed to the Black Death, one third of the population. There would be other outbreaks of plague throughout Europe for many more generations, but the first wave of the plague was the deadliest. In Paris, "the population fell by at least two-thirds between 1328 and 1470" (Fagan 2000, 82). In some parts of Normandy, the villagers suffered by the same numbers as in Paris.

During the Little Ice Age, plague and famine were not the only catastrophic climatic obstacles to humanity's survival; natural disasters in the form of volcanic eruptions also tormented them. Several destructive eruptions furthered tensions for the residents of Western Europe especially. The seventeenth century was dotted with eruptions that were inexorably linked to significant colder periods.

A large volcano in southern Peru, Huaynaputina, awoke from its slumber on February 16, 1600 and continued to erupt intermittently until March 5. "The scale of the Huaynaputina eruption rivaled the Krakatau explosion of 1883 and the Mount Pinatubo event in the Philippines in 1991. The volcano discharged at least 19.2 cubic kilometers of fine sediment into the upper atmosphere" (Fagan 2000, 104). Huaynaputina was a massive eruption, decimating fields, choking nearby cities with ash, collapsing structures, and killing at least 1,000 people along with thousands of cattle and sheep (Fagan 2000, 104).

What did Huaynaputina's eruption have to do with Western Europe or the Little Ice Age? Much, actually. Huaynaputina's eruption and consequential ash fall made the already chaotic climate activity worse. The sun, barely visible through the haze caused by fine particulates in the atmosphere from the eruption, was unable to significantly heat the Earth, making the summer of 1601 the coldest since the 1400's for the northern hemisphere. "Summer sunlight was so dim in Iceland that there were no shadows. In central Europe, sun and moon were 'reddish, faint, and lacked brilliance" (Fagan 2000, 105).

In 1641, another explosion occurred when "Mount Parker on Mindanao in the Philippines erupted with a noise 'like musketry.' Wrote an anonymous Spanish eyewitness; 'By noon we saw a great darkness approaching from the south which gradually spread over the entire hemisphere" and they began to fear "in the darkness 'the Judgement Day to be at hand'" (Fagan 2000, 105). Again, as with the Huaynaputina eruption, the Mount Parker eruption dropped temperatures not just in the areas surrounding the Philippines, but globally.

Volcanic eruptions continued to occur creating colder winters and shortening growing seasons affecting harvests and increasing the risk of famine, food dearth, and bread riots. Some scientists believe these increased volcanic eruptions were the main cause of the Little Ice Age. The largest eruption to occur during the Little Ice Age with the most catastrophic of consequences was the Mount Tambora eruption that took place in 1815 in Indonesia. A once dormant volcano sprang to life and created one of the most cataclysmic events known to modern history. Rumblings began on April 5, 1815 and finally on the 11th Mount Tambora erupted. The inhabitants of the island, as well as those of the neighboring islands, died as a result of the initial explosion or very soon afterwards from the aftermath. First-hand accounts from British officers on the island show that they suspected the rumblings and later explosion to be the work of another military force declaring war on the British occupied island of Java, or of marauding pirates.

To understand the full devastation caused by the initial eruption and to give it an accurate depiction and comparison to other volcanic eruptions, I have included a full paragraph from Brian Fagan's work:

> Volcanologists have fixed the dates of more than 5,560 eruptions since the last Ice Age. Mount Tambora is among the most powerful of them all, greater even than the Santorini eruptions of 1450 B.C. [which wiped out the Minoan civilization on the island and sunk the caldera completely]. The ash

> discharge was one hundred times that of Mount Saint Helens in Washington State in 1980 and exceeded Krakatau in 1883. Krakatau, the first major eruption to be studied at all systematically, is known to have reduced direct sunlight over much of the world by 15 to 20 percent. The much larger Tambora event, coming during a decade of remarkable volcanic activity, had even more drastic effects at a time when global temperatures were already lower than today. (Fagan 2000, 169)

The initial explosion was felt throughout the region, but the volcano was not yet exhausted, on "April 19, the explosions resumed, this time so intense that they shook both houses and ships" (Fagan 2000, 167). Precipitation in the form of ash, cinders, and other fine particulates fell for days blocking out the sun and choking the island's inhabitants. Much like the eruption that afflicted Pompeii after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, pyroclastic deposit buried thousands. Mount Tambora continued to erupt for three more months with even more disastrous consequences. Alan Robock, Professor of Climatology at Rutgers University, states that "large volcanic eruptions inject sulfur gases into the stratosphere, which convert to sulfate aerosols with an e-folding residence time of about 1 year. Large ash particles fall out much quicker. The radiative and chemical effects of this aerosol cloud produce responses in the climate system. By scattering some solar radiation back to space, the aerosols cool the surface, but by absorbing both solar and terrestrial radiation", and he further concluded that, "volcanic effects played a large role in interdecadal climate change of the Little Ice Age" (Robock 2000, 191).

"From Teramo in central Italy, near the Adriatic coast, came reports in late December 1815 of 'the heaviest snow ever known in that country.' More astonishing was the nature of the precipitation. The snow 'was of a red and yellow color . . . [which] excited great fear and apprehension in the people" (Klingaman and Klingaman 2013, 17). A few weeks after the bizarre snow in Italy, Hungary met with a powerful snowstorm dropping several feet of snow reported as oddly colored as described by an observer: "despite the magnitude of the storm, news accounts focused primarily on the fact that 'the snow was not white, but brown or flesh colored" (18). Italy again received peculiarly colored snow, but this time in the Alps "around the Tonale Pass, 'it was brick red and left an earthy powder, very light and impalpable, unctuous to the touch . . . [with an] astringent taste" (18). All of these bizarre colorations of snow were a direct result of Mount Tambora's eruption. Those sulfur dioxide gas particles mixing with water vapor in the atmosphere to produce droplets that froze to become snow were colored from the fine particulates of the eruption. And, as we have seen, "the spreading aerosol cloud from Mount Tambora had been cooling global temperatures by reflecting and scattering sunlight. It reduced the Northern Hemisphere average temperature in 1816 by about three degrees Fahrenheit" (19).

In 1816 the full effects of Tambora's massive series of eruptions started to make their way to Europe, causing not just cycles of bizarrely colored snow events but recurrent crop failure and further exacerbating famine and malnutrition, as well as a devastatingly grim cycle of frigid temperatures and bad weather in which there was a 'year without a summer'. Heavy rain soaked the fields of Europe because of the increased cloud cover brought about by the eruption. Storms became stronger and more intense, loaded with hail; they indiscriminately battered the lands as well as the people, animals, and structures of both cities and rural villages. The harvest yet again failed and "soon drove cereal and bread prices beyond families' reach. English wheat yields in 1816 were the lowest between 1815 and 1857, at a time when food and drink consumed two-thirds of a laboring family's budget" (Fagan 2000, 171). French citizens suffered as well. Their crop yields were half what they would normally glean and in some areas their grapes did not ripen at all on the vine resulting in low production of wine. Luckily both regions, England and France, legislated "politically mandated subsidies to keep bread prices low" resulting in food dearth, instead of famine (171).

As is the case with most famines, disease followed. Typhus and fever epidemics assaulted the already compromised and malnourished residents of Europe. Typhus passed from person to person through the infection of body lice feces. Many huddled together during the brutally cold years after the Mount Tambora eruption and passed typhus between them at an outstanding rate. "The desiccated and infected fecal dust clung to woolen fabrics such as cloaks and blankets, which were often the only source of warmth for people. In 1817/18, 850,000 people in Ireland were infected by the epidemic" with over a 100,000 succumbing to it (Fagan 2000, 178).

Famine, plague, and volcanic activity all had significant impact on Western Europe during the time of the Little Ice Age, but one very unfortunate series of events, mostly occurring in Ireland, almost crushed a civilization. Since the introduction of the potato as a successful crop in Ireland in the late 1600's, the people of Ireland soon began to rely on it as their primary source of food and revenue. The introduction of the potato to Ireland's crop rotation actually bore some fruitful years for the nation, and growing potatoes became a prosperous endeavor for many farmers. The potato did well in the rocky soil and wet climate of Ireland; often resistant to short growing periods, enduring floods or seasons of drought, and took very

little effort to cultivate, cook and store. Unfortunately, because potato cultivation was so advantageous, Ireland replaced much of its other crops with it and dangerously became an almost entirely monoculture society. Unknowingly this set up the residents of Ireland for nearly complete ruin. How would they know that a vegetable brought back from the Andes and cultivated with such great success in their own backyards would almost completely collapse their nation? While cereal crops used to supplement their diet failed because of poor conditions brought about by the cruel Little Ice Age's climatic shifts, the potato remained resilient. This did create some smaller food dearths, but the understanding and empathetic Irish government acted quickly to resolve the issue so people would not go hungry for long. However, in the year 1800, a move towards unification joined England and Ireland, and the newly governing administration was unsympathetic to food dearth, while openly accepting the bountiful revenue from the Irish potato. In the year without a summer, "more than 65,000 people died of hunger and related diseases because the British authorities chose not to ban grain exports, an effective measure in earlier dearths" (Fagan 2000, 187). In June of 1817, then Chief Secretary Robert Peel issued a proclamation in relation to these food dearths in Ireland stating, "persons in the higher spheres of life should discontinue the use of potatoes in their families and reduce the allowance of oats to their horses" (187). To say the Irish met the announcement with resentment would be an understatement.

