

The
Mediator



A Journal of Holiness Theology for Asia-Pacific Contexts

**ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Bridging Cultures for Christ
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Preface

One of the important disciplines to learn in the academic study of theology is observation. We learn to observe many things. At the top of the list is our contemplation of God in his revelation to us. God is beyond imagination and language, but we can do our best to find ways to understand God's self-disclosure. The primary instrument for this is Scripture, which bears witness to the Living Word, Messiah Jesus. God speaks to us in many other ways, and so we need to have "ears that hear" and "eyes that see" what God is doing in and around us. Observation should be followed by assessment as we learn to evaluate what God communicates to us. This process will *always* be filtered through God's grace in Christ. Seminaries are very good at helping students grow in their skills up to this point.

Moreover, we must do something with what we have learned. Here is where seminaries can excel with careful attention. Theological educators must guide their students to assessment in order to move the information into understanding. Two things can happen with understanding. Information can just sit in the mind and collect intellectual dust, possibly to be recalled for an exam or brought up in a trivia game. This type of understanding can be impressive on exams and may lead to high grades in some situations. The second type of understanding becomes personal and transformative insight leading to character change and spiritual growth. This is the more difficult type of learning to assess. Theological educators have debated these topics for decades, but the call to engagement and transformation remains and calls each of us ever forward into newness.

I hope that *The Mediator* is a resource where students, faculty, alumni, scholars, and practitioners can share their deepening understanding of God's revelation. People engage in this journey at multiple entry points. A theological journal such as this seeks to explore understanding at an in-depth level where ideas undergo significant reflection and evaluation. The

papers in this issue represent substantial thinking and evaluation of research in diverse contexts. It is always up to readers to determine how they will respond to this research. In some cases, this research will prompt new research from others. Each of the authors represented in this issue has invested substantial effort and time in their studies, hoping that their reflections and conclusions will aid others in making similar discoveries. *The Mediator* provides a forum for sharing these ideas.

In this issue, we have several papers that explore topics being much discussed in our world today. Yun, Ae-Sun explores the topic of spiritual nurture of children during the Covid-19 pandemic. The past year and a half have created many challenges for everyone and enhanced many social issues. The isolation and uncertainty have especially affected the spiritual nurturing of children. Ae-Sun offers a robust study of how to nurture our families during this time. Another topic that governments especially discuss is climate change. The church has not substantially entered this discussion. Rheynil Sagud explores how this topic affects Wesleyan ministers in the area of Pangasinan, Philippines. His creative conclusions offer all church leaders ideas for consideration. Marlies Hartkamp offers another study about nurturing children at home. She suggests principles that can be put into practice by both churches and parents as they seek to disciple children under their care. Finally, Biak Cung Lian provides a look into how the Chin people of Myanmar understand holiness. He explores this topic from multiple dimensions, offering readers both a methodological model and deeper insight into this Asian context.

This issue also includes the abstracts of theses and dissertations completed thus far in 2021. The full theses and dissertations are available online for free at the APNTS repository held at www.whdl.org.

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Spiritual Nurture in the Pandemic

Yun, Ae-Sun, M.Div.

Introduction

The pandemic is an unprecedented phenomenon that has affected most people, families, communities, and countries. When my husband, youngest daughter, and I were positive for COVID-19, we experienced a lot of physical pain. Emotionally, we had a lot of stress, fear, and worries. Socially, we needed to be wiser with our relationships with others. Spiritually, we were challenged many times because we could not join in worship at the church. During the long period of quarantine at home, we felt isolated and missed our worship and social interaction with our relatives and friends. Nevertheless, we could still develop our resilience through familial love, faith in God, unceasing emotional support of church members, and God's provision in a season of need. Though we have suffered from post-Corona symptoms, we remain resilient. Reflecting on my experiences, I have thought about children around the world. I imagine how children in dysfunctional homes have few opportunities to get good quality nurture during the pandemic. I ponder how their challenges have affected their development. I wonder how the church can contribute to creating a better family environment for COVID-19-affected families for the sake of the holistic development of children.

Children are born and grow up in various forms of families, depending on their primary caregivers (usually parents). Thus, children can experience social interaction and learn basic life skills and information in the family. In line with this function within the family, many studies attest that the influence of family upon a child, especially in developmental aspects, is significant (Roostin 2018, 1-2; de Figueiredo and Dias 2012, 703; Guralnick 2006, 46-50; Wong, Chen, and Wu 2010, 75).

However, children are not isolated from various environmental influences on their development. Children grow in the “immediate environment” (family, surrounding of the house, school, church, and parental influence) and “broader environment” (community and culture; Greener 2003, 42). Interaction within these contexts will produce different results for the development of children. Also, the growth of children does not merely indicate physical development but a holistic one. Kathryn Copsey describes a child as a whole person born and growing in multiple contexts (Copsey 2003, 3-4). To achieve the holistic development of a child, the family needs to understand a child as a whole person, not the generation of tomorrow. Also, a family should be empowered to nurture a child as a resilient person in his or her challenging context.

A Child as a Whole Person in Multiple Contexts

The Bible depicts children from a multi-dimensional perspective. A child in the Bible is God’s gift, the blessing of each family, and a source of joy (Ps 127:3-5). A child is also a sinful creature like adults but innocent and pure in loving God and his or her neighbors (Matt 20:12-15; 2 Kings 5:2-4). A child grows under parental instruction and guidance (Prov 4:1; 6:20-21). However, this view cannot undermine the fact that a child is also a full human with dignity embedded in the image of God (Gen 1:27). Children need to mature in the course of their growth (Prov 7:1-5), but they have the competence and potential of spiritually influencing adults and community as a model of faith and source of revelation (1 Sam 17:12-51; Matt 18:1-5). However, children are vulnerable to social injustice and dangerous environments, like wars and famine (Exod 1:8-22; Isa 10:2; Matt 2:13-18). Thus, they need the nurture of their family and a safe community (Bunge 2006, 563-68). To empower children to grow to their God-given potential, they need a safe environment where they can flourish fully in every aspect. These diverse perspectives indicate the complexity of the definition of a child as a whole person. Also, children fulfill their role as influencers as well as influence recipients in both micro and macro social systems. The multi-dimensional perspective of children acknowledges their wholeness and the importance of their holistic development.

Erna Roostin explains that “the development of children is a pattern of change that begins from the conception and continues throughout the life cycle. Child development patterns are complex because they involve biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional processes” (Roostin 2018, 5). A child’s growth is a complex and continual process of diverse development. The Bible includes stories related to child development. For example, Jesus grew in wisdom (psychological), in stature (physical), and in favor with God (spiritual) and people (social) (Luke 2:40; 52; Athriba 2016, 45). The report of his growth was a positive example of holistic (physical, social, mental or cognitive, emotional, moral, and spiritual) child development. Also, the Bible affirms the complexity of the growth of a child and has much diversity in seeking the integration of genuine child development. Jesus grew up holistically and fulfilled his mission as the Savior of the universe (John 14:6). His life testifies to the positive consequence of the integration of child development and how each child can reach his or her unique potential.

However, some children in the Bible were exposed to traumatic experiences as interpreted from the viewpoint of modern psychology. For example, the daughter of Herodias requested the head of John the Baptist, as her mother urged her to do (Mark 6:18-28). She would grow physically, but her emotional and moral development would be challenged more than other children who did not see a head on a platter. Isaac was laid on the altar to test the extent of Abraham’s faith (Gen 22:1-11). Isaac would witness Jehovah-jireh through his experience. However, it might interrupt his mental health regarding his secure attachment to his father and his trust in him. Jacob showed his favoritism to Joseph. His favoritism provoked the jealousy of his brothers and caused them to sell Joseph as a slave (Gen 37:4, 18-28). Jacob seemed to focus on loving Joseph and neglect the emotional wellness of his other sons. The Bible remains silent about the mentioned assumptions. However, these three cases can be interpreted as a negative parental influence on the holistic development of the children involved.

Child Developmental Theories

To experience holistic development, children need physical (size of their body, motor skills, brain development, and body health), socio-emotional

(their relationship with others, attachment, and emotional changes), cognitive (how to think, communicate, and solve problems), and spiritual (knowing God and restoring relationship with God) development (Greener 2002, 2-3; Copsey 2003, 4-10).

Socio-emotional Development

By the 1930s and 1940s, many parents turned to the psychoanalytic perspective for help with their children's emotional stress and behavioral problems (Berk 1996, 15).

Psychosexual Development (Sigmund Freud)

Sigmund Freud explained the relationship between a child's biological instincts and his or her development and emphasized that the parental responses to a child's instincts can influence the formation of the child's personality in the course of developing stages (Balswick, King, and Reimer 2016, 77-78). The theory has five stages: "oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latency, and genital stage" (Freud 1963, 45-59; Garcia 1995, 498-99). First, in the oral stage, infants do "thumb-sucking" (also called "sensual sucking") at their mothers' breast (or substitutes), and their lips function as their "erotogenic zone" (Freud 1963, 45-47). Freud states that the erotogenic zone is the attached part of the body where individuals attain the feeling of satisfaction by repeatedly and habitually stimulating it (Freud 1963, 47-50). Second, during the anal stage, children (mid-infancy to four-year-old) will experience a sensation of pleasure after releasing their fecal masses by controlling their anal zone (Freud 1962, 46-47; Freud 1963, 55). The oral and anal stages are categorized as the pregenital phases (Freud 1962, 57-58). The third is the phallic stage after the pregenital phases. Acknowledging only male genitals differentiates this stage from the later genital stage. At this point, children give up seeking "more mature object relationships" (Freud 1953, 1517; Freud 1961, 165; Garcia 1995, 499). Fourth, before adolescence, children are in the stage of latency when "sexual inhibitions" seek to control sexual impulses in culturally and socially acceptable ways (Freud 1963, 43-44). Fifth, the genital stage is the final part to form and has an adult-like sexual aim toward an "extraneous sexual object" (Freud 1963, 53, 63). This stage starts with puberty (Freud 1963, 55).

Psychosocial Development (Erik Erikson)

Erik Erikson is the theorist of the Psychosocial Development Theory. This theory describes a child as a “seeker” who achieves or fails in his or her developmental tasks in relationship with various significant people at different ages: birth to one year (trust vs. mistrust; relationships with mother), one to three years (autonomy vs. shame/doubt; with parents), three to six years (initiative vs. guilt; with family), six to 12 years (industry vs. inferiority; with neighborhood, teacher, and school), 12 to 17 years (identity vs. role confusion; with peer groups and heroes), young adulthood (intimacy vs. isolation; with the opposite sex and friends), adulthood (generativity vs. stagnation; with spouse and children), and old age (ego integrity vs. despair; with others) (Erikson 1985, 247-69; Richards 1983, 93-94).

First, a mother is a significant figure to infants (birth to one year old). Infants either build trust or mistrust depending on the quality of maternal sensitivity and responsive care. Second, parents are the significant figures to toddlers between one to three years old. Toddlers who achieve “a sense of self-control without loss of self-esteem” develop autonomy, while those who lose “a sense of self-control and experience foreign overcontrol” feel shame and doubt (Erikson 1985, 254). Third, the relationship between family and preschoolers at age three to six is important for determining whether they will develop either initiative or guilt. Experiences in which preschoolers actively plan and fulfill their tasks allow them to develop a sense of initiative. However, the deprivation of experiences of initiation because of oppression and control results in an “energetic halt” and a sense of guilt that makes preschoolers avoid exploring with their newly developed competent skills and actions (Erikson 1985, 255-56). Fourth, the extended interpersonal relationships with neighborhood, teacher, and school are important factors to achieve the fourth developmental task of the industry for children ages six to 12. Children utilize their tools and skills to complete their tasks. Successful accomplishment with their initiative leads children to develop a sense of industry, while discouraging experiences result in a sense of inferiority (Erikson 1985, 259).

Fifth, peer groups and heroes are significant figures for adolescents ages 12 to 17. Youth think about who they really are and how others perceive

them. In wrestling with those thoughts and integrating them, youth discover their genuine identity or “ego identity.” Erikson defined ego-identity as “the accrued confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others” (Erikson 1985, 261). However, an ambiguous understanding of the ego identity may cause youth to feel role confusion.

Sixth, during young adulthood, people of the opposite sex and friends are important figures. According to Erikson, intimacy refers to “the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments” (Erikson 1985, 263). Successful identity formation leads young people to develop intimacy in interpersonal relationships, especially with their opposite-sex partner. However, young adults with an insecure ego-identity tend to resort to isolation and find it difficult to develop intimate relationships with others.

Seventh, spouses and children are important to individuals in middle adulthood for accomplishing their developmental tasks. Generativity means “the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation” (Erikson 1985, 267). Feeling helpful and productive to younger generations and caring for them help adults in this stage to achieve generativity. However, lacking a sense of helpfulness and productivity leads adults to stagnation.

Eighth, individuals at old age will achieve “ego integrity” through their “ego’s accrued assurance of its proclivity for order and meaning” (Erikson 1985, 268). The ego integrity helps individuals perceive their lives as valuable and meaningful and form “the patrimony” of their souls (Erikson 1985, 268). The absence of ego integrity develops a fear of death and despair about their short life (Erikson 1985, 247-69; Richards 1983, 93-94).

Table 1: Erikson's Psychosocial Development (Erikson 1985, 274)

Age	Prosocial Developmental Tasks	Basic Virtues to Achieve
Infant (birth to one year)	Basic Trust vs. Basic Mis-trust	Drive and Hope
Toddler (one to three years)	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Self-control and Will power
Preschoolers (three to six years)	Initiative vs. Guilt	Direction and Purpose
Childhood (Six to twelve years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	Method and Compe- tence
Puberty and Ado- lescence (twelve to seventeen years)	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Devotion and Fidelity
Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Affiliation and Love
Adulthood	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Production and Care
Old Age	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Renunciation and Wis- dom

Psychoanalytic theory pays attention to the physical instincts and advocates the importance of the immediate and correct parental response to a child's physical instincts in order to achieve a positive personality. The Freudian theory states that early childhood experience shapes human behaviors (cause and effect), but it does not examine the case thoroughly that a child may exhibit undesirable behaviors regardless of a parent's good personality (Rosemond 2007, 32-36). While Freudian theory tends to focus on early childhood, Erikson has an overview of life-long development and analyzes the different developmental tasks from the relational perspectives. Expanding social interactions from a mother to others is helpful for understanding a growing child in context.

Object Relations Theory (Donald Winnicott)

This theory highlights the relationship between a child and a “good enough mother” (Balswick, King, and Reimer 2016, 82). It affirms the positive role of a good enough mother in the formation of a child’s personality. This theory is helpful for understanding how God as the good Father reflects for children the “good enough mother.” However, it has some limitations for explaining other parts of holistic child development.

Cognitive Development

Operant Learning Theory (B. F. Skinner)

According to this theory, children modify their behavior by experiencing positive or negative reinforcement (rewards and punishment, respectively) and by observing the consequence of others’ behaviors (Skinner 1984, 219). Like the video clip “Children See. Children Do,” this theory advocates the significance of modeling for the sake of a child’s development (Child Friendly Australia 2006). Thus, parents’ modeling is important to develop positive learning and behaviors through reinforcement and observation (Skinner 1984, 221; Balswick, King, and Reimer 2016, 86-87). However, from the biblical understanding of sinful human nature and free will, children need to be trained in wisdom, virtue, and self-control through parental discipline and modeling, not merely reinforcement (Rosemond 2007, 200-07; Morgan 1996, 88). Thus, the disciplinary aspect is missed from the behavioristic learning theory, though it takes an essential position in parenting styles for a child’s spiritual and moral development.