Ireland had many successful years cultivating their crops of potatoes, even if their production did not entirely prevent food dearths. But one fatal mistake was made in the early 1800's that led them down a dark path of ruin, starvation, and desperation. Many species of potatoes had found their way to Ireland and several varieties were highly prosperous. But one in particular was favored over the others for consumption by the Irish, not necessarily because of its pleasant taste or nutritional value, but because it was a quick grower in bad conditions. The variety of potato, named the Lumper, was the one the poor of Ireland selected to grow for themselves. They exported all their other varieties. But because of their poor quality, this variety of potato would not store until the next year. Lumpers provided no cushion between one year's crop failure to the next, so the ensuing potato blight was indescribably devastating and left most of Ireland completely vulnerable.

Irish people began to migrate to America long before the Irish Potato Famine began because of overcrowding and the overutilization of what land was available for farming. "'The condition of Ireland becomes worse and worse,' wrote John Wiggins in *The Monster Misery of Ireland*, published in 1844. Ireland was 'a house built upon sand . . . and must inevitably fall the moment that the winds blow and the waves rage, or even with the first and slightest gale" (Fagan 2000, 188). Little did Wiggins know just how prophetic his words would be, for the seed of a tragedy was growing in the form of a blight caused by a tiny fungal organism brought from across the Atlantic. The specific potato blight to bring ruin, known today as *Phytophthora infestans,* causes the potato to first develop black spots, then furry growth, then finally to rot completely. The wicked winds common during the Little Ice Age helped to spread the infectious spores throughout Europe. The Lumper, Ireland's preferred variety, was especially susceptible to disease, and the blight made quick work of thousands of acres of crops. By October 1845, the blight had completely overtaken Ireland's potato crop and rotted them in their fields. "The mean loss from tuber rot in Ireland in 1845 was about 40 percent and the threat of famine immediate. In London, Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel responded to the reports of crop failure by appointing a Scientific Commission to diagnose the problem, report on the extent of the damage, and recommend an antidote" (190). The Commission came back so very much alarmed by what they had observed, that immediate action was recommended. However, "Peel ordered for the immediate importation of £100,000-worth of maize from the United States. Peel intended this measure not as a way of feeding the starving potato farmer but as a way of controlling grain prices cheaply, without any danger of the government being accused of interfering in the cereal marketplace" (190). The following year, the blight reoccurred but earlier than the previous year. By August, almost every potato was a total loss. "On September 2, the London Times called the potato crop a 'total annihilation" (191). England continued its vulgar and abusive export of Irish grains, knowing of the unmitigated failure of the potato crop, and leaving the Irish with very little to survive upon. England even went so far as to send troops to protect the wagonloads of cereal crops for export from the hungry masses. Children and the elderly began to die first, and then in October "the North Atlantic Oscillation [NOA] flipped into low mode, bringing the most severe winter in living memory" (192). Many began to die from exposure to the elements. Captain Wynne recorded his account of the suffering at Clare Abbey "witnessed more especially among the women and little children, crowds of which were to be seen scattered over the turnip fields like a flock of famished crows, devouring the raw turnips, mothers half naked, shivering in the snow and sleet, uttering exclamations of despair, while their children were screaming with hunger" (192). Another witness to this terror, Magistrate Nicholas Cummins of Cork, when visiting Skibbereen reported that:

> six famished and ghastly skeletons, to all appearances dead . . . huddled in a corner on some filthy straw, their sole covering what seemed to be a ragged horsecloth, their wretched legs hanging about, naked above the knees. I approached with horror, and found by a low moaning they were alive—they were in fever, four children, a woman and what had once been a man. (Fagan 2000, 192)

Disease swept through Ireland's emaciated population. Hospitals were overrun with patients, dead or dying from starvation, disease, or hopelessness. The British government sent supplies for tent hospitals to be raised but people still died on the ground. By 1847, the weather improved and the harvest was bountiful, but because so many had eaten their seed potatoes out of desperation and were debilitated from disease and starvation, less than a quarter of the normal farmland was cultivated. England watched on. Many of England's Ministers "believed that poverty was a self-imposed condition, so the poor could fend for themselves." This was a time of free market and the beginning of capitalist ideals, after all (193). In 1848, people had renewed hope that the blight had been abated and replanted everywhere they were able. Early spring finally afforded them favorable weather, but by July the blight was back almost overnight, rotting everything in its wake. People defaulted on their rents and their landlords evicted them, many still could not afford food for their families, so thousands left Ireland to come to America to start again. Thousands of acres of land were abandoned and unworked and people took to living in ditches or wherever they could find to rest for free. The hopeless and despondent began to commit crimes just to end up in jails or crowded workhouses.

The Irish named the Great Potato Famine, *An Ghorta Mór*, which means the great hunger, and conservative losses are estimated around two and a half million due to starvation, disease, or immigration. "The 1841 census records 8,175,124 people living in Ireland. In 1851, the number had fallen to 6,552,385. The Census Commissioners of the day calculated that, with normal rate of increase, the total should have been just over 9 million" (Fagan 2000, 194). Ireland was forever changed. Immigration still rose sharply even after years of famine and disease abated. Finally, the blight was successfully eradicated by 1851, but because of the trauma endured during the years of the Irish Potato Famine mental illness in Ireland became prevalent. The relationship between Ireland and England was damaged and troubled for many years after the blight had gone. The Irish did not forget so easily the ill treatment they had received from the English at the end of the Little Ice Age.

3. Anthropological Implications

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown in his work, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, introduced the theoretical concept of a systematic framework of concepts and generalizations relating to the social structure of societies, termed structural functionalism. Radcliffe-Brown believed that social systems are integrated mechanisms in which all parts function together to bring about unity in the whole. Structural functionalism was "the process of social life." He states, "the process itself consists of an immense multitude of actions and interactions of human beings, acting as individuals or in combinations or groups" (Radcliffe-Brown 1965, 4). Understanding this process can be especially helpful when applied to the relationship between humanity and environment. There is undoubtedly a connection between people and their own environment as well as that particular environment's climate. Humans react to stimuli from the environment by constructing social and cultural processes to deal with their situations, even if tacitly, and to ignore the impact of these processes would be to miss the significance of culture or society as a whole. For the people of the Little Ice Age, their actions and interactions with their environment allowed them to succeed even when faced with starvation, complete crop failure, threat of violent storm or encroaching glaciers, and even the occasional volcanic eruption. They experienced all of these events, processed and reassessed their situations, and adapted. To relegate the environmental factors as mere background to the human experience is to dismiss the structural functional whole.

To look a little closer at this idea of structural functionalism as presented by Radcliff-Brown, we must immerse ourselves in the time of the people living during the Little Ice Age. This is not easy to do, but it can be accomplished through the utilization of narrative language and first hand accounts, as seen above in Fagan's work. The Little Ice Age tested the limits of peoples in Western Europe, many of whom where subsistence farmers barely making enough in foodstuffs to survive from year to year. They were closely connected to the land, and when the climate abruptly began to cool or produce periods of significant drought or flood, they felt the implications immediately. This close connection to land and climate of those living in Western Europe at the time of the Little Ice Age is an interesting phenomenon, one that has been previously been explained through the use of the theory of environmental determinism.

Environmental determinism is a theory that has much to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between climate and culture. This theory presupposes that the physical environment necessitates

certain predetermined adaptations in regards to the cultural development of the groups inhabiting the area. Environmental determinism seeks to explain why certain cultures develop as they do in response to the environment in which the culture is set, and to consider important aspects of cultural survival such as availability of important resources providing food, shelter, and comfort. However, this concept does not explain the relationship between social conditions and cultural change; it merely relies on physical aspects of the environment as causal factors.

Brian Fagan explains his adherence to environmental determinism, saying, "human relationships to the natural environment and short-term climate change have always been in a complex state of flux. To ignore them is to neglect one of the dynamic backdrops of the human experience" (Fagan 2000, xv). One cannot look at the implications of the Great Famine, the Black Death, the year without a summer, or the Irish Potato Famine and not recognize how climate changed culture. None of these events would have been solely responsible for the collapse of any one civilization. However, they did have an immediate impact on them, and through adaptation, alteration, and innovation Europeans survived each despite the chaotic climate of the Little Ice Age.