Social Cognitive Learning Theory (Albert Bandura)

According to this theory, people are “agentic operators in their life course” and “sentient agents” (Bandura 1999, 155). “Triadic reciprocal causation” describes an interplaying relationship among personal factors (cognitive-affective and biological events), behaviors, and environmental factors (Bandura 1999, 156; Nabavi 2012, 14-15). Bandura states that individuals learn something by “experiencing the effects of their actions and through the power of social modeling” and values the cognitive capacity (Bandura 1999, 170). In this theory, learning occurs by observing modeled behaviors and

their consequences (either reward or punishment), anticipating the outcomes (forethought), and deciding their direction by self-regulation (Bandura 1999, 173-75). Self-efficacy—“people’s beliefs in their capabilities to perform in ways that give them some control over events that affect their lives”—is the significant factor in the self-regulation to develop problem-solving strategies and increase active social participation (Bandura 1999, 181-82).

Symbolic interaction theory (George Herbert Mead)

According to this theory, social symbolic interactions (language, gesture, play, and game) with caregivers and others in their social group shape children’s self-concept and help them become human from the social perspective (Balswick, King, and Reimer 2016, 89-91). It affirms their ongoing growth. However, it is inconsistent with the biblical understanding of a child’s dignity as fully human with dignity embedded in the image of God (Gen 1:27).

Cognitive Development Theory (Jean Piaget)

This theory views a child as an “independent explorer” (Balswick, King, and Reimer 2016, 97). According to this theory, children go through four stages in the development of their thinking: the first stage is the sensory-motor stage (birth to age two); the second is the pre-operational stage (ages two to seven); the third is the concrete-operational stage (ages eight to eleven); and the fourth is the formal operational stage, which is age eleven and above (Copsey 2003, 6-7; Richards 1983, 100). This theory respects the uniqueness and difference of each child and trusts that a child develops the ability to reason logically. Thus, Jean Piaget’s research encourages educating children according to their cognitive stage (Copsey 2003, 6-7). This means that the varied readiness and ability of the individual child are more valued than the generalized standard of academic competency.

Socio-Cultural Theory (Lev Vygotsky)

This theory applies the notion of scaffold to the theory of child development. In this theory, children are described as collaborators, which enhances their ability more than their biological competence through the scaffolds in learning (Balswick, King, and Reimer 2016, 96-97). This theory

stresses that children should interact and learn in their social contexts to learn socially acceptable actions as citizens in their community (Greener 2003, 41). It is also applicable to parenting. Parents, as spiritual education teachers, lay the scaffolds (faith practices like praying, reading the Bible, and acting the faith out in reality in this context) so that their children can step on them for the sake of their ongoing transformation and for understanding abstract meanings in the Bible and their lives.

The developmental theories discussed above represent the transition from observing children in isolated circumstances, like a laboratory in their contexts. Also, these theories contribute to understanding children and their growth. However, though they inspire the church and parents to discover the insights applicable to a child's spiritual development, they do not intend to achieve those goals. Spirituality refers to "a relational connection to the living God that is beyond our understanding and reality" (Csinos and Beckwith 2013, 43). Katheryn Copsy regards it as "an innate or inborn, part of the humanness of each child" (Copsy 2005, 26). Based on their explanation, I understand spirituality as an indescribable and unique experience of the presence of the invisible God in our reality. Copsy advocates a child's spirituality and the necessity to restore a child's damaged spirituality caused by harmful circumstances (Copsy 2003, 8-10).

Needs of a Child at Risk

A child at risk struggles with emotional issues when he or she is vulnerably exposed to traumatic experiences from risky situations such as war, abuse, child labor, natural disasters, etc., and these experiences influence emotional health (expressing true emotion in a healthy way) and even his or her social skills in social relationship with others (Kilbourn 1995, 133-43). Also, a child at risk is challenged to build an intimate relationship with God. Thus, he or she needs to restore the reciprocating self for his or her holistic development. This is necessary in order to transform the wounded child into a restored, resilient child.

To answer the definition of the reciprocating self, it is necessary to understand the triune God in relational aspects. Oden states that the characteristics of the Triune God are "unity, equality, and distinguishability" (Oden 2009, 108). A diagram (see Figure 1) symbolizes his statement

clearly. According to Audsley, the circular aureoles at each angle of the equilateral triangle indicate the three Persons of the Trinity: P is equal to *Pater* (Father), F to *Filius* (Son), and SS to *Spiritus Sanctus* (the Holy Spirit). The central aureole means *Deus* (God) (Audsley 1865, 60). Though they are different from one another, all of them are God. It means that they work together with perfect unity as revealed in creation, baptism, and redemption. Unlike the ordinary view of human beings, there is no hierarchy system in the Trinity, but the Persons are all equal in glory. In addition, three Persons—P, F, and SS—are not only one God but also independently divisible deity. In short, the Trinity reveals the unity as well as the uniqueness in the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



Figure 1: Audsley’s Diagram of the Triune God

This is applicable to the relationship between the triune God and human beings. The Bible clearly says that God created human beings in his image (Gen 1:26-17). If the triune God has unity in the relationship of the Persons while maintaining uniqueness, it may be possible for humans to build not only a united but also a unique relationship with God and with others. This is because God embedded his own image in humans. Balswick, King, and Reimer stated that to be human is to live in unique quantities whose product is unity and who bear the image of God, living as unique

individuals in reciprocating relationships with others (Balswick, King, and Reimer 2016, 41-42). This means that we, as selves bearing the image of God, can establish uniqueness as we form a unity in a relationship. In other words, the reciprocating self refers to the “cohesive self,” which guarantees both individuals’ boundaries and openness of mutual relationship with God and others (Balswick King, and Reimer 2016, 84). In a relationship with others, if a child at risk recovers his or her reciprocating self, he or she can express his or her genuine emotion in a healthy way and develop a genuine relationship with God and with others as he or she develops his or her unique boundary. In this aspect, a child at risk needs transformational intervention to restore his or her reciprocating self and to strengthen his or her resilience in the family and community of faith.

Strategies to being a Resilient Child

The key components of a child’s development include “spiritual life, nutrition, health, intellectual inquiry, socially acceptable behavioral responses to emotional feelings and stimuli, and morally upright society” (Tomkins 2003, 165-67). To achieve these holistic developmental goals and restore “high self-esteem, empathy, autonomous responsible attitude, coping skills, social competence, communication skills, and emotional regulation skills,” children need not only safe and healthy environments but also securely attached figures that can demonstrate unconditional love and care (Greener 2003, 42-46). However, in the fallen world, there seems to be no perfect place to raise a child for the sake of holistic child development. Thus, a child should learn how to be resilient in stressful situations.

Resilience refers to the ability to live and cope in difficult circumstances, the ability to regain strength and normal life after traumas or crises, and the ability to handle stress (Gunnestada and Thwalab 2011, 169). Resilience strengthens the self to be well emotionally and to sustain the dignity as a human even in risky, overwhelming circumstances. Since children cannot help facing hardship in their reality, Susan Greener exhorts caregivers to “eliminate unmanageable stress when possible” and to “promote resilience in individual children so that they are better able to cope” (Greener 2003, 44). This means that caregivers, especially parents, should do what they can in their given situation to raise resilient children. Also, children need to

learn how to acknowledge the source of stress to avoid hurting others and regain the resilient competence to overcome overwhelming stressors by activating the extended families, such as relatives and the faith communities (Arellano-Carandang 1987, 3-5).

Shalom to Be the Resilient Child

For children to develop their spiritual resilience, they need salvation and to have *shalom* (peace) restored in aspects of relationships for biblical transformation as children of God. Hiebert views peace as a “proactive process,” not the conflict-vacuum state (Hiebert 2008, 294). The concept of peace as a proactive process includes loving our enemies, seeking justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation for “restorative justice” (Hiebert 2008, 294). This peace leads humans to develop a harmonious relationship with other humans and genuine belongingness to empower the community for mutual growth. So, as Bryant Myers states, *shalom* is the biblical ideal for human well-being and flourishing (Myers 2011, 97). When humans have *shalom* in their hearts, they can achieve well-being in their lives.

In the relation of *shalom* to the gospel, Padilla states that preaching the good news of *shalom* by Jesus Christ indicates the inauguration of a new era (Padilla 2010, 95). The proclamation of the good news of *shalom* by Jesus Christ, Padilla continues, brings about a community that embodies the blessings of the new age of the church (Padilla 2010, 95). It means that individuals can achieve *shalom* through Jesus and attain peaceful human relationships and a Kingdom-value-laden community in the church.

Children also need to restore *shalom* in their relationship with God and others. This can be on the micro-level of transformation. Myers points out that transformation in the Christian perspective seeks “changed people” and “changed relationships” (Myers 2011, 202). For this transformation, children also should learn how to forgive their pain-givers. Forgiveness means “a legal act, releasing the offender and the offended from the bond of the wound, enabling both parties to let go of the burden” (Miles and Houlihan 2003, 202). It does not mean to erase the sin of the wound-giver. Instead, it breaks the oppressing chain in order to enjoy the freedom given by God and to refuse the secondary wounds caused by the primary wounds. When children acknowledge their pain and the causes of their struggles

with the help of holistic caregivers, they can promote their resilience enough to embrace another wounded heart with deeper empathy and practical methods by their experiences. In this aspect, resilience functions as the strategy to develop wounded healers.

Through the gospel, people can reconcile with God, restore their dignity as God's image-embedded creation, and become liberated from all the oppression (Wink 1992, 74). People can be changed when they realize their true identity and vocation as children of God. These changed people can be empowered to restore just and harmonious relationships. God wants us to be transformed in three ways: 1) to change our distorted identity into our true identity (God's children embedded with his image); 2) to discover our original vocation as his productive stewards; and 3) to restore the broken relationship with God's creation so that we can accomplish right and just relationships with his creation (Myers 2011, 75; 82). However, this is not a simple event. It is an ongoing process to change choices according to the understanding of our transformed identity, vocation, and relationships (Myers 2011, 3-4; 22). In that aspect, biblical transformation is parallel to the course of sanctification.

In the macro aspect, resilient children in *shalom* can fulfill their mission. To seek this restoration-focused transformation, as converted Christians, they should fulfill their vocation as a "Christian witness by life, word, and deed." In the course of a lifetime of transformation, all people, regardless of their economic status, age, or social position, can experience God, recover their true identity (children of God), and restore their true vocation (productive stewards in God's creation). This transformational experience will shape Christian witnesses, who maintain an intimate relationship with God and reveal their faith by their lives and deeds (Myers 2011, 316-17). If changed, children can work to seek the transformation of others; children can have a great ministry in the church.

The Faith in Writings of Wisdom and Psalms to Be a Resilient Child

The writings of Wisdom and the Psalms can empower children who have faith in God to remain faithful and hopeful in their daily lives. All the Wisdom writings proclaim that fearing the Lord and turning away from evil are the beginning of wisdom and understanding (Job 27:28; Prov 1:7; 9:10).

Also, fearing the Lord refers to hating evil things, pride, arrogance, and perverted speech (Prov 8:13). Thus, the author of Ecclesiastes defines the duty of humans both to fear God and keep his commandments (Eccl 3:11). The book of Proverbs values wisdom and understanding because wise action produces the “well-being” of humans, but foolish conduct results in “failure, misery, and death” (Brueggeman 1999, 255). This means that the child who values wisdom will do wise behaviors and avoid doing foolish actions (spiritually doing evil). Such behavior of self-control can be helpful to form the child’s resilience.

Exceptional to the causal structures (cause-effect between obedience and blessing and between disobedience and destruction) in the Old Testament is the book of Job, which attests that Job’s suffering (effect) had no relation with sin (cause) because Job was blameless and upright and did not commit any sin before God (Job 1:1-12). Instead, his faithful response to his suffering was the means to glorify and exalt God (Longman and Dillard 2006, 235). Looking at Job’s case can help children understand that all suffering is not the curse of God. Realizing this can help children be set free from false guilt when they encounter distress and overwhelming stressors. They can imagine how God will change their sorrow into joy, and they will pray at that moment, glorifying God after overcoming their hardship.

Building on this understanding of Job’s exceptional suffering, Psalms instructs faithful attitudes during suffering unrelated to sin. Psalms consists of three main genres: “hymns of joy, laments, and thanksgiving” (Longman and Dillard 2006, 246). Life is made up of ups (peaceful, prosperous, and happy states) and downs (facing hardship and distress). When the faithful are in the ups, they will sing hymns of joy to praise God. During the downs, they will sing laments with faithful endurance for an uncertain period. Then when they experience another up after deep downs, they will replace their songs with thanksgiving (Longman and Dillard 2006, 249). The cycle of these three genres is called “orientation-disorientation-reorientation” (Longman and Dillard 2006, 246; Johnson 1990, 33).

For example, Job’s peaceful, faithful, and wealthy life (Job 1:1-5) belongs to the state of orientation. If he were a psalmist, he would sing hymns of joy. His afflicted life of suffering (Job 1:13-41:34) is the course of disorientation, when there may be lots of laments. His restored life after extreme

suffering (Job 42) can be categorized as reorientation during which he might express thanksgiving in his praise. During disorientation, our responsibility is to put our hope in God and praise him (Ps. 42:9-10) because he is our Savior and God (Ps 42:11; 43:1-5), Creator and Sovereign (Ps 89:6-14), and our Father and faithful to his covenant (Ps 89:26-28). Therefore, the faithful, even in the disorientation period, should fear and praise God because he will protect them (Ps 89:20-24). Charles Stanley affirms that the way to be resilient in suffering is to choose the way that benefits from difficulties, not the path that seeks to escape difficulties, because this can increase dependency upon God, build a more intimate relationship with him, strengthen faith, and help Christians be wounded healers with empathy (Stanley 2015).

When children understand orientation-disorientation-reorientation, they can acknowledge that God trains them to surrender everything to him and trust in him in any situation. They can be resilient to remain calm and look around to discover the light—Jesus Christ—in the darkness, like the pandemic. Also, they can be hopeful, dreaming a bigger picture of the good and faithful God who protects them. All these practices will make them spiritually resilient to grow in faith and empathy.

Transformed Identity to Be the Resilient Child

Crocker states that a child is not only the object of God's mission but also its carrier and partner, like Joseph, Samuel, David, a boy offering five loaves and two fishes, and Jesus (Crocker 2007, 266-72). He explains that children could 1) transform their family and communities through education and discipline, like Joseph, 2) be involved in the evangelism ministry like Samuel, 3) lead the community with justice like David, 4) work as the resource of the community with what they have, like a boy who offered the resources—five loaves and two fishes—for the community, and 5) participate in “the redeeming mission of God” like Jesus (Crocker 2007, 266-72). If the church and parents regard children as only the object of ministry, they will limit the potential of children and fall into a spiritual Kangaroo syndrome. Children need to grow up as we do. It is not desirable for leaders to keep children inside their pouches. When children are ready through enough nurture, they will fly in the air like eagles. The purpose of ministry is to

help them grow up to be Christlike adults.

Empowering Families to Nurture the Resilient Child

Home, church, and Christian schools are basic social and environmental units that take care of children. These three units should integrate to seek holistic development. As we know and have experienced, no child grows without stress. However, adults, especially caregivers like parents, teachers, and pastors, should develop the resilience of children to help them cope with stressful and traumatic environments (Greener 2003, 44). To develop resilience, first of all, children need role models who can teach them problem-solving skills and nurture them with high support (Greener 2003, 44; White and Wright 2003, 121). This need emphasizes the importance of caregivers at home, church, and Christian schools.

Moreover, religion, especially faith in God, can enhance the resilience of a child. Home, church, and Christian schools should try to help children pray as a positive religious coping skill, support their spiritual development, offer counseling (helping children understand the situation and find the meaning in it), link the truth of the Bible with their daily issues through instruction-as-interpretation-of-life, and guide them to forgive their wound-givers (Gunnestada 2011, 173-83; Richards 1983, 248). This should be followed by careful guidance. Moreover, faith in God can gently lead children to be resilient wounded healers. The video, “Children See. Children Do” (Child Friendly Australia 2006), advocates that parents need to be good role models in behavioral and moral aspects. Parental modeling is important for nurturing resilient children. However, the video seems to dismiss the influence of God’s sovereignty over the life of every child. Faith is like a scaffold for a child’s spiritual development. When parents discipline and train their children to acknowledge God’s presence and his action in their lives, children can understand the abstract image of God. When parents act out their faith in their lives, especially during the pandemic, children will observe their activities and learn how to act as faithful believers in any circumstance. Parents have the responsibility to visualize divine influence on their children’s lives through parental discipline and action in faith and to put God in the center of their family. To help parents fulfill this

parental responsibility, the church can empower them to conduct empowering leadership at home.

Empowering Leadership in the Parenting

Balswick and Balswick state that empowering is “building up” of one another in the community of faith through loving, serving, and helping each other mature in the faith (Balswick and Balswick 1989, 36). There are many empowered believers in the Bible like David, Stephen, Paul, and Peter. David could solve the problem of Israel against Goliath because he believed God would give him the strength to defeat Goliath (1 Sam 17: 26, 32-47). I can see his spontaneous participation in the conflict. Stephen could be peaceful in the stoning situation and generous to his persecutors because his intrinsic motivation of faith made him manage the risky situation (Acts 7:56-60). The dramatic empowering incident transformed Saul totally into Paul, who dedicated his life to God and explained heavenly things to the world (Acts 9:3-7; Rom 1:1-2). Peter was a very impulsive man but changed into a faithful, influential apostle and died for the sake of the gospel because Jesus empowered him (Acts 4:13; John 21:18).

Tomi Järvinen notes that there are two components of empowerment: one is the intrinsic factors of motivation, volition, self-image, efficacy beliefs, self-authorization, and self-determination, and the other is external factors like leadership styles, organizational structures, restructuring public sectors, and legal advice access to information (Järvinen 2007, 174). He explains that empowerment develops the ability to solve problems, make decisions, and manage stressful situations, thus creating the belief in problem-solving competence, which activates intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and spontaneous participation (Järvinen 2007, 174-77).

Arnold et al. interviewed 195 team members and leaders through three different groups: “a clothing retailer, a building products supplier, and a telecommunication corporation,” and clarified the behavior of national leaders (Arnold et al. 2000, 253-54). They concluded their research with eight kinds of characteristics of empowering leadership: “Leading by example” (being role model), “coaching” (teach for the self-reliance of the followers), “encouraging” (acknowledging the effort of the followers to promote high performance), “participative decision-making” (let the followers

express their ideas or opinions), “informing” (presenting goals, mission, philosophy), “showing concern” (regard on the well-being of the followers), “interacting with the team” (as a whole, treat the follower with respect), and “group management” (helping followers have a good relationship; Arnold et al. 2000, 254-55). These characteristics of empowering leadership are applicable to Jesus’ leadership, such as the following:

1) Leading by example: Jesus washed the feet of his disciples to help them follow what he did (John 13:14-15).

2) Coaching: Jesus gave his disciples the mission to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15) and taught them how to pray (Luke 11:1). He taught them the value of God’s kingdom with parables (Mark 4). He also exhorted them to forsake the desire of seeking a reputation (Matt 23:8-12).

3) Encouraging: Jesus encouraged his disciples to follow him (Matt. 4:19).

4) Participative decision-making: Jesus gave his disciples the chance to make a decision rather than displaying a list of do’s (Matt 14:15-17).

5) Informing: Jesus informed them what would happen to believers and unbelievers (Mark 16:16-18).

6) Showing concern: Jesus healed the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. She was in the crowd, and he was busy on his way to visit the sick daughter of Jairus. However, he did not disregard the needs of this lady and confirmed, affirmed, and comforted her (Mark 5:21-34).

7) Interacting with the team: Jesus answered those who wondered about his intention, whether their questions were verbal or nonverbal (Mark 2). He fed around four thousand to five thousand people with two fish and five loaves of bread (John 6).

8) Group management: Jesus explained to people why he was with tax collectors (Mark 2). He dealt with the conflicts of disciples (Mark 9:35).

In parenting practices, parents need to empower their children as Jesus did for his disciples. Jesus used his power to serve others, to forgive others, and to empower the weak (Balswick and Balswick 1989, 39). Parents need to use their power to serve their children for their maturity rather than to

reign over them, to forgive their faults with love, and to empower them to be mature, faithful, and independent Christians who can delegate their discipline responsibilities for others. This is the reason why parents need to dedicate their lives to loving their children and discipline them with patience and God's guidance.

Empowering leadership is the way to help followers participate in the vision with a spontaneous heart, to motivate them to move toward the goal or vision, and to internalize the appropriate behavior of followers, whether they are with their leader or not. Jesus empowered his disciples since he would soon go back to the kingdom of God after he completed his mission. Although the disciples were not with him physically, they could dedicate their lives to fulfill their mission with confidence and faith. Just as Jesus is an empowering leader, parents should also follow what Jesus did so that their children can be resilient children who are faithful and obedient to God.

Spiritual Nurturing Application I: Read the Bible as the Whole Story

Horace Bushnell exhorts parents to teach and train their children to transmit their beliefs, thoughts, and life testimony (Bushnell 1916, 55). According to him, parents should fulfill their mission to conduct Christian nurture with gentleness and patience because children are not too young to be Christians and because they can pray to God at any age. Moreover, children can learn the Bible through memorization, participating in Christian practices, and modeling according to their cognitive development (Bushnell 1916, 318-27). Richards calls it "situation-specific-instruction" (Richards 1983, 127). Children need to learn the abstract teachings of the Bible through their living role models, such as faithful parents and adults in the community of faith. For example, modeling is an example of situation-specific instruction that actualizes God's story in reality and witnesses the living God. It aims for children to be able to understand the right and wrong behaviors for Christians (an abstract concept and conduct) through concrete visual actions. That is a "situational approach to teaching moral behavior" for children in the concrete period of Piaget's framework (Richards 1983, 115-126). Also, praying together and using the Bible (godly play) are helpful practices to form children's spirituality (Nye 2009, 58-68). Through these parental efforts, children can participate in faith-enhancing practices

at home for the sake of their spiritual formation.

Anthony and Marshman state that spiritual formation is “the daily renewal of inner selves to become more like Christ through the love of the Father and the power of the Spirit” (Anthony and Marshman 2015, 67). Spiritual formation seeks with a daily effort to achieve Christlikeness by the love of God the Father and the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps humans both understand knowledge about God and encounter the invisible God as a real experience. Spiritual formation is the process of seeking “*Christ formed in you*” (Anthony and Marshman 2015, 68; 85). It is a process rather than a one-time achievement. Related to this insight, Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May mention the concept “life-forming and life-transforming faith” (Stonehouse and May 2010, 104). They did not use this term to define spiritual formation itself. However, it is a relevant phrase to understand spiritual formation as continuing development.

Parents have the holy parental responsibility to nurture the resilience and spirituality of their children. Modeling is an important parental practice that includes reading the Bible together, not merely telling children to read it. Since the Bible is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16), its remarkable characteristic is its inerrancy. In this aspect, the Scripture is the truth about God (Anthony and Marshman 2015, 99). When parents read the Bible together with their children, they need to seek “unitary reading” to create the space for “intertextuality,” which refers to the ability to synthesize each part of the Bible to draw its main biblical themes (House 2002, 270-78). It reminds us that it is proper to read the whole book, not only favorite parts of the Bible. Gerald Bray regards unitary reading as one of the main tasks of biblical interpretation to show the inner consistency and spiritual relevance of the entire text—a matter to which we must now turn our attention (Bray 1996, 33). Köstenberger also attests to the benefit of unitary reading: “The diversity and unity of the NT present the reader with the rich legacy of the faith of the first Christians, in which various perspectives of the same Christ and of the same gospel mutually complemented one another” (Köstenberger 2002, 157). When Christians read the whole Bible, they can discover the main integrated message. Anthony and Marshman note that the Bible is “God’s grand redemptive story” that can create the transformation of its readers (Anthony and Marshman 2015, 151-58).

The church can provide parents with materials and resources to empower them to read the Bible with their children at home. Video clips that show the whole story of the Bible can be the starting place, such as “The Story Rewind of the Bible” (Waters 2014) so that they can preview the whole story of the Bible. Also, the church can send the summary series of each chapter of a target book through a messenger or other communication tool. The church can create a visualized summary of each chapter so that children can concentrate on reading the Bible and enhance their understanding. Also, the church can create a YouTube channel to share the resources. The parents read the chapter and give summaries in advance to understand it and be ready to read it with their children, like a teacher at school or church. Then they create the space to read the Bible with their children at home. They should do their best to do it with a consistent commitment to their family’s spiritual formation, not only that of their children. After reading the assigned chapter, the whole family can share the insight and application to their lives and discuss some issues related to its content.

Spiritual Nurturing Application II: The Child-Inclusive-Conversation

Children in a contemporary age suffer from the consequence of the fall of humanity. Every child has the right to survive with his or her name in a healthy condition, to be protected from harmful environments, and to participate in making his or her voice known (Athriba 2016, 63). Unfortunately, the corrupted power of the world and irresponsible parents challenge these rights in forms of physical abuse (e.g., corporal punishment), child labor, sexual abuse (rape and incest), psychological abuse (damage immediately and ultimately the behavioral, cognitive, affective or physical functioning of the child), family violence (disturbance in education, adjustment problems in schools, bullying, and low academic performance), media and technology (boundary and instruction needed), and armed conflicts and terrorism (Athriba 2016, 30-39). In this child-unfriendly world, the church and parents should consider the nurturing system in the Bible and discover interventions applicable to the current season, especially during the pandemic.

Lawrence Richards states that there is no standardized universal formula regarding how to nurture children in the Old Testament (Richards

1983, 18; 31). However, this does not mean that the Israelites forsook nurturing their children. They had various systems to help their children in growing in faith, such as seasonal ceremonies, worship-centered institutions, and historical memorials (Richards 1983, 21-22). Children in the Mosaic community had enough opportunities to affirm their faith in God in these systems and to observe how to act out their faith in daily life, which echoes the application of situation-specific instruction. The whole community reared children together, but most responsibilities rested on the parents (Richards 1983, 23-24). Through God's ways, parents instructed their children how to live as God's children.

In the context of the New Testament, Jewish children received pagan education but were able to grow up in a loving and transforming community, with the faithful discipline of parents and the shared experience of faith in their daily lives (Richards 1983, 41-43; 47). Their nurture systems were not as strong as the Mosaic community in the Old Testament. However, children grew up in faithful communities that conducted unconditional love and mutual respect and valued one another (Richards 1983, 47).

The church and parents need to cooperate as partners for the sake of the resilience and holistic development of children. Richards states that Scripture is God's truth and his revelation that we can experience in our reality (Richards 1983, 64-67). The church empowers parents to nurture their children at home as a faithful and secure environment. Also, the church can include children in online platforms like a messenger group chat where inter-generational members share their prayer requests and support one another emotionally and spiritually. Thus, children can pray together and contribute to the faith community as members of the church and not only as children of church members. The church can include children in online worship as partners, such as opening prayer, a special presentation, or a testimony. The church can invite children to speak their thoughts so that the adult members can hear the voice of the children. Children need spiritual development and not just moral development. As the church embraces children in the faith community and ensures the opportunity of their participation, children can learn the whole Bible as God's truth and walk together with God and other church members. Then children can experience God's story in their daily lives and realize that they are also an active

part of God's story.

Conclusion

In Figure 2, the Taekwondo player in the green circle symbolizes the child in his or her context, the man in the red circle symbolizes the youth minister, and other players symbolize the community of faith. To jump high enough to kick the board in the air is not something ordinary humans can do. They need training and practice to do it successfully during an adequate period. However, though they are talented and trained, they cannot do it if no one supports them to jump high like the man in the red circle. If there are no players in the yellow line, they will have fewer opportunities to prove their potential. To jump beyond the limit, the three components need to cooperate with harmony.



Figure 2: Taekwondo Picture

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Awareness and Response of Wesleyan Ministers in Pangasinan to Climate Change: The Basis for a Mitigation and Adaptation Framework

Rheynil A. Sagud

Introduction

Climate change is real. It is happening, and every citizen of the world experiences it.¹ What is climate change? National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) defines climate change as the long-term change of temperature and unusual weather patterns in a particular location or the planet as a whole.² Scientists have discovered that human activities contribute a lot to climate change, like burning fossil fuels, natural gas, oil, and coal, and the result are greenhouse gases. These greenhouse gases trap heat from the sun's rays inside the atmosphere, causing the earth's average temperature to rise. Because of climate change, the frequency of flooding, water shortage, and extreme heat are expected to increase in the future.³ In response to the alarming impact and risks of climate change, the United Nations created the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 in order to address the issue.⁴ In the Philippines, in order to combat climate change, the government created the Climate Change Commission (CCC) through the Climate Change Act of 2009, otherwise known as R.A.

¹ Qingchen Chao and Aiqing Feng, "Scientific Basis of Climate Change and its Response," *Global Energy Interconnection*, Volume 1, Issue 4, October 2018, pages 420-427. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2096511718300628>.

² NASA, "What is Climate Change?" (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/k-4/stories/nasa-knows/what-is-climate-change-k4.html>.

³ *National Geographic*, "Climate Change" (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/climate-change/>.

⁴ IPCC, "History of the IPCC" (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.ipcc.ch/about/history/>.

9729.⁵

In the fight against climate change, we need to work together as citizens of this world. Let us not just leave the problem to our leaders, but each of us should find our significant part. In a sharp pronouncement to the leaders at the 2019 UN climate action summit in New York, Greta Thunberg courageously said that the world is already dying because of pollution and yet is ignoring it.⁶ The researcher believes that more is required than just being just an activist; we can create awareness in our own workplace and community in helpful ways.

This study is not the work of a climate change expert but builds on the work of others. As a minister of the Wesleyan Church of the Philippines, the researcher pursued and consulted spiritual leaders about the issues of climate change. Pope Francis said that one of the most serious phenomena of our time is climate change. There is a need to put more effort in order to solve the climate issue, and more awareness of every citizen is needed.⁷ The CCC is tasked to coordinate with other institutions, public and private organizations, NGOs, and civil society organizations to work hand-in-hand as collaborating bodies to address climate change.⁸ Churches must also be included in the program of the government; the government must make churches its partner in addressing the issues of climate change. The researcher's main concern was based upon the plan of God for humanity to

⁵ The Lawphil Project, "R.A. 9279" (2020). Retrieved from https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacks/ra2009/ra_9729_2009.html.