Environmental determinism is just one explanation of this unique relationship between climate and culture. Another explanation is found in ecological anthropology. This particular sub-discipline focuses on the intricate connections between human groups and the environment in which they reside. Ecological studies of the connections between climate and culture by anthropologists have come from notable researchers in the field such as Margaret Mead and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, who looked specifically at subsistence practices of local communities and societies as well as how individuals process natural disasters. "New studies ask how coping ability is affected by the dynamics of the wider society and, further, the role society plays in determining who does or does not become a disaster victim in the first place" (Dove 2014, 2). Ecological anthropology can be just as relevant in looking at historical human responses as current reactions. The period known as the Little Ice Age was rife with natural disasters, and the unpredictable climate thrust people into a battle of wills pitting nature against humanity for survival. Dove comments that anthropology has recently been able to look at climate change from the position of "being there and the capacity to provide insight into perceptions, knowledge, valuation, and response," but that some social sciences are still debating the necessity for studying and researching climate change in relation to human culture (3).

To understand more profoundly the fundamental relationship between climate and culture, an examination of Anthony F. C. Wallace's work is in order. Wallace, an acclaimed cultural anthropologist, presented a theory in a work published in the *American Anthropologist* in April of 1956 that is relevant to this subject. He presents a new concept, the *revitalization movement,* to explain the process of individual stress becoming societal stress, which in turn produces a paradigm shift so significant that in areas of religion especially, movements develop into new denominations or even result in religious revolution (Wallace 1956, 265). Wallace defined a revitalization movement as, "a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture . . . from a cultural standpoint, [it] is a special kind of culture change phenomenon: the persons involved in the process . . . must feel that this cultural system is unsatisfactory; and they must innovate not merely discrete items, but a new cultural system" (265). He explained that previously cultural shifts were thought to be gradual and provided a chain reaction of sorts as the result of environmental or individual stress. To the contrary, Wallace claimed that change can happen "abruptly and simultaneously," and he cited Margaret Mead who said, "cultures can change within one generation" (265). Wallace continues that "revitalization movements are evidently not unusual phenomena, but are recurrent features in human history" (267).

To explain the process of what occurs during revitalization movements, Wallace begins by explaining that localized stress can be a primary motivator for cultural change because the localized stress soon becomes too great for the individual to bear alone, and they then challenge the current "steady state" so that the stress can be more easily managed. (Wallace 1965, 268). Once social stress has passed tolerable limits for the individual there begins a "period of cultural distortion" where individuals either choose to address the stress and adapt to changes in their cultural behavior or to tolerate the stress, potentially developing unhealthy coping mechanisms that ultimately create "disillusionment and apathy toward problems of adaptation" (269, 270). The next stage in this process of social and religious change is a "period of revitalization" (270). This stage is led by a prophet or charismatic leader who facilitates social change and is chosen through supernatural appointment. Historically these leaders have been government officials, scientists, religious leaders, researchers, and inventors. These prophetic leaders offer their followers a different version of social reality wherein different thoughts, ideals, and even technologies are presented and utilized. Interestingly, Wallace shows a split in the way forward for these charismatic leaders and their followers, "prophets do not lose their sense of personal identity but psychotics tend to become the object of

their spiritual longing" (272). So leaders lead their followers through new cultural shifts providing for an elimination of perceived stress. When a prophet begins the process, it creates a new steady state wherein the "cultural transformation has been accomplished and the new cultural system has proved itself viable" (275). Conversely, when a psychotic begins the process, the social structure erodes and the leader becomes the center of their own created world whether through delusional fantasy or narcissism. Eventually the cultural deterioration of the group is so significant that the society perishes. These ideas can be further substantiated by an examination of several cult-like groups throughout the world, including the notorious Manson family and Jonestown, created by Jim Jones.

We can apply the concept of the revitalization movement to the enormous paradigm shifts that occurred during the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, both of which occurred during the Little Ice Age. The Scientific Revolution, which preceded the Enlightenment, addressed a social need for scientific explanation during a time of increased anthropo-centrism. Many people in Europe lacked sufficient education or knowledge to further themselves in their position or status as society was emerging from medievalism. But others became "self-made men" who rose in status and intellect. The Enlightenment provided for the development of new ideals, specifically the separation of church and state, the idea of liberty, and the new forms of government not based on monarchy. These new ideals were born out of social stress experienced by those unwillingness to continue the cycle of servitude and in need of support for their new independence.

The Industrial Revolution created a working class, further facilitating the transition from a population of mostly subsistence farmers and serfs to that of factory workers, machinists, and other new industrial jobs. Modern technologies were also created using the newly developed steam powered engines, harnessing of electrical power, and the invention of the assembly line. These people too needed new ideals and encouragement, much of which came from religion (as I will describe below).

In sum, the cultural adaptions that occurred during the Little Ice Age are but a small example of how resilient the human spirit can be, even when faced with insurmountable and unexplainable odds. There were specific cultural changes in reference to daily matters such as farming techniques, but also with heating concerns and fire safety, as well as advances in medicine and hospital care. Additionally, inventions were created to make life more productive, but more enjoyable and comfortable as well. People during the Little Ice Age in Western Europe chose not just to survive at a time of erratic and often times unpredictable climate change, but to find ways to embrace their struggles in the changing climate and to elevate those experiences. There were large-scale revolutions in social thought and religious theory made during this time as well, that forever changed how Western Europeans related to their environment and each other.

4. Theological Considerations

The Little Ice Age was rife with complex weather events, social and economic adaptations, rebellion and war. Climate most definitely affected culture, but was religion changed as well? Were the stresses that people faced in their day-to-day lives placated by faith or did the complications and corruption that existed within the Church help to exacerbate these issues?

The Roman Catholic Church during the beginning of the Little Ice Age was a colossal powerhouse of Christian thought and influence, but with that power came corruption. Before the Little Ice Age, during the Medieval Warming Period, the Church had seen significant growth not just in land acquisition but also with the successful influence of rulers and gentry. The pockets of the Church seemed limitless. But as a result of the first few years of devastating climate change during the Little Ice Age an increase in abuses by the Church began. Somehow the Church needed to maintain their revenues amidst all of the strife and stress the peasants and then later the nobility were facing: enter the idea of indulgences. The Roman Catholic Church implemented the use of indulgences to continue to fund their very expensive building projects and control of the ruling class. This process of absolution through payment reduced the punishment and time spent atoning for sins, but created major issues for the peasant class which could not afford to pay these costly absolutions, especially when they could not even afford to pay for food or supplies to keep their own homes running sufficiently. Under the weight of significant stress, they soon looked to an individual that would provide a way forward through a revitalization of the church in doctrine and practice. Martin Luther acknowledged the coercion, force, and abuse by the leaders of the church that he believed to be an exploitation of the church's power and influence. He began to construct a way for Christian believers to continue their faith, but without the costly penance of indulgences (among other things).

Anthony Wallace would have described Martin Luther as a prophet, given his role in religious revitalization. Luther raised theological questions about free will, the sacraments, the division of church and state, and of the authority of the rulers. Luther's theology was intense and multifaceted, and it challenged the corruptions and coercion of the Church. His ideals instigated a reform in the Church and of its practices.

The stress people felt during this time of corruption and abuse must have been tremendous. The poor could not afford to pay their loved ones' way out of purgatory so they believed they would forever languish there. Luther's answer to indulgences was the understanding that grace and absolution can only come from God and are free.

John Wesley was another monumental religious figure responsible for reform during the time of the Little Ice Age. Wesley had a passion to bring the gospel to the people, and circumvented the restrictions and structures of the Anglican Church to do so. He understood that only certain portions of the population of England were able to attend services. Most had to keep working through the week and were unable to leave their fields long enough to make the journey to church for service. To meet their needs, Wesley "covered nearly a quarter of a million miles in his lifetime, delivered forty thousand sermons and yet found time to write well over two hundred books" (Wood 1978, 116). "Heat and cold, rain and wind, hail and snow, bogs and floods did not prevent him from bringing the message of life and light to the people who walked in darkness," all of which were more severe due to the unpredictable weather of the Little Ice Age (117). Wesley understood that "his real pulpit was where the people were. His was essentially an outgoing ministry to take the gospel, as the Savior did, to the man and woman on the street" (136). Thus Wesley broke with traditional preaching and brought the Word of God to the people, more effectively conveying God's message of love and forgiveness to others and presenting complex theological ideas in a common tongue.