⁶ NPR Staff, "Transcript: Greta Thunberg's Speech At The U.N. Climate Action Summit" (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2019/09/23/763452863/transcript-greta-thunbergs-speech-at-the-u-n-climate-action-summit>.

⁷ Vatican News, "Pope Francis Sends Video Message to UN Climate Action Summit" (2019). Retrieved <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-09/pope-francis-video-message-climate-action-summit-united-nations.videomessage-climate-action-summit-united-nations.html>.

⁸ The Lawphil Project, "R.A. 9279" (2020). Retrieved from https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacks/ra2009/ra_9729_2009.html.

take care of God's creation (Genesis 1:28).⁹ Taking care of God's creation is not just the duty of the government but also the duty of the church and even every human being.

This study focuses on determining the level of awareness and response of Wesleyan ministers in Pangasinan of climate change in order to develop a framework for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The awareness of ministers is shown by their general knowledge of global climate change and their awareness of the risks that affect the Philippines. The responses are mitigation and adaptation in nature, which are the common ways that can help in delaying the fast progress of climate change and avoid the risks that climate change brings.

The respondents of this study are the pastors of the Wesleyan churches in Pangasinan. These are pastors recognized by the Wesleyan Church of the Philippines through the District Conference as ministers, whether student minister, licensed minister or deacon/deaconess, or ordained minister or ordained deacon/deaconess. The descriptive survey method was used with a questionnaire as the main instrument in collecting the data. All the data were consolidated and analyzed through frequency counts and percentages in order to address the stated problems.

This study will give an actual picture and information and create a new program to the following: a) Wesleyan ministers will be able to see their actual awareness and response to climate change and may adopt a mitigation and adaptation framework. Although ministers are known as spiritual guardians, yet it is also biblical that ministers are part of God's original agenda to take care of God's creation (Genesis 1:26-28). b) The result of this study will also show the extent and effectiveness of the government's (CCC) campaign to address climate change issues. c) And through the influence of the ministers, the Wesleyan Church members will be encouraged to follow a climate change mitigation and adaptation program that will lead

⁹ New International Version. *The Holy Bible* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1984).

them to a Bible-based, sustainable, and healthier lifestyle.

Objectives of The Study

This study aims to deal with the following specific problems:

1. Determine the profile of Wesleyan ministers in relation to the following:
 - a. Age
 - b. Civil status
 - c. Gender
 - d. Educational attainment
 - e. Ministerial status
 - f. Years in the ministry
 - g. Number of vehicles/motorcycles
 - h. Number of appliances used at home
 - i. Number of seminars attended sponsored by the church
 - j. Number of seminars attended sponsored by the government.
2. Determine the awareness of Wesleyan ministers concerning the following:
 - a. Causes of global climate change
 - b. Impact of climate change.
3. Determine the Wesleyan ministers' sources of information on climate change.
4. Determine the activities Wesleyan ministers observed in the locality that contributes to climate change.
5. Find the level of response of Wesleyan ministers on climate change.
6. Develop a climate change mitigation and adaptation framework for the Wesleyan ministers.

Materials and Methods

The researcher used the descriptive survey method of research with the questionnaire as the main instrument in the collection of data. The questionnaire was made as simple and as clear as possible so that it would be easily understood by the respondents. The data were supplemented by informal interviews and observations to verify some of the responses in the

questionnaire and to gain additional information needed to give more substance to the study.

The respondents of this study were 79 pastors of the Wesleyan Church of the Philippines in Pangasinan who are duly recognized by the District Conference as ministers. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to all the ministers and had a chance to see some of them and their local churches.

The researcher selected the ministers of the Wesleyan Church in Pangasinan who are assigned to different churches in the province. There are two (2) district superintendents supervising the churches and the ministers in the area. The Wesleyan ministers and their churches are located in the following municipalities/cities: Bolinao, Burgos, Agno, Alaminos, Aguilar, Mangatarem, Urbiztondo, Malasique, Sta. Barbara, Dagupan, Laoac, Urdaneta, Sta. Maria, Tayug, San Quintin, Rosales, Umingan, Binalonan, San Manuel, Pozzorobio, and Sison.

The survey questionnaire that was used in this study was formulated based on the common scientific findings on climate change. The researcher based the questionnaire on awareness of climate change from the Climate Reality Project and from the Philippine Climate Risk index. The questions about the response to climate change are the common mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change.

In order to establish the validity of the questionnaire, the research instrument was pre-tested and evaluated by Wesleyan ministers from other Wesleyan Church districts. The result of the pre-test and evaluation helped the researcher to redesign, reword, restructure, and remove unnecessary items in the survey questionnaire.

There were several steps in the gathering of data in order for the study to be completed. The researcher wrote a letter to the two District Superintendents (DS) in Pangasinan asking for permission to do his study in their respective districts. Moreover, the District Superintendents were informed of the purpose of the researcher and were encouraged to ask their ministers

to participate in the study. Upon the approval of the District Superintendents, the questionnaires were given to the ministers.

All the data were consolidated and were analyzed by the official statisticians of Pangasinan State University, School of Advanced Studies. SPSS was the main tool in the treatment of data. Frequency counts and percentages were used to address the stated problems in the study.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the distribution and percentage of the respondents according to gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, ministerial status, and the number of years in the ministry.

It can be noted from Table 1 that there are more male ministers (54.43%) than female ministers (45.57%), and most of them are ages 40-59 (43.04%). The number of female ministers shows that the Wesleyan Church of the Philippines in Pangasinan welcomes female ministers, and this is true to all Wesleyan Churches all over the world. According to the article, "The Divide Over Ordaining Women," other major religious groups, namely Roman Catholics, Southern Baptists, Mormons (Latter-day Saints), Muslims, Missouri Synod Lutherans, and the Orthodox Church in America, do not ordain women or allow them to lead congregations¹⁰ Women ministers in all Wesleyan churches are allowed to lead and can be ordained. Most of the ministers are college graduates (79.75%), and very few of the ministers took further studies after college. There is only one minister with a doctorate degree and only three ministers with a master's degree. It is notable that most of the respondents are ordained ministers (44.30%). In the Wesleyan Church of the Philippines, an ordained minister is the highest ministerial status, and ordination is the highest honor that is given to ministers.¹¹ Finally, it can be noted that the greater number of ministers (35.44%) are just

¹⁰ David Masci, "Divide Over Ordaining Women" (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/09/09the-divide-over-ordaining-women/%3famp=1>.

¹¹ The Wesleyan Church of the Philippines, *The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church*

in their first to fifth year of ministry, and this is followed by those who are more than 20 years (30.38%) in the ministry.

Table 1
Profile of the Wesleyan Ministers

	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	43	54.43
	Female	36	45.57
Age	17 - 19	2	2.53
	20 - 39	28	35.44
	40 - 59	34	43.04
	60 and above	15	18.99
Civil Status	Single	14	17.72
	Married	62	78.48
	Widow	3	3.80
Educational Attainment	High School Graduate	12	15.19
	College Graduate	63	79.75
	With Master's Degree	3	3.80
	With Doctorate Degree	1	1.27
Ministerial Status	Student Minister	4	5.06
	Licensed Minister	24	30.38
	Licensed Deacon/Deaconess	5	6.33
	Ordained Deacon/Deaconess	11	13.92
	Ordained Minister	35	44.30
Number of Years in the Ministry	1 - 5 years	28	35.44
	6 - 10 years	11	13.92
	11 - 15 years	8	10.13
	16 - 20 years	8	10.13
	more than 20 years	24	30.38

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the number of vehicles and appliances owned by Wesleyan ministers.

Table 2
Number of Vehicles and Appliances Owned by the Wesleyan Ministers

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Number of vehicles Owned	0	26	32.91
	1	35	44.30
	2	13	16.46
	3	5	6.33
Number of appliances Owned	0	5	6.33
	1	3	3.80
	2	17	21.52
	3	14	17.72
	4 or more	40	50.63

The table shows that most (44.30%) of the Wesleyan ministers have at least one vehicle at their disposal. A vehicle is not really a status symbol but perhaps a necessity, especially for ministers since they need to travel and visit their parishioners from time to time. For some people, a car is a status symbol, but it should not be for ministers.¹² Furthermore, the table shows that 50.63% of the respondents are enjoying the benefits of using four or more appliances at home. In the Wesleyan context, it is not a sin to have vehicles as long as a person needs one and can afford it, and neither is having appliances considered a sin. Appliances like television, washing machine, refrigerator, electric fan, gas stove, and the like are already necessities nowadays.

¹² Elona Pojani, et. al., "Cars as a Status Symbol: Youth Attitudes Toward Sustainable Transport in a Post-socialist City," *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*. Volume 58, October 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1369847817302930>.

Table 3 shows the distribution and percentage of respondents according to the number of climate change seminars they have attended.

Table 3
Number of Climate Change Seminars Attended by the Wesleyan Ministers

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Church-sponsored Seminars	0	40	50.63
	1 - 10	21	26.58
	11 - 20	6	7.59
	more than 20	12	15.19
Government and NGOs-sponsored Seminars	0	52	65.82
	1 - 10	20	25.32
	11 - 20	3	3.80
	more than 20	4	5.06

Based on the table above, Wesleyan ministers are not really saturated with climate change seminars. Most (50.63%) and more than half of Wesleyan ministers have never attended a climate change seminar sponsored by the church. The percentage is higher for government-sponsored climate change seminars, with 65.82% having never attended. Pew Research Center (2015) found in their study that church people or religious people do not care so much about climate change¹³ That might also be true to the Wesleyan ministers in Pangasinan. Government-sponsored seminars must come to the rescue if the churches do not care so much about climate change. Republic Act No. 9729 states, “It shall be the policy of the State to enjoin the participation of national and local governments, businesses, non-government organizations, local communities, and the public to prevent and reduce the adverse impacts of climate change”¹⁴ Why not call the

¹³ Pew Research, “Religion and Views on Climate and Energy Issues” (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2015/10/22/religion-and-views-on-climate-and-energy-issues/>.

¹⁴ The Lawphil Project, “R.A. 9279” (2020). Retrieved from https://lawphil.net/statutes/re_pacts/ra2009/ra_9729_2009.html.

attention of the ministers in the local communities? Ministers are significant public figures who can influence their congregations. Veldman et al. (2014) said that religious leaders are respected, and many people accept their authority.¹⁵

Awareness of Wesleyan Ministers to Climate Change

This investigation discusses the awareness of the respondents to global climate change and to the impact of climate change.

Table 4
Causes of Climate Change According to the Wesleyan Ministers

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
1. Pollution (from factories, burning of fossils)	54	68.35
2. Cutting of trees/logging/ deforestation/ kaingin	45	56.96
3. Burning of garbage	28	35.44
4. Improper waste disposal	22	27.85
5. Use of fertilizers/pesticides	11	13.92
6. Natural Calamities/volcanic eruption	6	7.59
7. Mining/quarrying	5	6.33
8. Abuse of natural resources	5	6.33
9. Natural decomposition	4	5.06
10. Intensive Fishing/Illegal fishing	4	5.06
11. Overpopulation	3	3.80
12. Intensive Farming	2	2.53
13. Poultry production (large scale)	1	1.27

Table 4 shows the distribution and percentage of the causes of climate change according to the Wesleyan ministers in Pangasinan.

¹⁵ Robin Globus Veldman, et. al., ed., *How the World's Religions are Responding to Climate Change: Social Scientific Investigations* (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.Routledge.com>.

Wesleyan ministers in Pangasinan identified eleven causes of climate change. Of these, pollution had the highest percentage (68.35%), and overpopulation had the lowest percentage (3.80). It can be noted that most of the causes of climate change identified by the respondents fall under human activities. NASA identified most of the causes of climate change as results of human activities that release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and eventually affect the earth's climate system.¹⁶ Most of the greenhouse gases are produced through deforestation, land-use changes, burning fossil fuels, agriculture, soil cultivation practices, especially rice cultivation, manure management associated with domestic livestock, use of commercial and organic fertilizers, nitric acid production, biomass burning, the decomposition of wastes in landfills, and industries. NASA also identified the natural causes of climate change, such as volcanic eruption, respiration, decomposition of waste materials, and water vapor. Very few of the respondents (7.59%) identified natural causes such as volcanic eruptions and other natural calamities. This shows that in the context of the respondents, human activities contributing to climate change are very clear. Among the respondents are a few keen observers (3.80%), noting overpopulation as one of the causes of climate change. National geographic society highlights overpopulation as one of the causes of climate change.¹⁷ However, the table also shows that among the identified causes, only two causes are known by at least 50% of the respondents, and these are pollution (68.35%) and deforestation (56.96%), while the other nine causes fall below 50%. This shows that a climate change awareness campaign is necessary in order to elevate the awareness of ministers to at least 90% or even 100% of all causes of climate change in their particular context. As a result of this study, the causes of climate change that are not mentioned are nitric acid production, water vapor, respiration, and other natural causes like changes in the earth's

¹⁶ NASA, "The Causes of Climate Change" (2020). Retrieved from <https://climate.nasa.gov/causes/TheCausesofClimateChange>.

¹⁷ National Geographic, "Climate 101: Cause and Effect" (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/video/climate-101-cause-and-effect/>.

orbit, ocean circulation and temperature, tectonic movements, and the increasing brightness of the sun.¹⁸ Greenhouse gases and the greenhouse effect are also not identified, and the researcher wants this aspect to be explained clearly to the respondents.

Table 5 shows the impact or effects of climate change according to the Wesleyan ministers in Pangasinan. The results show that among the impact identified by the respondents, flooding has the greatest percentage (64.56%), and the least that were identified are sea-level rise, reduced water supply, and fish kill, each with a similar percentage (2.53%). Flooding is a common scenario during typhoons and thunderstorms in Pangasinan, and it is also broadcasted on televisions, radios, and social media. Sea level rise and fish kill were identified because a number of the Wesleyan ministers are assigned in Dagupan, Bolinao, Agno, and Burgos, which are very close to the sea. However, it is of great importance to highlight a slight misconception shown in the table that needs to be addressed: pollution (3.80%) as one of the impacts of climate change. Pollution is rightly considered as one of the causes and not an impact of climate change.

Table 5
Impact of Climate Change According to the Wesleyan Ministers

Impact of Climate Change	Frequency	Percentage
Flooding	51	64.56
Health problems	30	37.97
Increased temperature/global warming	21	26.58
Typhoons/Abnormal weather conditions	13	16.46
Landslide/erosion	12	15.19
Drought	11	13.92
Heavy Rain	6	7.59
Natural disasters	6	7.59

¹⁸ Stephen T. Johnson, "Climate Change" (2012). Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/science/climate-change>.

Destruction of the ozone layer	5	6.33
Affects farming	5	6.33
Loss of livelihood	5	6.33
Reduced food supply	4	5.06
Effect on the global economy	4	5.06
Pollution*	3	3.80
Poverty	3	3.80
Rising sea level	2	2.53
Reduced water supply	2	2.53
Fishkill	2	2.53

Note: pollution is one of the causes of climate change but is considered by some ministers as an impact.