One important theological development relevant to the Little Ice Age was John Wesley's interpretation of prevenient grace and how that was available to all who believed in God through God's divine love for us. Wallace would point out that this new development in theology would create a paradigm shift in normal accepted theological theory and doctrine of the time. He would also consider that the understanding of prevenient grace would allow for the stress the individuals were feeling in regards to the Anglican Church and its archaic traditions to be placated. He was able to explain how prevenient grace begins the cycle that leads to sanctification, which is the ultimate goal of every Christian and is rewarded by entrance into Heaven. Wesley saw many converts to Christianity and witnessed many be saved during his long career as an itinerate street preacher. He witnessed that "the habitual drunkard, that was, is now temperate in all things" (Placher and Nelson 2013, 212). Wesley became someone that Wallace would regard as a prophet; a supernaturally ordained individual, hand-picked to liberate individuals and society as a whole from the rising stress of their difficult lives. In Wallace's terms, Wesley delivered them from a period of cultural distortion to a new stable state where individuals could yet again maintain their stress at appropriate levels.

These are examples of specific religious events that produced societal paradigms shifts of great importance to the people of the Little Ice Age. When people are scared, stressed, disillusioned, or troubled, they turn to their religious foundations to shore up their lives. Faith gets people through many hardships in life. One of the most stressful climatic events in modern history was the Little Ice Age. Livelihoods were challenged on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis. People turned to their faith to get them through. The otherworldly climatic events that occurred between the 1300's to the mid-1800's confronted people with adversity. Our modern understanding of weather patterns, cold fronts, glacial encroachment, volcanic eruption and the consequences of all of these events was not something the people of this time could explain; they believed they were supernatural in causation. Many believed God to be unequivocally in control. They found hope through faith and eternal life through salvation that went beyond their earthly fears of changing weather patterns and cool sunless summers that furthered fears of hunger, famine, and disease.

It is apparent with the rising concern about global warming and climate change, that Christianity is in the throes of yet another paradigm shift. A shift wherein we again concern ourselves with the care of God's creation and the understand that we exist within its perimeters instead of above or disconnected from them.

Long before the modern age, in the sixteenth century, Martin Luther understood both the majesty and intricacies found within God's creation when he exclaimed, "If you truly understood a grain of wheat, you would die of wonder" (Huyssteen 2003, 248). He as well as Calvin and Wesley, among so many others, set the groundwork for an understanding of the delicacy and grandeur found in the environment. Luther understood that humans are to be cultivators and stewards, not exploiters, of creation. He also understood the nearness of God in the environment as Huyssteen illustrates in saying, "God was not detached from the world, far above in some spiritualized heaven. On the contrary, as Luther often said, God is 'in, with, and under' the whole created world" (248). These great theological minds understood and appreciated the complexities of the world affected by the Little Ice Age and all its chaotic and dramatic climatic swings.

In our time, A. J. Swoboda in the introduction to *Blood Cries Out: Pentecostals, Ecology, and the Groans of Creation* (2014), suggests that, as Christians, we not only need to encourage a sense of environmental awareness, but to elicit a call to action to achieve justice specifically with the environment in mind.

> Any postmodern, postChristian, intellectually-privileged, secular individual who has rejected the claims of the Bible will at some level believe in and practice their own sense of justice in their world. Admittedly, that sense of justice may not be rooted in any way to Christian theology or Scripture. But one quickly becomes aware that nearly every non-religious Western individual believes wholeheartedly in justice and absolute truth the minute the words "bullying", "rape", "subordination", or "Monsanto" are spoken. Everyone has a sense of justice—religious or not. (Swoboda 2014, xiii)

Swoboda suggests that in essence the "Spirit of Pentecostalism" is that sense of justice and healing that needs to take place in the world, not only between people, but also between humanity and God's creation (xvii). Forgiveness and grace are two of the core components in Christianity and without humanity doing our part to enact change environmentally, not only will creation suffer, but justice will not be done. Ultimately our eternal fate is at stake. We need to understand again the value found within God's creation, not just to resist our temptation to domination, but also to appreciate the beauty and wonder of it all. Svoboda suggests that we need to stop resisting and denying our culpability in the process of the deterioration of God's creation "and respond afresh . . . that it *is* we who are tasked as keepers of God's garden. And it is by the Spirit we stop passing the buck to the next generation" (xvii).

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen discusses how "religions' voice is widely dismissed in public conversations concerning the care of environment" because we are continually blamed for its current condition due to the perceived anthropocentrism of Christianity. (Kärkkäinen 2014, 84) But, says Kärkkäinen, this condemnation of Christianity and its abuse of creation is due to a misuse of scripture has been clarified and rectified by the work of Paul Tillich and Joseph Sittler. Kärkkäinen adds, "Christian theology should have reminded itself more often that the mandate in Genesis 1:26-27 for humanity to act as God's faithful vice-regents does not justify abuse but rather is a call to responsible service on behalf of God's good creation" (86). Unfortunately, the ever-present myth remains of the separation of the worldly and the sacred in the West. Enlightenment ideals of this separation still plague the West. However, when looking at Christian tradition and the leaders of that tradition historically, we see exemplified a specific relationship with the Earth that both honors and respects God's creation. One such example is St. Francis of Assisi and his uninhibited love for the entire living world.

Kärkkäinen says that in the "Judeo-Christian tradition the human being is placed in the world as steward, accountable to God. Rather than superiority, humanity should exhibit solidarity with creation to which it also belongs" (87). He then emphasizes that Jesus was resurrected not just for humanity, but also for all of God's creation, for every living thing. Kärkkäinen returns at the end of his chapter to reassert religion's voice in the conversation by stating,

> A continuing dialogue with natural sciences is a necessary task and asset in this pursuit. Although theology should never be merely the recipient of science's ever-new insights—the dialogue is rather a two-way process in which both parties speak to and challenge each other—no credible theology of creation and ecology can be constructed currently without deep investigation of scientific resource. (Kärkkäinen 2014, 94)

Peter Althouse introduces the term *creation care* into the discussion as a "transformational eschatological ethic inlud[ing] personal, social and global responsibilities" (2014, 123-124). Althouse even believes that Darwin's evolutionary theory can work in union with Moltmann's understanding of the idea of tripartite creation, for as he explains, "what evolution reveals is that humans are not 'godlike' and set apart from the rest of creation, but one species among the whole community of biodiversity in the planet" (125). Althouse understands how important it is for humanity to step up, take responsibility of our past abusive relationship with creation, and begin a new relationship of genuine stewardship. He also describes this past relationship as violent and sinful because those that have been baptized by the Spirit should honor God's creation instead of squandering it. By exploiting creation and humankind, we have also exploited the Spirit, so we need to understand the importance of correcting our relationship with creation. For as Althouse explains,

> the infilling of the Spirit is a kenotic act that makes the Spirit present in the world and in creation. It harkens back to the kenosis of creation when the Spirit's presence fills the earth with life. The Spirit is poured out on all flesh. Moreover, the kenosis of Spirit that manifests the Spirit's presences in creation also anticipates the cosmic realities of the new creation where the goal of Spirit kenosis is the delimitation of God who will be fully present with and in the renewed creation. (Althouse 2014, 127)

Althouse approves of Moltmann's transition from an anthropocentric view of ecotheology to one of a biocentric view, centering nature instead of humankind. This change in perspective allows individuals to understand the importance of creation and how we are just one facet of the whole of the cosmos. Ultimately,

Althouse's answer to the burgeoning global and climatic crisis is the individual response. He aligns again with Moltmann and suggests, "the accumulation of personal choices had global ecological consequences. Moltmann therefore proposes the adoption of a simple lifestyle of moderation and cultural solidarity. Living an ecological lifestyle means a return to embodied existence and a global ecological consciousness with local lifestyle choices" (129).

In looking at individual responses, we can see the transitions taking place from archaic Westernized anthropocentric ideals of control and dominance, as well as the erroneous disconnect between humans and other animals, to one of a more conscientious model of creation care and ecotheology wherein God is recentered. But what of the denominational view? Have some denominations offered a plan of action going forward as we observe significant increasing stress on creation and humanity?

Specifically, the United Methodist Church has made a call to its members and others to be more mindful of our impact on the Earth and ways in which we can hold ourselves more accountable for our actions. In Ryan Dunn's article, he confesses that, "I engage in behaviors that I know detract from the goodness of the natural world. The harm I—and many others—do to creation has real effects" (Dunn 2019). Dunn goes on to identify the many factors that contribute to the deterioration of the environment, from noxious emissions to the poisoning of our oceans and waterways with loads of garbage and plastics, to the severely detrimental practice of deforestation that is not only advancing soil erosion but also depleting habitats for native flora and fauna. He makes an interesting connection between witnessing the goodness of God in creation and being intentional in our relationship to the Earth and others. He suggests that if we neglect our relationship with and stewardship of God's creation, we are also neglecting our relationships with others who were created in God's image. Dunn reminds us that, "the poorer a person is, the more likely environmental degradation will deliver negative effects. The fewer resources available to a person, the more likely she experiences hardship from environmentally-influenced asthmas or cancer. The impact of environmental disaster deepens in accordance with poverty" (2019).

Our current predicament with the planet and its climate is escalading at an exponential rate and only time will tell what the outcome of our efforts going forward will be. Are we headed towards another global crisis of global warming or are we about to enter into another Ice Age, potentially much like the one experienced in the years from the 1300's until the 1850's? While I have an opinion on the subject, it is not based on my own professional acumen nor my own research. Instead, I prefer to consider climatologists, meteorologists, and weather historians' opinions, which do vary considerably. In any case, one premise is true, God has created the whole world for us and we are called to care for it and nurture it to the best of our abilities. If we fail to understand the significance of the relationship between our home, and ourselves, we have not only failed ourselves, but we have failed our covenant with God.

> Our conviction is that time is limited for engaging the predicament in which our planet is immersed, that we cannot flee the "inescapable," and that God has situated us in this place "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). In memory and honor of those who have gone before us, and in love for creation and for those inexorably affected by our decisions, both now and in the future, the time has come for Christ-followers to "re-vision" their history, study reflectively, think imaginatively, pray humbly, and act boldly. (Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda 2014, 94)

4. Conclusion

One observation I have made in this study of the Little Ice Age is that humans are ultimately highly adaptive. We have learned and advanced in ways never thought possible. We are an ingenious species, ever adaptive, ever triumphant. We are resourceful and industrious and will take on any challenge in an effort to see our species grow and thrive. The people of the Little Ice Age met with seemingly insurmountable odds, but adapted their methods, their culture, their societies, and even their religious beliefs to withstand the challenges of bitterly cold winters, seasons of flooding and drought, years without a summer, famine, plague, and revolution to become more successful.

> We can now track the Little Ice Age as an intricate tapestry of short-term climatic shifts that rippled through European society during times of remarkable change—seven centuries that saw Europe emerge from medieval fiefdom and pass by stages through the Renaissance, the Age of Discovery, the Enlightenment, the French and Industrial revolutions, and the making of modern Europe. (Fagan 2000: xiv)

However, we are not only called to survive and adapt, but to thrive in God's creation. Ultimately, we are all called to be stewards of the Earth and that encompasses not only our neighbor but also nature itself. The ultimate authority to whom we are accountable is God, and we must put our faith in Him that we will be protected and guided by His infinite grace. The ethics and recommendations of science are nothing compared to what we are called to do as good

neighbors and stewards of the Earth. Our first and foremost priority is our covenant with God, and our obligation to human ethics is secondary. Nonetheless, if we ignore our convent we neglect not just ourselves but the Earth, and by ignoring significant climatic changes we are doing just that. We can learn from the lessons our forbearers who suffered in their own struggles with climate change and amend our current course before we begin another significant shift in climate with possibly more devastating consequences. Thorsen suggests in his work on the Wesleyan Quadrilateral that, "Christians also need to advocate on behalf of correcting causes of impoverishment and injustice, lest unjust social and institutional practices continue to oppress people, individually and collectively" (Thorsen 2018, 17). I would also add that Christians need to advocate for the Earth as well.

The overall intention of this article has been to understand the intimate connection that exists between culture and climate and how the events from the Little Ice Age underscore that relationship. Through understanding the past, we can connect with it and give hope to the future. We need to consider our methods and motivations in order to learn how to do the right thing at the right time. Climate is an ever-changing organism, much like culture: one responding infinitely to the other in perpetuity. For the fate of humanity and for the fate of the Earth, we turn to what others have done before us, how they have adjusted, how they have thrived, and how they have responded to previous climatic events to determine their course. For as Margaret Mead is reputed to have once stated, "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has" (Mead 2019). It is our responsibility to care for and nurture the planet that we call home. God has entrusted us with His miraculous creation and we must honor our covenant with Him.

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NEWS & OPINIONS

Systemic Racialism and the Continuing Struggle for Social Justice in the United States

Steven J. Ybarrola

As the world now knows, on May 25, 2020, George Floyd, an African American, died in Minneapolis while being constrained by three police officers as a fourth stood by watching and keeping the growing crowd of onlookers and concerned citizens away. The senior officer on the scene, who is white, had his knee on Floyd's neck while the other two held his back and legs. Although, based on videos taken at the time, onlookers were concerned about Floyd's safety as he kept telling the police that he couldn't breathe, and calling for the policeman to get off his neck, the officer remained in that position for over 8 minutes, well after Floyd had stopped moving. This is, as we've come to see, not an isolated incident, but unfortunately a too common occurrence in the United States, brought to public attention in recent years primarily through cellphone videos.

In an article I published in this journal in January 2019, I discussed teaching a course in 2015, "Ethnicity, Race, and the Church," in which I had to stop beginning class sessions with a "What's in the News" section due to the fact that there were so many examples of mainly unarmed black men being killed by police, and in some cases vigilantes, that it took up too much class time. It is disheartening that five years later we are still witnessing so many of these incidences. A Washington Post study of fatal shootings by police during a five-year period beginning in 2015 found that African Americans were disproportionately killed by police. "They account for under 13% of the U. S. population, but are killed by police at more than twice the rate of white Americans".[1] Likewise, Department of Justice investigations of the police departments in Ferguson, Missouri (where Michael Brown, an unarmed African American teenager, had been killed by a police officer in 2015) and Chicago found that they had routinely violated the constitutional and civil rights of African Americans and Latinos/as.[2]

The outrage over the murder of George Floyd, which has come to symbolize the continued abuse and denigration of African Americans and other minority populations in the United States, has led to a renewed movement for social justice largely under the umbrella of Black Lives Matter, with estimates of the number of protesters since the death of Floyd ranging between 15 and 26 million, which would make it the largest such movement in U.S. history.[3] A key argument in this recent movement, as with those in the past, has been the systemic nature of racialism/racism in the United States. Anthropologists, as well as other social scientists, have long studied the issues of race and racialism,[4] and

[1] Tate, Julie, Jennifer Jenkins, and Steven Rich. "Fatal Force." *The Washington Post*, July 1, 2020. Accessed July 7, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/.

[2] U.S. Department of Justice. "Justice Department Announces Findings of Two Civil Rights Investigations in Ferguson, Missouri." March 4, 2015. https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf; United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and United States Attorney's Office Northern District of Illinois. "Investigation of the Chicago Police Department." January 13, 2017. Accessed July 7, 2020. https://www.justice.gov/opa/file/925846/download.

[3] Buchanan, Larry, Quoctrung Bui, and Jugal K. Patel. "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History." *The New York Times*, July 3, 2020. Accessed July 7, 2020. https://nyti.ms/2ZqRyOU.

[4] I use the term racialism instead of racism, following common scholarly usage, to connote the wider societal impact of the meanings given to race. It also conveys the idea that our understanding of race and racial attitudes change over time, though, as we see in American society today, they don't necessarily diminish in their potency or effect.

have pointed out its systemic nature, particularly, though not exclusively, in the United States.

The development of the social imaginary (Taylor 2003) of race in the United States began well before the founding of the country, but it became more deeply embedded in the 19th century with the rise of "scientific racialism," which purported to have scientifically confirmed that racial categories were, in fact, real, distinct, and that key intrinsic differences existed among the "races" (Lieberman and Scupin 2012; Meneses 2006). These differences were seen to be so important that some of the leading scientists of the day argued, based largely on the study of skulls (phrenology/ craniology), that there had actually been separate "geneses" (polygeny) for the different races (see Stocking 1991, and Gould 1996). Anthropology moved away from such a clearly delineated model of "race," especially after the development of genetics which revealed that humans are incredibly genetically homogeneous, regardless of how we may appear physically. Instead, anthropologists and other social scientists came to understand race to be a sociocultural construct, one where those in the dominant group (in this case, white) were able to determine which physical attributes would be used to categorize people into what were argued to be clearly demarcated groups. However, though the social sciences have moved beyond the categorical concept of "race" due to the scientific evidence, it still informs how most US-Americans understand race, and more importantly, how our institutions continue to perpetuate a racialized society.