The Climate Reality Project (2019) identified three ways that climate change affects people’s lives.¹⁹ These are effects on health, home, and food. Basically, Wesleyan ministers identified these basic effects, but in some areas, these were only a small percentage. These are the same impacts that Global Climate Risk Index identified as risks affecting the Philippines, especially typhoons, flooding, and increased rainfall in Luzon.²⁰ Only flooding is known as an impact by at least 64% of the respondents, and the rest fall under the 50% mark. There are other climate change impacts that were not identified by the respondents, such as loss of wildlife habitation and wildlife species, depletion of arctic ice, and the dangerous devastation due to wildfires.²¹ A climate change awareness campaign is necessary in order to elevate the awareness of Wesleyan ministers to at least 90% or even 100%

¹⁹ Climate Reality Project, “Ten Clear Indicators Our Climate is Changing” (2015). Retrieved from <https://climaterealityproject.org/blog/10-indicators-that-show-climate-change>.

²⁰ Climate Links, “Climate Risks Profile: Philippines” (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-change-risk-profile-Philippines>.

²¹ Conserve Energy Future, “What is Climate Change?” (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-and-effects-of-climate-change.php>.

of all the impacts of climate change in their particular context.

Sources of Information on Climate Change

This investigation discusses the sources of information of the respondents about climate change.

Table 6
Sources of Information on Climate Change

Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Television (T.V.)	69	87.34
Radio	38	48.10
Social Media	63	79.75
Online Resources	37	46.84
Newspapers	30	37.97
Seminars	33	41.77
Magazines	22	27.85
Pastoral Messages	37	46.84
Conversation with common people	47	59.49
Conversation with experts	14	17.72
Books	24	30.38
Pamphlets	10	12.66

Table 6 shows the sources of information on climate change by the respondents. According to the table, television (T.V.) is the primary source of information (87.34%) for most of the respondents, followed by social media (79.75%) and conversation with common people (59.49%). A similar result is found in the study of Lopez and Malay (2018), indicating television and social media as major sources of climate change information.²² Interaction

²² Christopher A. Malay and Joshua Jener D. Lopez, "Awareness and Attitude Towards Climate Change of Selected Senior High Students in Cavite, Philippines," *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 7, 2, part III, 2019, pp. 56-62. Retrieved from http://www.researchgate.net/publication/334048488_Awareness_and_Attitude_Towards_Climate_Change_of_Selected_Senior_High_Students_in_Cavite_Philippines.

and sharing of knowledge with other people are good avenues of climate knowledge sharing, but to be with experts is also necessary. Some of the respondents (17.72%) are privileged to talk with people who have greater knowledge of climate change issues. Generally, the depiction of the table shows a balanced source of information on climate change. The use of print media like newspapers (37.97%), books (30.38%), magazines (27.85%), and pamphlets (12.66%) is still a good source of information for ministers. And it is worth mentioning that one of the sources of information on climate change is pastoral messages (46.84%).

Activities Observed in the Locality that Contribute to Climate Change

This investigation discusses the activities observed by the respondents in the locality that contribute to climate change.

Based on Table 7, use of vehicles (39.24%), burning of garbage (39.2%), and throwing of garbage everywhere (32.91%) have been highly observed by at least 30% of the Wesleyan ministers in their local communities. On the other hand, deforestation is least observed by the respondents (34.18%).

Table 7

Activities Observed in the Locality that Contribute to Climate Change

Activity	1		2		3		4		5	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Burning of garbage	4	5.06	7	8.86	21	26.6	16	20.3	31	39.2
2. Use of vehicles	6	7.59	4	5.06	12	15.19	26	32.91	31	39.24
3. Land clearing/ kaingin	19	24.05	14	17.72	24	30.38	14	17.72	8	10.13
4. Massive use of fertilizers and pesticides	17	21.52	10	12.66	19	24.05	24	30.38	9	11.39
5. Large-scale poultry (chicken, ducks, etc.) production	23	29.11	15	18.99	21	26.58	15	18.99	5	6.33

6. Large-scale animal (goat, cow) production	22	27.85	16	20.25	26	32.91	11	13.92	4	5.06
7. Deforestation	27	34.18	5	6.33	26	32.91	11	13.92	10	12.66
8. Throwing of garbage everywhere	18	22.78	4	5.06	17	21.52	14	17.72	26	32.91
9. High energy consumption	12	15.19	8	10.13	19	24.05	23	29.11	17	21.52
10. Excessive use of water.	18	22.78	10	12.66	28	35.44		11.39	14	17.72

In general, the table shows that all those activities contributing to climate change listed in Table 7 are being observed by the respondents in Pangasinan. This means that the province of Pangasinan must also act in order to limit these activities contributing to climate change and find ways to make and implement climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. No wonder why on December 5, 2018, Pangasinan held its first climate change summit in Lingayen.²³ Governor Amado Espino III urged the participants to act and respond to the threats brought by climate change. On the said climate summit, Vice Governor Jose Ferdinand Z. Calimlim, Jr., said that the provincial government would surely make an effort in easing the effects of climate change in localities of the province through legislative agenda. On March 13, 2019, another significant event was held in Pangasinan to address climate change concerns. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) held a climate outlook forum to deal with climate change concerns in the province of Pangasinan.²⁴ The forum aimed to call for a

²³ Province of Pangasinan, "Climate Change Summit" (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/pangasinan.gov.ph/posts/provincial-government-stages-1st-climate-change-summit-lingayen-pangasinan-stake/2866061260086586>.

²⁴ PAGASA, "Climate Outlook Forum" (2019). Retrieved from <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/03/15/pagasa-holds-climate-outlook-forum-in-pangasinan/>.

better understanding and action in dealing with climate change issues and thereby to call for practical mitigation strategies.

Level of Response of the Wesleyan Ministers to Climate Change

As shown in Table 8, Wesleyan ministers in Pangasinan have a high response to climate change except for a moderate response on items 8-10, which are choosing organic food, choosing organic materials, and sharing of climate change knowledge. The results show that the respondents highly practiced conserving gas (45.57%), followed by conserving water (43.04%) and conserving electricity (43.04%). The respondents indicated that sharing climate change knowledge to others is least practiced (13.92%), followed by choosing organic materials (10.13%), choosing organic food (10.13%), and avoiding burning garbage (10.13%). The overall average weighted mean (OAWM) on the level of response of Wesleyan ministers in Pangasinan to climate change is 3.76, which is equivalent to “highly practiced” (HP). In their study, Lubos and Lubos (2019) found that the knowledge, attitudes, practices, and action of their respondents were on a moderate level, and they interpreted that these factors did not do much in involving them in climate change activities.²⁵ Hence, intervention is needed to improve awareness and action.

Table 8
Level of Response of the Wesleyan Ministers to Climate Change

Response	1		2		3		4		5		AWM	Descriptive Rate
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Avoid burning	8	10.13	3	3.80	23	29.11	20	25.32	25	31.65	3.65	HP

²⁵ Leslie Lubos and Lalevie Casas Lubos, “Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, and Action on Climate Change and Environmental Awareness of the Twenty-two Villages along the River Banks in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines,” *Journal of Earth Science and Climatic Change*, Vol. 9, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333917112_Knowledge_Attitudes_Practices_and_Action_on_Climate_Change_and_Environmental_Awareness_of_the_Twenty-two_Villages_along_the_River_Banks_in_Cagayan_de_Oro_City_Philippines.

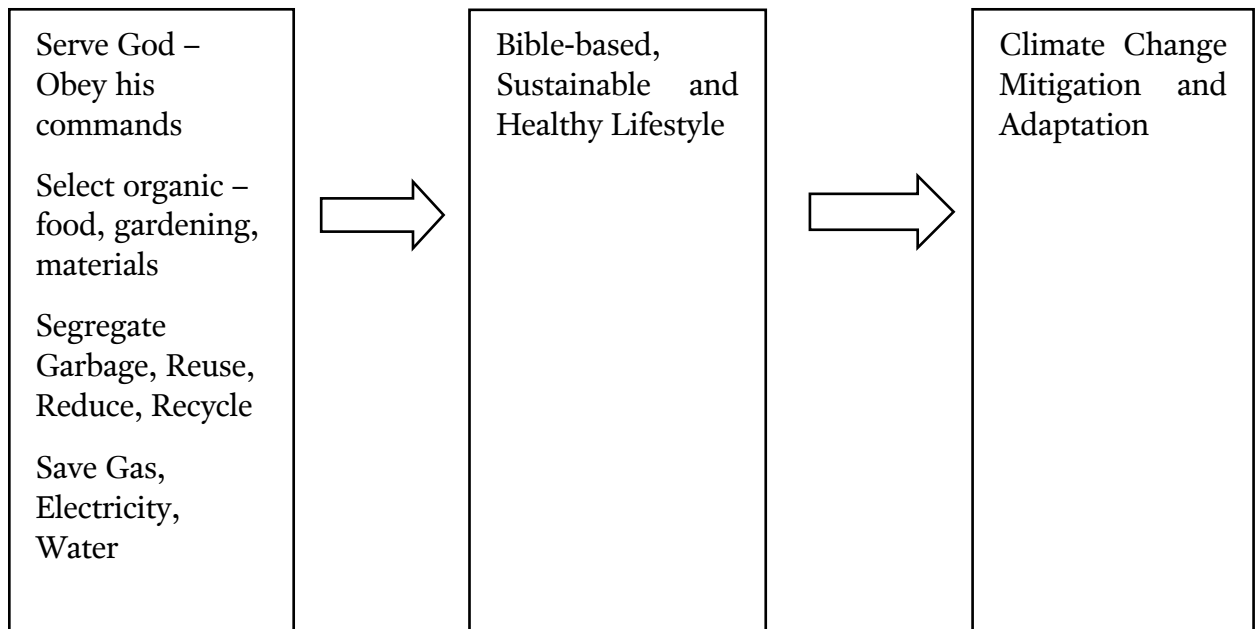
garbage													
2. Segregate garbage	3	3.80	8	10.13	18	22.78	19	24.05	31	39.24	3.85		HP
3. Reduce, reuse and recycle materials	4	5.06	6	7.59	22	27.85	21	26.58	26	32.91	3.75		HP
4. Conserve electricity	4	5.06	5	6.33	16	20.25	20	25.32	34	43.04	3.95		HP
5. Conserve water	2	2.53	4	5.06	15	18.99	24	30.38	34	43.04	4.06		HP
6. Conserve Gas	2	2.53	5	6.33	11	13.92	25	31.65	36	45.57	4.11		HP
7. Plant Trees/ Flowers	6	7.59	4	5.06	14	17.72	24	30.38	31	39.24	3.89		HP
8. Choose organic materials	8	10.13	8	10.13	22	27.85	22	27.85	19	24.05	3.46		MP
9. Choose organic food	8	10.13	10	12.66	21	26.58	20	25.32	20	25.32	3.43		MP
10. Share climate change knowledge with others	11	13.92	5	6.33	22	27.85	19	24.05	22	27.85	3.46		MP
OAWM											3.76		HP

Rate Descriptive Equivalence

- 5 Very Highly Practiced - Practiced 81 – 100% of the time
- 4 Highly Practiced - Practiced 61 – 80% of the time
- 3 Moderately Practiced - Practiced 41 – 60% of the time.
- 2 Fairly Practiced - Practiced 21 – 40% of the time.
- 1 Least Practiced - Practiced 1 – 20% of the time.

Finally, based on the data gathered, a climate change mitigation and adaptation framework are developed.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Framework for the Wesleyan Ministers in Pangasinan



1. Implement Gardening – Church (District) to the ministers - members
 - Gardening can be done in the backyard, rooftop, or any space that can allow plants to grow (trees, flowers, vegetables)
 - Since the respondents have limited space in their assigned churches, they can use containers for planting – any container will do – recycled and reusable materials must be encouraged.
 - The advantage of container gardening is being able to move your plants if it is too hot, too cold, windy, during typhoon and flood.
 - Segregation of garbage must be imposed – some will be recycled, reused and biodegradable materials must be placed in a compost pile/pit to be used as fertilizers.
2. Implement Walking/Biking – Church (District) to the ministers - members
 - When visiting parishioners or going for an errand nearby, walk, if necessary use a bicycle.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were generated:

1. Unlike other denominations, the Wesleyan Church allows women to the pastoral ministry and have the same privilege as men of being ordained. Most of the ministers are college graduates, and a handful pursued graduate studies to further their professional growth and development. Most of them are ordained ministers, and the greater number is just in their first to fifth year of ministry. Furthermore, most of the respondents have a vehicle at their disposal and enjoy the benefits of using four or more appliances at home. Most of the Wesleyan ministers have never attended a climate change seminar sponsored by the church, and almost all of them have never attended government-sponsored climate change seminars.
2. The Wesleyan ministers have limited knowledge on the causes and impact of climate change.
3. The Wesleyan ministers rely on various sources of information on climate change, including pastoral messages and online resources.
4. Activities contributing to climate change are being observed in various localities, including the use of vehicles, burning of garbage, and throwing garbage everywhere.
5. Conserving energy is the common response of Wesleyan ministers to climate change.

Based on the conclusions generated, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Wesleyan ministers can become climate change mitigation and adaptation agents if they are given proper training. The Wesleyan Church can provide climate change seminars for the Wesleyan ministers.
2. The Wesleyan churches or ministers can initiate a partnership with government and non-government agencies in the climate change agenda.
3. Ministers are encouraged to go for further studies, and they may also explore other means to widen their professional armory.

4. Ministers must continue getting updated information on climate change by reading books, magazines, and online resources to enrich their awareness.
5. Wesleyan ministers should continue to conserve renewable and non-renewable energy, choose organics, and share climate change knowledge.
6. Wesleyan ministers may adopt the climate change mitigation and adaptation framework to have a Bible-based, sustainable, and healthier lifestyle.
7. Future researchers may conduct a parallel study to other agencies of the government covering other variables that this research was not able to cover.

**Nurturing the Faith of Children at Home:
What the Church can do to Support Parents**

Marlies Hartkamp

Introduction

Recent research by the Barna Group showed that of the young people who grew up in Christian homes, only 10 percent became resilient disciples of Christ.¹ That means that 90 percent had either lost their faith, did not go to church anymore, or went only out of habit. That is quite a sobering finding. The question of how that could happen easily arises. After all, these young people all grew up in a Christian environment. And yet, only a small percentage of them still follow Christ into adulthood.

The faith of children does not grow or mature by itself. Only faith that is nurtured has a chance to develop. There are a variety of ways to nurture the faith of children. When we reflect on the process, we can ask many questions. For example, how does faith actually develop in children? Is faith related to the development of children in general? How does the world in which children live impact their development? What are different approaches available to nurture faith in children? Does it matter which one we choose?

The aim of this paper is to discuss faith development in children, how faith relates to other domains of child development, how faith can be nurtured, and how parents can be supported in their role in the formation of faith at home. The first part of the paper argues that the development of faith in children is an integrated part of the development of children. This

¹ David Kinnaman, Mark Matlock, and Aly Hawkins, *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2019), 33.

development has cognitive as well as experiential components and needs to be understood in the context in which it takes place. The second part discusses faith formation and the role of parents in this process. The paper will then end with principles and practices for supporting parents in this important role.

Child Development in General

Having some understanding of different theories of child development is important since they also inform theories of faith development in children. I have chosen the theories developed by Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson. After introducing these theories, I will point out some of their shortcomings and propose a model that provides another perspective on child development that will suggest how best to nurture faith in children.