One example of the systemic nature of racialism is the one cited above—policing. An argument that has been made in recent weeks in the wake of the killing of George Floyd and others at the hands of law enforcement is that we shouldn't impugn all police officers because of a few "bad apples." However, the philosophers Todd May and George Yancey argue that this is a fundamental misunderstanding of the real problem. They state,

> We think that making this distinction [between policing and a few "bad apples"] is a mistake. It is a mistake not because it underestimates the number of police officers who are racist and violent, but because the problem of racist policing is not one of individual actors. It is a mistake because the role of the police in society must be understood, not individually but structurally.[5]

One of the police officers involved in the killing of George Floyd self-identified as African American (like president Obama, his mother is white and his father is African, in this case, Nigerian). He entered the police force in Minneapolis with a desire to bring about change in how the police dealt with African Americans and other minorities, but became an agent of the ongoing oppression of black people. Ironically, he became a symbol of such oppression, and helped spark a movement for the change he was ostensibly seeking.[6]

But systemic racialism affects all of our institutions in the United States. As the Christian sociologists Michael Emerson and Christian Smith argue in their book *Divided by Faith*,

> racial practices that reproduce racial division in the contemporary United States "(1) are increasingly covert, (2) are embedded in normal operations of institutions, (3) avoid direct racial terminology, and (4) are invisible to most Whites." It understands that racism is not mere individual, overt prejudice or the free-floating irrational driver of race problems, but the collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities for some racial groups (2000, 9, quoting Bonilla-Silva and Lewis, 1997).[7]

The problem is that since, as Emerson and Smith argue, most white people don't "see" racialism in the United States as a systemic problem, they can easily place blame for any offense on the victim of the offense. I recall being with family in California at a barbecue with some of their friends (all of us white) when the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin was announced. As we discussed the verdict, all of those there, with the exception of my brother, my wife, and me, were making the argument that the killing had nothing to do with race—it was just self-defense against a "thug." Now, it could be argued that Zimmerman felt his life was threatened once Martin was on top of him, but he would never have gotten into that position had he not been following Martin around the neighborhood (where Martin had

[5] May, Todd, and George Yancey. "Policing Is Doing What It Was Meant to Do. That's the Problem." *The New York Times*, June 21, 2020. Accessed July 7, 2020. https://nyti.ms/37Mu2zG.

[6] Barker, Kim. "The Black Officer Who Detained George Floyd Had Pledged to Fix the Police." *The New York Times*, June 27, 2020. Accessed July 7, 2020. https://nyti.ms/383XPEa.

[7] For a broader survey of public opinion on race in the U.S., see Menasce Horowitz, Juliana, Anna Brown, and Kiana Cox. "Race in America 2019." *Pew Research Center*, April 9, 2019. Accessed July 7, 2020. https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/.

family) because he was "suspicious," and had he not disobeyed the 911 operator when he was told to stop following Martin. This is eerily reminiscent of the recent killing of Ahmaud Arbery as he jogged through a predominantly white neighborhood in South Georgia. The systemic nature of race in the U.S. is such that blacks and other minorities can easily be seen as "out of place" in all sorts of social settings (e.g., department stores, neighborhoods, car dealerships, apartment rental offices, bird watching in a park).

Systemic Racism and White Evangelicals

In their research among white evangelicals, Emerson and Smith found that their "cultural tool kit" did not provide a framework for understanding systemic issues related to race. Instead, there was a strong emphasis on "accountable freewill individualism" ("individuals exist independent of structures and institutions"), "relationalism (attaching central importance to interpersonal relationships), and antistructuralism (inability to perceive or unwillingness to accept social structural influences)" (2000, 76). They go on to state that "Although much in Christian scripture and tradition points to the influence of social structures on individuals, the stress on individualism has been so complete for such a long time in white American evangelical culture that such tools are nearly unavailable" (78-79).

One thing that did make a difference, however, was the degree to which white evangelicals had contact with people from minority populations. Those who had little contact with such populations denied that race was a problem in the U.S., or blamed minorities for the racial problems that do exist, whereas those who were more immersed in non-white society regarded race problems as real, prevalent, and even scary. Towards the end of their chapter dealing with white evangelicals' perceptions of the "race problem," they state,

> white evangelicals' cultural tools and racial isolation curtail their ability to fully assess why people of different races do not get along, the lack of equal opportunity, and the extent to which race matters in America. Although honest and well-intentioned, their perspective is a powerful means to reproduce contemporary racialization. Because reality is socially constructed, a highly effective way to ensure the perpetuation of a racialized system is simply to deny its existence (2000, 89, 90).

As I argued in my OKHJ article, because we are brought up in a particular family and community at a particular time and place, we tend to see the world, including the social world, through the meanings that our culture gives to it. And since we are naturally ethnocentric, we believe the world is as we see it, or at least it ought to be. Therefore, it takes great intention on our part to move beyond our own cultural and social situatedness to try to understand how other people, who come from different families and communities, see and experience the world (Ybarrola 2019). In order to do this, we need to take an incarnational approach: humbling ourselves, taking the attitude of a learner, and seeking how we can serve others rather than expecting them to serve us (see Rynkiewich 2011, 41, 42). In this way we can expand our "cultural tool kit" and join those who are crying out for social justice!

I was struck by a news story recently that showed an African American girl wearing a tee shirt that read "All Lives Cannot Matter Until Black Lives Matter." True enough, but we are living in a time when members of our government are claiming that "Black Lives Matter" is "a symbol of hate" and that protesters are all "radical left fascists." Let us be, as Andrew Walls says that Christians throughout church history have been, those who are "out of step" with our society when it comes to continuing the oppressive systems that keep so many Americans marginalized and impoverished (Walls 1996). Let us follow the mandate given to us by God through the prophet Micah—to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

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NEWS & OPINIONS

The Benefits of Having Family Accompany the Ethnographer in Fieldwork

Ned Wilson

Introduction

This short excerpt recounts the benefits of having my wife, Theresa, and two of our daughters accompany me while conducting fieldwork in western Colorado. My current research is a continuation of Dallam's conversation that is situated within the masculine church in general, and the cowboy Christian in particular (Dallam 2018, 22-28). Dallam, as "a woman attending the church alone," mentions that she felt like an oddity, perceived as being a bit dangerous, and was often avoided by male congregants (27-28). Conversely, I consider myself a masculine academic of western heritage who punched cows up the mountains and raised sheep in the valley; nevertheless, I wanted to avoid a different kind of suspicion that often accompanies men who attend church alone. In other words, rather than going it alone, I anticipated that attending the cowboy church services as a family would not only garner trust more readily but would also foster a more familial relationship with both the congregation and future interlocutors.

From a parenting perspective, affording our daughters—a high school junior and senior—the opportunity to experience field research firsthand was immeasurable. Incidentally, most of our children were born and raised in western Colorado; however, we relocated to New England before the mentioned two could experience mutton busting, raising lambs, and riding horses like their older siblings.

People Take Notice

Rural, bi-vocation pastoral experience in Colorado cattle country has taught me that Sunday morning Bible studies are lightly attended. In western parlance, the ten-o'clock big service is comprised of the regulars, the once-a-month'ers, twice-a-month'ers, and a few pew poachers. The evening gatherings, however, are mostly attended by the regulars and the big guns. I suspected the cowboy church would be similar, and as such, we attended both the big service and the evening gathering.

It was during the evening gathering, though, that the girls earned their keep. As I was keeping one eye on the preacher and the other eye on the congregation, I noticed that many of the congregants were keeping both eyes on our daughters. Subsequent the final doffing of hats and a double amen, a seemingly human stampede introduced themselves to Theresa and our daughters. I, on the other hand, was little more than roadkill. However, not all was lost.

Theresa, as though on cue, acted as a single person advance team. Not only did she redirect the conversation to include my fieldwork, but with near sleight of hand, she guided several people to me who wanted to know more about my research. Meanwhile, the girls' sweet and sanguine personalities kept the conversation alive with the remainder of the congregants who wanted to visit. Before the lights were turned off, I had secured two morning breakfast meetings, a family breakfast with horse riding afterward, a dinner meeting, and a family dinner with games. I am confident that what the family accomplished in one evening would have required weeks' worth of visits.

Relaxed Setting

Concerning the interviews, I noticed a significant difference in interlocutors' body language, depth of detail, and exciting anecdotes when they shared their story with the family compared to solo interviews. Interestingly, it was during the family dinner that the girls earned their freight as well. The interview and storytelling turned into a more serious and extended conversation, so the girls excused themselves and entertained the family's younger children. Since our daughters were watching the family's children the couple felt free to share their hearts in matters that addressed the backstage of their church experience. In one evening, relationships were built, hearts shared, and a gold mine of anthropological data was gathered.

Contrariwise, during my solo interviews the interlocutors seemed more guarded when answering the same interview questions or sharing their story. The

difference could be personal dynamics; however, my years in both executive management and pastoral ministry suggest the differences lie within the safety-amongst-family schema.

Familial Support

Last, conducting research away from home is often more straining on the anthropologist's family than the anthropologist. My fieldwork rotation consisted of two weeks in western Colorado and six weeks at home. In my thirty-plus years of marriage, I can count on two hands the number of times where we did not sit down and have dinner as a family. By having my family accompany me in the field, we were able to continue what I believe is an important family custom. Additionally, I suspect our daughters felt an intangible worth—over against abandonment—by joining me in the field.