The first theory is the one developed by the psychologist Jean Piaget, who developed his theory of the cognitive development of children in the middle of the last century. Piaget studied his own three children, identified different stages of cognitive development, and discovered that the way they thought and the logic they used changed qualitatively throughout their childhood.² The four stages Piaget distinguishes are sensorimotor or practical intelligence with the goal of object permanence (from birth to 1.5 or 2 years); preoperational or intuitive intelligence (from 1.5 or 2 to 7 or 8 years); concrete (intellectual) operations characterized by symbolic thought (from 7 or 8 to 11 or 12 years); and formal operations or abstract intellectual operations (starts from age 11 or 12).³ According to Piaget, all people go through the same order of stages, although the pace at which they do so might differ. The acquired skills in one stage form the basis for the next stage. Besides identifying stages of cognitive development, Piaget also studied what causes that development.⁴ He distinguished four factors, namely

² Catherine Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 73, Kindle.

³ Piaget, Jean, "Part I: Cognitive Development in Children: Piaget Development and Learning," *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 2, no. 3 (1964): 177-178.

⁴ Piaget, "Part I: Cognitive Development in Children," 178. Stonehouse, *Joining*

heredity and maturation, direct experience, social interaction, and the process of equilibration. By understanding these causal factors, a child's development can be facilitated. Piaget also studied the moral development of children.

Lawrence Kohlberg was a psychologist who built on Piaget's study of moral development in the second half of the twentieth century. Kohlberg discovered that children think quite differently than adults when it comes to moral decisions. Like Piaget, he found that there is a sequence of developmental stages to moral reasoning.⁵ He studied different aspects of moral reasoning, such as the source of authority, the person's definition of right and wrong, the motivation to do right, and the awareness of intentions.⁶ Kohlberg distinguished three levels of morality: level one is called pre-conventional morality (younger than six years old) and is based on reward and punishment. Level two is called conventional morality (7-11 years), during which moral reasoning is based on external ethics. And level three is called post-conventional morality (11 years on) when moral reasoning is based on personal ethics.⁷ For each level, he distinguished two stages. For instance, level one consists of the stages (a) punishment-obedience (whatever leads to punishment is wrong) and (b) rewards (the right way to behave is what is rewarded). An understanding of the different stages can be instrumental in facilitating moral development in children. Developing a context where discussion about values, views, and attitudes is encouraged and where children and their perspectives are taken seriously is most conducive for moral development.

The third theory was developed by Erik Erikson, a German American psychoanalyst and developmental psychologist who lived in the twentieth

Children, 82.

⁵ Lawrence Kohlberg, "Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology," in *Review of Child Development Research*, ed. Lois Wladis Hoffman and Martin L. Hoffman, vol. 1. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964), 394-395.

⁶ Stonehouse, *Joining Children*, 95.

⁷ Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages and Aging in Moral Development—Some Speculations," *The Gerontologist* 13, no. 4 (1973): 499.

century. Erikson developed a theory of psychosocial development of children.⁸ He saw the child in a holistic way and believed that biological and psychosocial development were inseparable. Whereas Piaget focused mainly on the development of the child itself, Erikson found that development was more complex because of interactions with others and their history. Erikson, like Piaget, used stages of development, and the stages follow the biological development of children. He distinguished eight stages.⁹ Each stage is marked by certain challenges in developing new skills and a new sense of self in relation to others. For example, the first stage is about trust versus distrust (and takes place from birth until the age of one year).¹⁰ In this stage, the challenge for the baby is to develop a healthy sense of trust. Whether or not that happens depends on the quality of the relationship with the mother. Erikson includes in his theory here the child-mother relationship instead of just looking at the child itself.

These theories have helped us enormously in understanding how children develop. The main focus of all three theories is on the “normal” development of a child, assuming a child grows up becoming a well-balanced and fully developed person. These insights are helpful when working with children. For example, if we work with a toddler, we cannot expect that child to function as a teenager. What is lacking in the work of Piaget and Kohlberg, however, is the impact of the environment on a child’s development. Piaget wrote some things about the causes of development, but this was not the main focus of his work. Erikson paid more attention to the way in which close people influence a child’s development. For instance, the quality of the mother-child relationship impacts the sense of trust or mistrust a child develops. Seeing the child in its context and considering the impact of that context on the development of the child are important. A

⁸ Erik H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, ext. version ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998); Stonehouse, *Joining Children*, 45.

⁹ Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, chap. 3.

¹⁰ Examples of other stages in childhood are the second stage which is about autonomy versus shame and doubt (ages 1-3), and the third stage (ages 3-6), in which the child learns about initiative versus guilt.

story will illustrate this.

When I was working in Asia, I worked with a girl whom some local Christians had taken under their wing. Let us call the girl Lili.¹¹ Lili came from a small rural village and had a complicated family history. When her mother was pregnant with her, she was mentally ill. In order to escape life with an abusive husband, she started roaming the streets and eating from rubbish bins. We can only imagine what that must have done to her unborn baby. After Lili was born, her maternal grandmother took Lili and her mother under her care. However, when Lili was about three years old, her father claimed her back. Instead of finding a safe and caring home, Lili was subject to severe neglect and abuse for years. When some local believers heard about Lili's situation, they decided to start caring for her. This was the point at which I was asked to assess Lili and provide intervention. I have never seen a life so broken. Lili's development was stunted. She could not communicate, did not understand basic language, and had great difficulty focusing on anything.

Although the story of Lili's life may be an extreme example, it helps to illustrate what is lacking in the child development theories introduced so far. Basically, they pay relatively little attention to the impact of the context or environment in which a child grows up. As Lili's story shows, the immediate context of her family, the wider context of her village, and even the greater context of the country where she lived led to very unhealthy development or even a lack of development. And so, in her case, the focus on normal child development by these theories is insufficient. A non-American scholar, who was communicating with an American scholar in the middle of last century, said that it seemed to him that American researchers are constantly seeking to explain how the child came to be what he or she is, while this scholar was more concerned with discovering "how the child can become what he [or she] not yet is."¹² This is a fascinating insight.

The American scholar who was listening, Urie Bronfenbrenner, wanted

¹¹ Not her real name.

¹² Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development," *American Psychologist* 32, no. 7 (1977): 528.

to learn more. Bronfenbrenner developed his initial theory about the ecological theory of human development in the 1970s. Instead of focusing on a specific domain of human development, such as cognitive, psychosocial, or moral development, Bronfenbrenner considered not only the person (the child) but examined the interrelationship of different processes and their variation in different contexts.¹³ Throughout his career, Bronfenbrenner made a few major adjustments to the model.¹⁴ His work can be divided into three phases.¹⁵ During the first phase (from 1973 to 1979), he spoke of his emerging theory as “an ecological model of human development.” In the second phase (from 1980 to the mid-1990s), he added biology and chronosystems¹⁶ into his ecological framework. During the last phase (from the mid-1990s to 2006), he developed the PPCT-model, which stands for Process – Person – Context – Time. This last version of his model has been less used but is more comprehensive. The following looks at the different parts of his model.¹⁷

¹³ Bronfenbrenner, “Toward an Experimental Ecology,” 513; Nancy Darling, “Ecological Systems Theory: The Person in the Center of the Circles,” *Research in Human Development* 4, no. 3-4 (2007): 203.

¹⁴ Urie Bronfenbrenner, and Gary W. Evans, “Developmental Science in the 21st Century: Emerging Questions, Theoretical Models, Research Designs and Empirical Findings,” *Social Development* 9, no. 1 (2000): 116.

¹⁵ Malin Eriksson, Mehdi Ghazinour, and Anne Hammarström, “Different Uses of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory in Public Mental Health Research: What Is Their Value for Guiding Public Mental Health Policy and Practice?” *Social Theory & Health* 16, no. 4 (2018): 418-421.

¹⁶ See below under the heading “*time*.”

¹⁷ Bronfenbrenner, “Toward an Experimental Ecology,” 514-515; Urie Bronfenbrenner and Pamela A. Morris, “The Bioecological Model of Human Development,” in *Theoretical Models of Human Development*, ed. R. M. Lerner and W. Damon, Handbook of Child Psychology, vol 1. (New York: Wiley, 2006), 795-796; Eriksson, Ghazinour, and Hammarström, “Different Uses of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory,” 419-420.

Process – In this last model, Bronfenbrenner emphasized the importance of “proximal processes,” also called the “engine of development.” These refer to reciprocal interactions between a person and a significant “other,” which could be a person, object, or symbol. These processes happen over time and are viewed as the main mechanisms producing human development.

Person – This focuses on individual characteristics and how they influence the proximal processes, including dispositions, resources of ability, experience, knowledge and skills, and demand characteristics. This can include characteristics such as age, intelligence, gender, personality, and so on.

Context – Within “context,” Bronfenbrenner refers to four interrelated systems: the microsystem, which is the direct environment of the person such as the home or classroom; the mesosystem, which refers to the interrelations between different microsystems of a person, for instance, interactions between family, school and peer group; the exosystem, which refers to systems that have an indirect impact on the person, such as the neighborhood, the mass media, government agencies, and so on; and the macrosystem, such as the culture and subculture, social, educational, legal, and political systems. Bronfenbrenner compares the context or ecological environment as a series of nested structures, like a set of Russian dolls, with each structure nested within the next and with the immediate setting with the developing person at the center.¹⁸

Time – This points to the specific time in history as well as changes over time. In an earlier model, Bronfenbrenner referred to this as chronosystems. The changes in government financial support can impact the family and then have an indirect influence on the development of a child. Government funding might change, though, when considered over a longer period.

Throughout the development of his model, Bronfenbrenner moved from an emphasis on the ecological environment or context to a focus on

¹⁸ Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 3.

the proximal process, which plays a more prominent role in his final model. The main insights that Bronfenbrenner brings to child development theory are his emphasis on the context in which a child develops and how processes between different contexts have an impact as well. When we think back at Lili's life and consider her development with Piagetian glasses on, we do not get very far. Although she was seven, she still operated at the level of a much younger child. We could say that besides biological development, hardly any development had taken place at all. However, when we look at her from a Bronfenbrenner perspective, we understand not only how she had become who she was at that time but also how she could start developing. It provides more pointers for intervention and nurture.

Spiritual Development

After looking at theories focusing on the cognitive, psychosocial, and moral development of children, we will next look at the domain of spiritual development. Over the years, Christian scholars have studied the development of faith in children.¹⁹ This next section introduces two different approaches to faith development: Fowler's stages-of-faith theory and the work of Rebecca Nye, who focuses on spirituality.

James Fowler did extensive research in faith development. His theory of the stages of faith is built on the work of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg.²⁰ Fowler followed the pattern of stages and applied this to faith development, calling his theory "a structural-developmental theory of faith."²¹ Fowler stated that when compared to Piaget's or Kohlberg's stages, the stages of faith deal with different domains of knowing, and Piaget (cognitive domain)

¹⁹ Donald Ratcliff, "The Spirit of Children Past: A Century of Children's Spirituality Research," in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 21-22. Ratcliff has written a helpful overview about perspectives and approaches in different eras. See also note 25.

²⁰ James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 39.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

and Kohlberg (moral domain) tried to avoid those modes of knowing. In Fowler's theory, each faith stage is made up of "integrated sets of operations of knowing and valuing."²² As with Piaget's and Kohlberg's stages, Fowler's stages of faith are hierarchical, meaning that mastering operations in one stage is a prerequisite for the next stage.²³

The first three stages cover most of childhood.²⁴ Before stage 1, Fowler identified a "pre-stage." This takes place in infancy and concerns *undifferentiated faith*. In this stage, trust, courage, hope, and love are fused together in an undifferentiated way. There are also threats of abandonment, inconsistencies, and deprivations if the parent or significant others are not responsive and do not provide a safe place. *Stage 1* is called *Intuitive-projective faith* (ages 2 - 6 or 7). In this stage, the child starts using speech and language to organize his experiences into meaningful units. The child cannot yet see different perspectives, and so projects its own understanding as the only perspectives there is. Understanding comes about predominantly through perceptions and the feelings caused by them. Thoughts of God are concrete, and the child reasons from its own experience. At this stage, children mix reality and fantasy or imagination; they love faith stories, and by capturing the imagination of children, a basis for commitment to their faith might start.²⁵

In *Stage 2, Mythic-literal faith* (ages 6 or 7 to middle school years), the child has mastered the capacity for concrete logical thought and understands cause and effect as well as the sequencing of events. Children start seeing relationships and can now logically link together different pieces of information. They can consider other people's perspectives and are concerned with fairness (seen as reciprocity). Faith stories are at the heart of faith development in this stage and are an expression of theological thought

²² Ibid., 99.

²³ Ibid., 100.

²⁴ Ibid., 117-213. This is the part of the book that describes the different stages of faith in detail.

²⁵ Stonehouse, *Joining Children*, 156.

for them.²⁶

In *Stage 3, Synthetic-conventional faith* (ages 11-15), children are capable of formal abstract thought and can reflect deeply. Expanding social contacts brings them in contact with master stories that are different from their own. Through reflection, children start constructing their faith by coming to a synthesis of meanings, beliefs, and values that they have gained from different parts of their world.²⁷ They have a deep desire to know God personally and to be accepted by him. The remaining stages (*individuated-reflective faith, conjunctive faith, and universalizing faith*) start with young adulthood and are outside the scope of this paper.

Fowler acknowledged the limitations of Piaget's and Kohlberg's work. One of these is the disconnect between emotion and affection, and that is quite a significant challenge when it comes to faith and its development. This is related to what Stonehouse mentions, namely that if faith development only focuses on a cognitive knowledge of God, then the experience of God is overlooked.²⁸ Related to this is also Fowler's critique that there is a restrictive role of imagination in the structural-developmental approach. Fowler stated that the concept of cognition needs to be expanded and include an imaginal type of knowing if it is to work for the discussion of faith development. Interestingly, this is where the research focus has shifted to in more recent years.²⁹ Ratcliff and Nye state that Robert Coles' groundbreaking book, *The Spiritual Life of Children*, published in 1990, marked a change towards a new trajectory.³⁰ The focus shifted from religious or faith

²⁶ Ibid., 161.

²⁷ Ibid., 164.

²⁸ Ibid., 127.

²⁹ Ratcliff, "The Spirit of Children Past," 21-22. Ratcliff gives an overview of the history of research on spiritual development in children. He distinguishes four phases during the past century. The early holistic period (1892 – 1930). Then a period that placed less emphasis on experience (1930 – 1960). The third period was a time in which cognitive stages were emphasized (1960 – 1990). And the last period places an emphasis on children's spirituality (1990 – present).

³⁰ Donald Ratcliff, and Rebecca Nye, "Childhood Spirituality: Strengthening

development in children to spirituality of children.³¹

Rebecca Nye is one of the main scholars who has focused research on spirituality. Her research involves experience instead of a cognitive type of knowing.³² According to Nye, spirituality is not something that is easy to grasp or articulate.³³ It has to do with a way of knowing that is not concerned with proving how one knows. She sees spirituality as powerful, inspiring, and a shaping force for our being.³⁴ Several scholars state that there is no widely accepted definition of Christian spirituality, which, according to Boyatzis, is caused mainly by the longstanding history of looking at spiritual development from a cognitive perspective.³⁵ Nye explains that spirituality can be defined from different perspectives: theological, educational, and psychological. She herself comes up with several definitions that could be used, some more extensive, articulate, and academic, and others shorter

the Research Foundation,” in *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, ed. Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Pamela Ebstyne King, Linda Wagener, and Peter L. Benson (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2005), 475.

³¹ Ratcliff, “The Spirit of Children Past,” 35. Note that the spirituality was seen in contrast to religious development. It was not necessarily Christian. And moreover, spirituality was not necessarily seen as a religious spirituality. There is also a so-called non-religious spirituality. Ratcliff states that religion, although it includes spirituality, also encompasses theology, creeds, and other content.

³² Ratcliff, “The Spirit of Children Past,” 35.

³³ Rebecca Nye, *Children’s Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009), chap. 1, Kindle.

³⁴ Nye, *Children’s Spirituality*, chapter 1.

³⁵ Holly Catterton Allen, “Exploring Children’s Spirituality from a Christian Perspective,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 11; Michael J. Anthony, ed., *Perspectives on Children’s Spiritual Formation*, Perspectives, ed. Leonard G. Goss (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 6, Kindle; Chris J. Boyatzis, “Children’s Spiritual Development: Advancing the Field in Definition, Measurement, and Theory,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 46.

and simpler, such as, “Children’s spirituality is like a child.”³⁶

Nye considers spirituality essential to faith, childhood, and being whole. Instead of analyzing childhood development in different components or compartments, she states that children see their world in a holistic way; they are open and curious, have a natural capacity for wonder, perceive things in a mystical way, learn in a natural way by discovering new things on a daily basis, are emotional as much as intellectual, and are comfortable with things greater than themselves that they cannot express in words.³⁷ Mystery is a close friend to them, and they naturally respond in awe and wonder. These insights from Nye shed a different light on faith and what it entails.

Faith and Nurturing Faith in Children

Faith has been described in different ways. For instance, a famous quote by Henrietta Mears, a Christian educator in the first half of the twentieth century, states, “Faith is caught rather than taught.”³⁸ Walter Wangerin describes faith as a “dance with God,” a drama, or a story.³⁹ Faith has to do with trust, relationship, and wonder about God’s greatness, with reflection on God’s story of salvation. It includes reveling in who God is and the mercy and grace he offers in and through Christ. Faith is a gift, journey, and process of growth that takes place in community and engages the whole child. As Nye states, it is as much emotional as it is intellectual. Others affirm that view. For instance, Westerhoff states that faith is given as a gift and has a

³⁶ Nye, *Children’s Spirituality*, chap. 1.

³⁷ Nye, *Children’s Spirituality*, chap. 1. Nye (together with Hay) uses the term “relational consciousness” as the central category of spirituality, and have developed three categories of spiritual sensitivity: awareness-sensing, mystery-sensing, and value-sensing. Unfortunately, I do not have enough space to expand on their research in this paper.

³⁸ From lecture notes. Henrietta Mears was one of the founders of the National Sunday School Association in America.

³⁹ Walter Wangerin Jr., *The Orphean Passages: The Drama of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), 20.

cognitive as well as an emotional component.⁴⁰ Fowler saw faith as a “relation of trust in and loyalty to the transcendent about which concepts and propositions—beliefs—are fashioned.”⁴¹ Again, this includes feelings, decisions of the will, as well as intellectual beliefs.

Although spirituality is an innate capacity in a child from birth, and the journey of faith or the “dance with God” starts at the beginning of life, yet in order for faith to develop in children, nurture is essential. The Bible is clear about the importance of nurturing faith. For example, in Deuteronomy 6:4-5,⁴² the *Shema* reads, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” These two important verses are directly followed by an instruction to the Israelites to impart them to their children:

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deut. 6: 6-9).⁴³

The act of impressing these commandments on children is supposed to happen in different settings but mainly in the context of the family.⁴⁴ So the

⁴⁰ John H. Westerhoff III, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2012), Afterword, Kindle.

⁴¹ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 11.

⁴² Patrick D. Miller, “That the Children May Know: Children in Deuteronomy,” in *The Child in the Bible*, ed. Marcia Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), Kindle. This chapter focuses on children in Deuteronomy

⁴³ NIV translation.

⁴⁴ Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell, *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 151, Kindle; Miller, “That the Children May Know,” section “The Nature and Character of Deuteronomy.”

main responsibility for this instruction or formation is placed with the parents. The call to parents (or fathers) to train children up in the faith is also found in other verses of the Old and New Testament, such as Proverbs 22:6, which reads, “Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray,”⁴⁵ and Ephesians 6:4, which says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”⁴⁶

In the Christian tradition, important theologians have also written about nurturing faith in children and, in particular, the role of the family in this process. For instance, John Chrysostom (347-407 CE), an early church father, called the family a “little church” or a “sacred community.”⁴⁷ Martin Luther wrote the “Small Catechism,”⁴⁸ also known as “Luther’s Little Instruction Book,” in 1529 for parents to teach their children (and servants) the main truths of the faith. Luther placed a high value on the vocation or “divine calling” of parents to raise their children in the Lord.⁴⁹ He wrote that parents are “apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel.”⁵⁰ Horace Bushnell (a pastor in the nineteenth century) also considered the family a little church, in

⁴⁵ NRSV translation.

⁴⁶ NIV translation.

⁴⁷ Marcia Bunge, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Children, Parents, and ‘Best Practices’ for Faith Formation: Resources for Child, Youth, and Family Ministry Today,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Theology* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 351; Marcia Bunge, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives: Resources for Raising Children in the Faith,” *Lutheran Partners* 25, no. 4 (July/August 2009), 17.

⁴⁸ Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism with Explanation (1529)* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986).

⁴⁹ Don S. Browning and Marcia J. Bunge, *Children and Childhood in World Religions: Primary Sources and Texts* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 90; Bunge, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives,” 351.

⁵⁰ Bunge, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives,” 352.

which the daily routines and practices of faith can be modeled by parents.⁵¹

Through these biblical passages and theological writings, we see that faith formation is primarily the responsibility of parents.⁵² But not all parents feel comfortable or confident in taking up that responsibility. I was surprised recently when a friend's child told me that they do not read the Bible or pray at home. I also know of parents who like to "outsource" their child's faith formation to the Sunday school or to the Christian school their children attend.⁵³ However, nurturing faith in children still remains a role that Christian parents need to take up. As churches and people who are trained in children's ministry, we should ask ourselves if we provide enough support to parents to assume that responsibility. Bunge states that few churches actually engage parents or support them in the area of faith formation.⁵⁴ This is a sad observation. This is also a gap that we need to fill.

If we are willing to support parents in nurturing the faith of their children at home, then the next question is *how* we can do that. In the previous sections, we looked at child development in general and spiritual development in particular. We learned that if we want to nurture faith in children, we need to pay attention to the cognitive as well as the experiential way of knowing God. From Fowler, we also learned that it is important to provide nurture that is developmentally appropriate. From Nye, we learned that faith has to do with mystery, wonder, and awe, so children need opportunities to experience that. And finally, from Bronfenbrenner, we learned that child development takes place in context, and therefore it is important to look also at faith formation in its social, cultural, and historical setting. Based on these insights, I will present principles that are important when

⁵¹ Ibid., 351.

⁵² George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 2nd ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2013), 88, Kindle.

⁵³ Karen Marie Yust, "Being Faithful Together: Families and Congregations as Intergenerational Christian Communities," in *Understanding Children's Spirituality: Theology, Research, and Practice*, ed. Kevin E. Lawson (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2012), 225.

⁵⁴ Bunge, "Biblical and Theological Perspectives," 349.

we support parents in faith formation at home.

Principles and Practices for Faith Formation at Home

Supporting parents is important and can be done in different ways, such as through training, church-based parent support or small groups, children's ministries, and Christian schools. When we support parents in faith formation at home, there are some principles we can keep in mind.

Principle 1: Nurturing faith in children is a biblical mandate, and it is essential that it happens in the home

Parents need to know the biblical basis for faith formation in the home. This is not some new trend but a biblical mandate. It is also helpful to introduce to parents what theologians throughout the ages have written on this topic, especially within their own faith tradition. The following two suggestions are not so much what parents could do but what could be done to support parents.

- a) Workshops, seminars, or webinars for parents about biblical foundations for faith formation in the home.
- b) Developing a booklet on faith formation in the home.

Principle 2: In nurturing faith in our children, we need to pay attention to a cognitive knowing as well as an experiential knowing of God

This means that we need to teach children the facts of our faith while at the same time we nurture their spirituality. There are several practices that parents can use, such as Bible reading, prayer, giving, and serving others.⁵⁵ It is important to note that some practices, such as Bible reading or Bible storytelling, can be done in different ways. Some ways encourage learning facts about stories, while others also encourage children to engage with their feelings. This is also true of prayer. Some suggestions for parents

⁵⁵ Marcia McQuitty, "A Qualitative Understanding and Application of the Deuteronomy 6 Commandment for Parents," in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 252-265.

are:

- a) Reading the Bible to or with the child and discussing the content.⁵⁶ Stonehouse proposes that the emphasis should be on THE story, the metanarrative of the Bible,⁵⁷ and Nye provides practical suggestions of how this can be done.⁵⁸ One way in which the feelings of the child can be engaged and how the child can engage with the story reflectively is by using the “I wonder . . .” statements.⁵⁹
- b) Times of worship and prayer.⁶⁰ Here again, the focus on spirituality needs to be mentioned. Children need to learn that they can interact with their heavenly Father in an intimate way. This includes corporate worship and prayer on a Sunday but also praying at home. Prayers could be formal or spontaneous prayers.
- c) Celebrating traditional festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, keeping family traditions for Advent (such as the Jesse Tree), and Lent and family rituals are very powerful in spiritual formation.⁶¹ They

⁵⁶ Marcia Bunge, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives,” 355.

⁵⁷ Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May, “THE Story and the Spiritual Formation of Children in the Church and in the Home,” in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 366-372.

⁵⁸ Nye, *Children's Spirituality*, chap. 5. In chapter 4 Nye provides six general criteria for ensuring spiritual foundations, which she captures in the acronym S.P.I.R.I.T.: space, process, imagination, relationship, intimacy, and trust. In chapter 5 she applies these to Using the Bible.

⁵⁹ Stonehouse and May, “THE Story and the Spiritual Formation,” 371; Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey: Guidance for Those Who Teach and Nurture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 88-89; Michael J. Anthony, “Children's Ministry Models, Learning Theory, and Spiritual Development,” in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 190-191. Anthony calls this the “contemplative-reflective” approach.

⁶⁰ Bunge, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives,” 355.

⁶¹ Karen Marie Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's*

bring together the cognitive and experiential modes of knowing.

- d) Opportunities for children to serve, for example, through community service and missions projects.⁶² Through serving, they can grow in their relationship with God and grow in their love for other people.
- e) “Faith talk.” Helping parents to feel comfortable in discussing faith at home and providing them with specific ideas of how to start faith-talk.⁶³ Parent-child conversations concerning faith can enhance children’s spiritual growth.⁶⁴

Principle 3: Nurturing faith in children has to be developmentally appropriate

Basic knowledge of child development is important when we aim to nurture the faith of children in a developmentally appropriate way.⁶⁵ For instance, an understanding of Erikson’s psychosocial stages of development can help us know the developmental challenge a child faces at a certain age. Or, if we know that younger children cannot consider the perspective from another’s point of view, we have more realistic expectations of them. If parents have more than one child, they might have to use a different approach with each child in order to provide developmentally appropriate content. This can be challenging, but it will help each child to grasp the truth more

Spiritual Lives, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), chap. 3, Kindle; Ivy Beckwith, *Formational Children’s Ministry: Shaping Children Using Story, Ritual, and Relationship*, 1st ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 76.

⁶² Jane Carr, “Equipping Children for Ministry,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 205-206.

⁶³ Stonehouse and May, *Listening to Children*, 130.

⁶⁴ Chris J. Boyatzis, “The Co-Construction of Spiritual Meaning in Parent-Child Communication,” in *Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications*, ed. Donald Ratcliff (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2004), 182.

⁶⁵ Stonehouse, *Joining Children*, 66.

easily. And if parents have a child with disabilities, they might need additional support to provide nurture in a developmentally appropriate way, a way their child can “hear.”⁶⁶ What we can do to support parents includes:

- a) Run a workshop or webinar on child development theories, like Erikson’s, Piaget’s, and Kohlberg’s, to help parents understand how their child develops in general and how spiritual development takes place. Also, help them realize they might have to use different ways for different children depending on age and stage of development.
- b) Write a brochure or booklet for parents on this topic.

Principle 4: In order to nurture the faith of a particular child, we need to consider the child’s context.

The environment in which a child grows up impacts that child enormously. The different ecological systems in which a child grows up interact with one another and change over time. One example is the use of computer games and electronic devices that our children grow up with. We never had those during our childhood, and they bring different challenges with them for our children and for us also as we try to raise our children in the Christian faith. We can distinguish different types of contexts. The home is the closest and most immediate context. The faith community is the wider context. And a secular society with its culture and subcultures is the macro-system or the context that impacts the child more indirectly. It is important to be aware of the impact of secular culture and context on our children and create a culture in which children are accepted and valued.⁶⁷ And if we minister in different countries or different types of contexts, such as rural versus urban, or across denominations, we will have to consider how to adapt our practices of faith formation in a way that is appropriate and relevant. We

⁶⁶ MaLesia Breeding and Dana Kennamer Hood, “Voices Unheard: Exploring Spiritual Needs of Families of Children with Disabilities,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 306.

⁶⁷ Keeley, Robert J., *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith: How the Church Can Nurture the Spiritual Development of Kids* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 115, Kindle.

can teach or inform parents about the following things:

- a) Model or live out faith at home and nurture the faith of parents if that is needed. Stonehouse states, “The spiritual formation of children should begin with the spiritual formation of their parents.”⁶⁸ How parents live out their faith at home is one of the most important aspects of nurturing faith. Children observe if their parents walk the talk. If parents are unsure of their own relationship with God or Jesus, then it will be hard to nurture the faith of their child.⁶⁹
- b) The role of the community of faith is important as well. For instance, intergenerational churches are important for children as they can learn about God and life together with believers of all ages.⁷⁰ And within the faith community, children have role models and mentors from whom to learn.⁷¹ Children can also learn from older generations within the family context, such as their grandparents, who can model the practices of faith.⁷²
- c) Starting parent support groups where they can discuss the issues they encounter and be supported by others in the faith community.

⁶⁸ Stonehouse, *Joining Children*, 65.

⁶⁹ Stonehouse and May, *Listening to Children*, 124-125.

⁷⁰ Holly Catterton Allen, “Nurturing Children’s Spirituality in Intergenerational Christian Settings,” in *Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Application*, ed. Donald Ratcliff (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2004), 266.

⁷¹ Barna, *Transforming Children*, 112.

⁷² Holly Catterton Allen and Heidi Schultz Oschwald, “God Across the Generations: The Spiritual Influence of Grandparents,” in *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008); Catherine Stonehouse, and Scottie May *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey: Guidance for Those Who Teach and Nurture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 126.

- d) “Fostering life-giving attitudes toward the body, sexuality, and marriage.”⁷³ This has to do with the world in which we live, which concerns the social, cultural, and historical context. Every day our children face challenges in the world in which they live. It can be hard for parents to know what youth culture or school culture is like or to deal with challenges that they have never experienced themselves.

Through these four principles, we can support parents in their responsibility to train up their children in the way of the Lord. These practical suggestions can provide more concrete direction for our combined efforts. Also, depending on the context in which we nurture our children’s faith, we might want to place more emphasis on certain aspects than others. And we might have to adapt the ways in which we present our content.

Conclusion

Throughout the years, we have learned a lot about the development of faith in children. Fowler based his theory about the stages of faith on the theories about the stages of development of children, such as those presented by Piaget. In recent decades, we have seen an increased interest in spirituality as an approach to understanding faith. Having these different types of models and theories makes us aware of the complexity of faith development. From the ecological theory of child development, we learn that development happens in context and that ecological systems impact the development of a child, including the development of faith.