Conclusion

In the end, I am uncertain if families would have invited me into their homes for breakfast or dinner the first time they met me at church. However, I believe having the company of my family did indeed garner trust more readily and helped to build familial relationships with my interlocutors.

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Ned Wilson is a graduate student in Eastern University's Theological and Cultural Anthropology program. His academic interests concern congregant disenfranchisement and the masculine culture's influence over homiletics, theology, orthopraxy and subsequent efficacy of reaching the unchurched. Currently, his ethnographic study is focused on the masculine culture of a western Colorado cowboy church. Ned serves as the senior pastor of a non-denominational church in New Hampshire and volunteers as an EMT/Firefighter.

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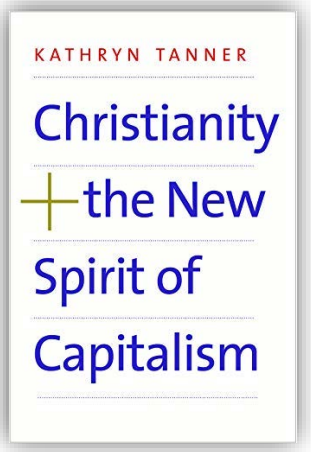
BOOK REVIEW

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

By Kathryn Tanner

Reviewed by Christine Albertini



New Haven CT: Yale University Press, Kindle 2019

The global Covid-19 pandemic and its concurrent economic destruction have again revealed the shortcomings of capitalism and private employer-based compensation and benefits. Around the globe, governments have had to step in with a safety net, reminding us of the unequal balance of power between the private enterprise and its employees. Capitalism as we know it is like a roulette table, with a winner-take-all make-up, leaving only a few still standing in its boom and bust wake.

Prominent theologian and Yale Divinity School Professor Kathryn Tanner's book *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism* was published in 2019, before the current crisis. But she had keen hind-sight-perspective on the *last* global economic crisis: the economic meltdown of 2008 and its root cause in contemporary capitalism, which she characterizes as "finance-dominated" capitalism. Tanner describes this system as so corrupted by debt, short term perspective, byzantine and hollow financial instruments that it bears little resemblance to a system that once might have built productive economies. This capitalism is a rapacious creditor, powered by greed, dominating the life of workers in a demand for all-consuming attention to its present moment demands. It is characterized by futility, uncertainty, and fear. Among its faults outlined by Tanner are its privatizing tendencies in the provision of public goods and the shifting of risks onto vulnerable individuals. "When things turn ugly one is on one's own" (2413).

Tanner's title harkens back to the primary insights of Max Weber's classic work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* published over a century ago. In this treatise Weber attributed the Protestant work ethic to the particularly punishing theology of Dutch Calvinism and its doctrine of double predestination. You were either damned or saved and there was nothing that could be done to alter God's predetermination. What was left to an individual was to work without pleasure, follow a strict, joyless, ascetic life and take this as sinful humanity's lot. Later evolutions of capitalism were disassociated from the Calvinist ethic, but the artifacts such as humorless work being deserved drudgery, and power in the hands of a few based on financial assets remained, finally morphing into the immoral and debased "finance-dominated" capitalism Tanner eviscerates.

Her perspective on a typical working day as a harsh slog recall Marx's "The Working Day". But Tanner is no Marxist. Finance-dominated capitalism has a destructive "person-shaping capacity" that she proposes can be countered by Christian beliefs and practices with a comparable "person-shaping capacity". Tanner looks at contemporary capitalism and holds that as a Christian she has no choice but to critique it. In fact, it is so deplete of any moral, let alone Christian, ethic that it must be resisted and replaced with a Christian vision of redemption and salvation.

Tanner's book contributes significantly to a Christian perspective on modern economic life. Her deep dives into various aspects of finance-dominated capitalism (e.g. derivatives, consumer debt) are abundantly detailed and dense. But one must wade through these descriptions to understand her view of just how amoral and vacuous is the essence of contemporary capitalism. Her elaborate citations provide a path through the extensive post-modern re-examination of the concept of work and economic injustice among theologians, sociologists, philosophers and cultural critics of the past decades.

Tanner's conclusion is clear: "The work ethic of finance-dominated capitalism is incompatible with fundamental Christian commitments" (2735). She argues that "there is surprisingly little reason to think Christianity has a direct interest in developing a work ethic at all, whatever form that ethic takes" (2739). To support this she cites pre-Reformation theology which prioritized religious pursuits and suggests that economic pursuits were viewed with suspicion in a church-dominated world. Then, the highest concern was placed on a life dedicated to God. Nevertheless, Tanner's Christian worldview allows for non-religious aspects of life, but all these must be in support of a total commitment to fulfillment of one's primary calling: a God-centered life.

I could not help but reflect on a growing, global, Christian, *Business as Mission* movement as I read Tanner's book. In this movement, work and worship are the same concept as the Hebrew word *avodah* commends. Within this frame, the idea of business and the productive work it offers fits into Tanner's view of a Christian commitment to God expressed in all of one's life. This covenant brings meaning to even the most mundane aspects of the human condition. No more the competitive and individualistic drive to profit for profit's sake. "Salvation is not a scarce good to be fought over" (2819). In this scenario, ethical, God-centered business is a vital component of a free, fair, and joyful society. We can only hope (and pray) that Kathryn Tanner's vision of "new hope" will dominate and lead as we emerge from the current economic crisis with all the inequities in employment and social safety net that it has exposed.

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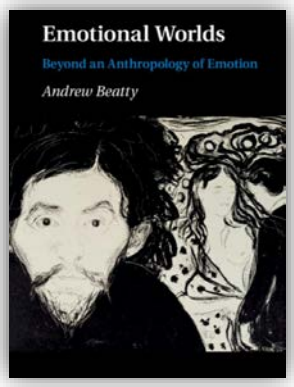
BOOK REVIEW

EMOTIONAL WORLDS: BEYOND AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF EMOTIONS

By Andrew Beatty

Reviewed by Adriana Myland



Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
2019

Andrew Beatty considers the emotional worlds that anthropologists are not only seeking to interpret but embody through experience. Beatty recognizes that if emotions are misunderstood, so is the cultural scene, and most significantly the narrative (3). His fieldwork in Nias and rural Java, Indonesia supports his argument well. He examines the challenges anthropologists have faced in the past seeking to describe emotion to inform understanding (6, 8). This benefits anthropology as he seeks to flee from "anthropology's cardinal sin," projecting the way we think *and* feel on others (10). Beatty is not confined to psychological anthropology, rather he employs relevant interdisciplinary thought (11). He proposes an "emotionally engaged anthropology" to enhance ethnography through human encounters that outweigh theory (12, 14-15). Beatty does not present a new theory about emotions, but an epistemological humility that embraces emotional encounters with informants, as he stewards his privilege, and ensures ethnography reaches its full potential.

Beatty strongly believes emotions deserve space in anthropological thought. He desires to enhance ethnography by incorporating emotional experience without sacrificing human complexity (17). Beatty acknowledges the depth of emotion that penetrates human experience and is often sifted out of ethnography. I believe incorporating emotion enhances the ontological turn in anthropology to grasp ways the human spirit flourishes through encountering the divine, which is often infused with emotion.

Beatty pleads for a narrative approach to understanding emotion that allows informants to divulge their feelings and the ethnographer to capture "emotions in action" (37). However, a problem Beatty does not fully address is the commitment and length of time needed to witness informants' emotional worlds. Although Beatty's experience with the Nias demonstrates that Western psychology does not translate across culture, it is possible to enter informants' experience through narrative (38). This enriches a theology of culture by acknowledging the diversity of emotional experiences that narratives help illustrate. An example of how Beatty's emotionally engaged anthropology compliments the value of a theological understanding of culture is the introduction of Christianity to the Nias. An entanglement of emotions followed the Nias' repentance and Beatty recognized their emotions which helped him navigate their spiritual experience, as well as grasp their values and understanding of Christianity (73). This shows humanity cannot be fully understood without concern for emotions, and the latter will effectively transform conversations about faith and cultural diversity.

Next, Beatty explores the Javanese emotions that are analyzed "inward" in contrast to the Nias (75). There is a consistent theme that emphasizes the distinctiveness of humanity and the complexity of emotions, illustrated through the influence of linguistic tradition, meaning drawn from orthodox Islam, and mysticism that shapes the Javanese emotions (77-78). This helps us understand the way the Javanese express their feelings. He states emotions are like "navigational tools" to understand the emotional terrain of Java (84, 90). It is clear a narrative approach allows for emotionally engaged encounters to enhance cultural understanding, one of anthropology's primary purposes.

Emotions emerge through story and writing precise accounts of a culture's narrative makes for exceptional ethnography. Beatty provides a threefold concept of why narrative matters including: 1) the "construction and shape of an emotion episode," 2) understanding the sequence and linked emotions to grasp the structure, and 3) reporting effective words or images to carry the construction through all its phases (111). This is vital to understand as narrative structure is intrinsic to emotion that naturally unfolds (111). This supports Beatty's approach as he does not theorize about emotions, but ensures ethnography accounts for emotional experiences that are embedded in narratives. Also, it is important ethnographers recognize the emotional baggage they bring to the field without diminishing their experience. Beatty could have included a short reflection on his emotional experience to bring to life the challenges and commitment required to ensure narratives are reported accurately.

Beatty urges ethnographers to provide deeper accounts of narrative context and introduces two perspectives on emotion: personal and biographical. Emotional experiences are *personal* in that they are not social constructions such as norms, and they are *biographical* which attend to one's history (126). This raises concern for ethnographers reporting on emotions because feelings are both personal and subjective experiences. So, what is the purpose of including emotions in ethnography? Beatty recognizes that narratives are anchored in shared cultural experience, not the bubble of an interview, and he reckons the complexity of cultural, social and psychological experiences of community while maintaining particularity (130). But by accounting for emotion he puts human experience and narrative first, followed by cultural analysis, as emotions often remain tacit or embodied (148). This explains how narrative approach to emotion considers the whole person including what remains unspoken.

Narrative context is key to making sense of emotion, however, Beatty provides a few precautions. Emotions cannot simply be labeled but must be understood in the broader scene that carries significance (166-167). This informs ways ethnographers effectively write about emotion while examining the flaws from anthropology's past (170). The work of prominent anthropologists is interesting to examine with Beatty's emotionally engaged ethnography. For example, Beatty claims Geertz's interpretative anthropology was on the right path, but rich reflections on symbols were consuming, leaving out emotional experiences, which Beatty acknowledges is part of ethnography's design (181, 183). This is understandable considering the historical scientific objections to anthropology and its questionable credibility. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach to understanding emotion cross-culturally will help cross this bridge.

In critique of Beatty's work I believe he belabours the discussion on affect theory, which does not align with his emotionally engaged ethnography, and the discussion could be condensed. He describes affect theory as relying upon the verb "to affect [or] to have an affect on" (197). Beatty argues this theory does not enhance shared emotional encounters with informants, instead it is "object-oriented ethnography" and distant (221, 224-226). I agree with Beatty and appreciate the fine line he draws between embodied emotional experience versus affect theory despite the lengthy discussion.

Beatty introduces challenges and practical ways to navigate the semantics of emotional experience. Beatty reminds us that "emotions are moving targets, not fixed entities," which emphasizes how lived experience with informants ought to capture the intricate complexities of emotional meaning that are often difficult to name (236). Again, this reinforces the shortcoming of affect theory. Beatty makes a strong point that emotions and emotion words cannot be distinguished, as language interacts with experience, and emotions cannot simply be labeled (250). This emphasizes anthropologists' duty to faithfully report their informants' emotional worlds through embodying shared experience with their informants to help untangle the difficult semantics of emotions.

Beatty also addresses a perplexing question considering ways emotions are experienced cross-culturally that challenges ethnography. He asks, "Are emotions that are not named or otherwise formulated in a given culture nonetheless experienced?" This indicates the limits of cross-cultural understanding and empathy (250). However, it strengthens Beatty's case for an informant-based narrative approach that honours cultures and informants' diverse emotional worlds.

Above all the strongest point in Beatty's narrative approach to emotion is the use of empathy. He states that the dynamic understanding of narrative empathy is described as a tool for engagement and "not a mystical act of communion," but I would say it *is* close to a mystical encounter (262, 276). There seems to be an unexplainable part of empathy that allows ethnographers to truly understand and communicate narratives well. Beatty pleads for "emotionally alive anthropology" that will enable us to get the story straight without theorizing about emotion (268, 271, 281). Further exploration on narrative empathy in ethnographic examples would enhance Beatty's approach and direct areas for future research on emotion in anthropology.

Overall, I highly recommend Beatty's *Emotional Worlds* and believe it will improve the practice of ethnography, while raising further questions about

emotion across cultures, especially in our increasingly globalized world. Also, Beatty's emotionally engaged anthropology parallels a theological anthropology as his fieldwork experience in Nias exposes how relevant emotion is to exploring and understanding spiritual experience. For instance, humanity's response to sin, suffering, dreams and visions, death and life are infused with complex emotions that can no longer be filtered out of anthropology. Ethnographers must account for their informants' emotional worlds who are created as both spiritual and emotional beings.

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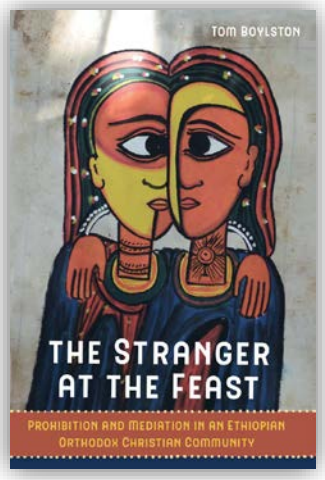
BOOK REVIEW

THE STRANGER AT THE FEAST: PROHIBITION AND MEDIATION IN AN ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

By Tom Boyleston

Reviewed by Harold Wanton



Berkeley: University of California Press
2018

In *The Stranger at the Feast: Prohibition and Mediation in an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Community*, Tom Boylston blazes a new path for ethnography in Ethiopia in eloquent terms. Historically, anthropology was slow to develop in Ethiopia due to its link with colonial rule, but now ethnographers have been tasked with educating the public on the cultural richness of Ethiopia. Although "*The Stranger at the Feast*" is not overly historical, the ethnography delves into the sociohistorical significance of ritual prohibitions and their mediation among the inhabitants of Zegeña. Prohibitions in the Ethiopian society, specifically in Zegeña, date back to a covenant between God and a monk named Abune Betre Maryam. The covenant states that as long as no trees are cut, land ploughed, or large animals kept, the people of Zege would be protected from natural disasters and wild animal attacks. Thus ploughing, for example, is prohibited within the Ethiopian society, but prohibitions are always accompanied by mediations that can been observed in intrareligious events. Boylston depicts the inter-dependence of prohibitions and their mediations as, "Where there are rules and acts of avoidance, we see not just mediators, but proliferations of mediators" (12). The ethnography of Zegeña, a peninsular province in Ethiopia, provides a closer look at the observance of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's organization in everyday life even after the secularization of the Ethiopian state. Boylston suggests that while the state has become secularized, Ethiopian Orthodox core principles of prohibition and mediation remain intact, if not enhanced, in Zegeña (3).

One strength of this work is Boylston's description of the intricacies of the Orthodox calendar and how it navigates fasting and feasting. While not all Ethiopians are Orthodox Christians, all adhere to the calendar in everyday life. Boylston not only describes the large-scale religious change after the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie, but he meticulously highlights the local transformations in feeding practices, ritual prohibition, and hospitality. Boylston describes the special role that coffee plays in the Habesha community, which "shifts between hospitality medium, commodity item, and sacred tree" (83). Boylston has truly set the bar for ethnographic work in Ethiopia and has given anthropologists a fruitful foundation to build upon.

Boylston divides the book into an introduction and nine chapters. In each chapter, Boylston reconstructs the social history of Zege, describing the political and social entanglement of the relationship between monastic and political power. For instance, the Orthodox calendar is the most important mechanism of regulation of life in Ethiopia for everyone.

The Stranger at the Feast describes how Ethiopian culture has preserved religious traditions to the point that religion and culture are one. The reluctance to allow other religions to dominate socio-political roles and the common adherence to the Orthodox calendar and traditions have allowed Ethiopia to stand by its faith in a relentless manner, allowing all decisions, state and

otherwise, to be done through the lens of the Orthodox Church.

A Christian anthropologist's perspective would engage Ethiopian culture and Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahedo tradition with both the heightened understanding of a Christian theological perspective and the ethnographic data of an anthropologist's view of the unique variations within Ethiopian culture. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahedo Church plays an important role in the whole of Ethiopian culture. The constant tension between religious prohibitions and political institutions require ongoing mediation. But the Orthodox tradition is interwoven into the cultural fabric of all Ethiopians. In this, the existence of a secularized state under the constant influence or guidance from religion presents ways in which Christianity and culture interact.

The Stranger at the Feast is a groundbreaking ethnographic study in that it is a study of one of the oldest Christian traditions. This text is particularly suitable for scholars, and it explores the complexities of both Ethiopian culture and Orthodox tradition. Professional scholars, anthropologists, economists, and linguists will benefit from this body of work, and it provides readers with a considerable understanding of one of the least-understood religious traditions and its influence within the contemporary secularized Ethiopian state.

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