When we look at faith formation, the Bible, as well as theological traditions, teach us that nurturing faith is in the first place the responsibility of parents. Churches, however, can and should support parents in faith formation. How they give parents support depends on their specific ministry context. The principles and practical suggestions provided in this paper may assist them in moving forward with this task.

⁷³ Bunge, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives,” 357.

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Christian Holiness in the Chin Context

Biak Cung Lian

Background of Christianity in Chin Hill

In this paper, I am writing about the background of Christianity in Chin Hill and a bit about Myanmar as well. I will mention some cultural observations or traditions that we have been practicing since Chin began. The purpose of this paper is to understand what biblical holiness and cultural holiness mean for Chin people. This paper will mostly compare holiness in Chin culture and holiness in the Bible. I interviewed one of my friends who said that we Chin people must understand the difference between holiness in culture and biblical holiness. This paper will help many Chin people understand holiness more deeply, and it will correct and lead them to the Lord.

Myanmar is one of the Buddhist countries of the world. Myanmar (Burma) has a population of over 50 million.¹ Close to 90% of the people in Myanmar today are Buddhist, and virtually all of them practice Theravada Buddhism. There are eight major tribes in Myanmar: Kachin, Kaya, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Barma, Rhahkaing, and Shan. Among them, the Kachin, Chin, and Kayin tribal people are mostly Christians.

In 1554, Catholic missionaries entered Burma for the very first time. Not until 1613, however, was there a permanent presence with churches with about three hundred Roman Catholic believers in Rangoon. But growth was so significantly disrupted by the wars between Burma and Siam (Thailand) in the next two centuries that total membership of five thousand in 1800 had fallen to about three thousand in 1832. In 1813, the famous American missionary, Adoniram Judson, arrived in the country to serve

¹ World Council of Churches, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/myanmar-baptist-convention> (accessed 5/1/21).

there for nearly 40 years. He translated the Bible into Burmese in 1834.² This was the greatest gift for us. He was a precious gift from God for our nation. However, Judson did not physically go to the Chin State when he was serving the Lord in Myanmar.

In Myanmar, we Chin people are a minority tribe known as the Asho and Chin people. We call ourselves Mizo, Lai mi referring to Hakha, Falam, and Than Tlang. Zo mi refers to Ti Dim, Kuki refers to Kangpalet and others, Asho and Bawm. Even though we belong to the same race, our homeland has been divided into three parts. These parts mainly live around the borders of the three countries: Myanmar (formerly Burma, in the Chin state and areas in lower parts), India (in Mizoram and a few other bordering states), and Bangladesh (in the Chittagong Hill Tracts).³

On March 15, 1899, American missionaries Arthur and Laura Carson arrived in Chin Hill (Hakha) and saw Chin people for the first time. The Carsons wrote about the Chin, “They were very drunken, exceedingly savage, being head-hunters fierce savage-looking, dirty and filthy beyond description, wild, savage, pagan and heathen.”⁴ So, the Carsons did not know what to do or how to evangelize these people. Arthur’s wife could not even think they could live there. “Arthur, I cannot do it. I cannot stay on and live out my life in this awful place, among these loathsome people.” Arthur answered in a most gentle manner: “Do not talk that way. Things will look brighter in the morning. Do not think any more about it tonight. Just try to go to sleep, with the thought that you do not have to stay. Unless you want to . . . Laura, remember our motto, I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me.”⁵ They started learning the language and sharing the gospel with the people. After a year, in 1904, Pau Suan and Thuam Hang were

² Samuel H. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 2 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 330-331.

³ K. Robin, *Chin History, Culture and Identity* (Brussels: The Euro Burma Office, 2009), 187.

⁴ Zomi Theological College, *Chin Church History* (Falam: Zomi Theological College, 2007), 49.

⁵ Zomi Theological College, *Chin Church History*, 50.

converted to Christianity from Animism. While the Carsons were serving in Chin Hill, some Karen teachers and evangelists came to Chin Hill to help them. The Karen people especially worked in the Falam areas. These are the names of the Karen people who came to Chin Hill to help the missionaries: 1) Thra San Win in 1900 at Hakha, 2) Thra Shwe Zan in 1920 at Khuasak (Tedim), 3) Thra Po Ku in 1901 at Tedim, 4) Thra Maung Gone in 1906 at Laizo (Falam), 5) Thra Po Aye in 1906 at Lungbang (Falam), 6) Thra MaungLun in 1906 at Zokhua (Hakha), 7) Thra Maung Kya in 1904 at Than Tlang, 8) Samo Gyi Ghine in 1902 at Hakha, 9) Thra Aung Dwe in 1915 at Hakha, Falam, and 10) Thra San Tun in 1920 at Laizo, Falam.⁶

Traditional Music/Songs

We Chin people like to dance and sing, whether we are happy or sad, and basically on any occasion. I believe that this is one of the most beautiful parts of our culture. “Many tribes show variations in songs, dances, music, and even different musical instruments are employed.”⁷ We have many different songs, depending on the situation, such as lullabies, children’s songs, war songs, and hunter’s victories songs known as Vawr Hla, songs of cultivation, drinking songs, love songs, and funeral songs. Almost every song is accompanied by a musical instrument.⁸

Speech Tone Songs: These songs are sung when someone dies as an expression showing our sadness for him or her. “The (Thuthmun Zai) songs were composed around AD 1400.”⁹

Thuthmun Zai: In Chin language, this is A mi an than nan e Vuitum lian lu a tlun, Keini kan than nan e. ka hrai Rihsang a kai. In English, it is, “For a man’s fame, a Gayal’s head was brought into the house, but our news

⁶ Zomi Theological College, *Chin Church History*, 53.

⁷ Robin, *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, 69.

⁸ Robin, *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, 70.

⁹ Robin, *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, 72.

is that my child is dead, and his spirit went to the Rih Lake.”¹⁰

Lamentation: This song is normally sung by women; I did not hear many men sing this, but there may be some. Women sit directly next to the grave and sing it. For example, in English, “Oh, Khap khap mother what a pity. You just left us, and we will not see you anymore.”

Hunter’s Victorious Song: These songs are still sung in many places in Chin State. I will not write the words in Chin but only in English because they are too long in Chin. The English is, “Go and tell my parents, their son is nursing lovingly, A Swiss lady in his arms, Sewed together with his clothes (married).”¹¹

Christianization Period: Before 1899-1959, it seems that there were no Christian songs in Chin Hill. Most songs were traditional songs. Then missionaries introduced Western hymns and instruments. They taught Christian themes, such as the birth of Christ, crucifixion, resurrection, and heaven.¹²

Dances: Dances also played an important part in the lives of Chin people. We perform for festivals and ceremonies, such as happy occasions and funeral rituals, national days, etc. We have many dances, but the bamboo dance is the most popular in Chin State.

The Holiness Movement in Chin State

By 1973, many denominations had separated from the Baptist church. In Chin State, Baptist was the only denomination in the early years because Chin State missionaries were sent by the Baptist church in the United States. It seemed that Chin Christians did not have any problem with the doctrine of the Baptist church or the teaching of Baptists in those days. According to Bishop No Chum, in 1973, some evangelists began to preach the gospel, and revivals were seen in many places in Chin State.¹³ Mostly,

¹⁰ Robin, *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, 73.

¹¹ Robin, *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, 72-73.

¹² Robin, *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, 72.

¹³ https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=no+chum+interview (accessed,

they preached about salvation or the importance of being born again because, as Rev Hoi Cung Tum, who was one of the best preachers and theologians, said, “Chin State missionary did not tell Chin people about being born again; they just told them about Christian living or life. You should not drink alcohol or smoke, but you should go to Church and sing a song, etc.”¹⁴

Evangelists started to preach about salvation, holiness, love, and other topics. One of the gospel themes many Chin Christians loved and were inspired by was “holiness.” They preached and emphasized that no one can go to heaven unless they are holy. We Christians are called to be holy and love each other, they said. But the way they explained holiness was not really biblical, I think, because it seemed to me that they tried to be holy by their effort and ability, not by the Holy Spirit. They said that the Holy Spirit could not live in us as long as we are unholy because the Holy Spirit is so pure and so clean. We should clean ourselves first, and after that, the Holy Spirit will come and live in us so that we can live a holy life.

Many Chin Christians were trying to live a holy life. Some even said that pork is unholy, and we should not eat it if we want the Holy Spirit to come in us. Many people started to fast and pray every day and night in order to get the Holy Spirit. Some women left their husbands in order to live a holy life. When they saw someone who had colored hairstyles, lipstick, and other adornments, they judged them because they thought these were unholy. Their holiness did not bring glory to God but became their weapon to destroy other people. They left the Baptist churches and started new churches. After some years, Reformed doctrine became popular in Chin State. Some Bible students, who graduated from India, preached about holiness in different ways compared to 1973. They preached that we cannot be holy unless the Holy Spirit is living in us because we are sinners, and we cannot do any good thing. We become holy in the eyes of God when we receive the Holy Spirit and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is a short summary of the holiness movement in Chin State.

5/3/ 21).

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilOHC-yIirU> (accessed, 5/3/2021).

Interview

In order to find out more about how holiness is thought and taught in Chin State, Myanmar, I interviewed five prominent Chin leaders.

Bishop Tin Hmung: I had a chance to interview Bishop Tin Hmung. He is the current Bishop of Than Han district of the Believer Church. Before He became Bishop, he served the Lord in many different places: Kangpalet where Christians are persecuted, Khampet, Hakha, and Kalay. He has a wife, Tin Zing, and God gave them two sons. Why I chose Bishop Tin Hmung, even though he is not well educated compared with others whom I interviewed, is that he is one of the most honest and open persons. He is faithful to the Lord and the Believers Church as well. His daily life is a good example for his members.

Dr. Robert Ro Uk Cung: Dr. Robert was one of my professors while I was studying at Judson Bible College. He is not only my professor but also my very close relative as well. He did not even want me to call him a teacher or professor. I called him Ka Pu, which means my mother's brother. He is graduated from Asia Theological Seminary, International Graduate School of Leadership, and Manila Theological College. He is a Professor of Judson Bible College, Myanmar Evangelical Holiness College, One Mission One Million Bible College, and Reaching the World Bible College. He is Presbyterian and lives in Yangon. He is married to Siang, but they do not have children yet. They have a children's ministry. They adopted many children and support them in school and help in other ways. I chose him because he is from a different denomination, is a very good person, and knows many things about Chin.

Rev. Dr. Lian Bik: Dr. Bik is a relative of mine, and I stay in his house whenever I go to Yangon. Their home is my second home. They give me a private room, and we are so close to them. Dr. Bik is a professor and academic dean of Myanmar Evangelical Holiness College. He is a translator of books and is very much involved in the Myanmar Evangelical Holiness Church. He graduated with a B.Th. from Gospel for Asia Bible College (Believers Bible College), an M.Th, from Asia Theological Seminary (Manila), and a doctorate from India Bible College. He married Easter, and God gave them two boys and one girl. I chose him because he is a representative of

the holiness church in Myanmar, and not only did he graduate from a Bible school but also his wife, who graduated with a master's degree from Yangon Dagon University.

Rev. Dr. Thawng Ling: Dr. Thawng Ling is a senior pastor and founder of Chin Evangelical Baptist Church in Indianapolis, USA. He is the very first one who started the Myanmar Christian community in the USA. He is from the same village as me, and we know each other well. He served the Lord in Chin State many years ago and then went to the USA to study and did not return due to the political situation. The Lord called him to be a pastor in the USA. He graduated from Yangon University (BSC), Myanmar Institute of Theology (MDiv), Sioux Falls Theological Seminary (MRI) (USA) and finished his doctorate in Newburgh Theological Seminary (USA). He was formerly president of Union Theological Seminary (Matupi, Chin State) and pastor of many villages in Chin state. I chose him to interview because his father was one of the very first Christians in my village, and he has a lot of experiences related to my topic (holiness in the Chin context). He represents the Myanmar Baptist Church. He has also written sermon books with more than 100 sermons. He is a great man, and the Lord is using him amazingly. He has three children.

Rev. Dr. Paul Za Tlung Lian: Dr. Paul is president of Myanmar One Mission One Million Bible College and was formerly of the Holiness Church. He graduated with his doctorate from India. He will be representing the local Holiness Church. I chose him because he knows much about Chin history and reads many books. He also has a children's ministry and has adopted many children. He supports them to study and helps them in other ways. He has four children, lives in Yangon, and serves the Lord in many different ways.

I asked each of these men many questions about holiness in the Chin context, including the following:

How do you understand Holiness?

Bishop Tin Hmung: Holiness is one of the most important things to do in our Christian life. Our God is the holiest, and he loves holy people when we look at the Bible. Likewise, we believers are called to be holy as we are Christian. We have to be holy in flesh, spirit, and soul, and we need to be

holy in the way we wear our clothes and cut our hair. He gave an example: Buddhist people take off their slippers or sandals before entering their temple, which is a good thing to do. We Christians should learn from them as well, even though this will not lead to heaven. Christian holiness is not a thing that we can earn by ourselves, but holiness comes from the blood of Jesus Christ. We can be holy only when we are washed by Christ's blood.

Dr. Robert: Holiness has two different meanings or two different perspectives: Christian holiness and cultural holiness. Christian holiness comes from the blood of Christ; our sins can be washed only by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2: 25). We are justified by his blood; we Christians are set apart through his blood. We cannot do holiness by ourselves but only by Christ, grace, and faith. Holiness is called solar grace in Romans 6. This holiness helps us to grow in our Christian journey. Only Christians can be holy in the eyes of God. These three things are important in our holiness life: first, discipline (spiritual); second, self-discipline (goodness, taking care); and third, progressive holiness (1 Thessalonian 4: 7-8). We cannot be holy only one single time, but we need to continue to be holy until we die.

Rev. Thawng Ling: Cultural holiness is ethical and moral living. We call holy people those who do not drink alcohol, smoke, and others. Basically, cultural holiness is good and evil, pure and not pure, good and bad. For example, when someone gets married, if the man's parents say to their son's wife, "Holy," it means that she is a virgin, and they really respect her. Therefore, in Chin culture, when someone is called a holy man or woman, it means that they deserve respect from others and are something special.

This is the same response among the five I interviewed: We Chin did not copy from anyone; therefore, many people said Chin culture is so beautiful.

Rev. Lian Bik: Yes, I think that this is really important because holiness is the identity of Christianity. Holiness has two different meanings: Christian holiness and non-Christian holiness or culture holiness. Christian holiness is when Christ died for our sins, and all our sins are washed by his blood. It is impossible to be holy without the blood of Jesus Christ because animal blood is not enough to wash our sins. That is why God sent his only

Son. Culture holiness is when we try something requested by our law or culture. For example, our culture says that when someone dies from a falling tree, we think that the tree becomes unholy, and we cannot eat the fruit of it. Those who follow these kinds of things become holy people according to our culture. Basically, we consider them holy people who follow outward holiness. This is the difference between Christian holiness and cultural holiness or traditional holiness.

Rev. Paul: Holiness has two different meanings: Christian holiness or culture holiness. Christian holiness comes from God; it is impossible to be holy without the blood of Christ. God calls us to be holy because he is holy; his name is holy (Isaiah 6). Culture holiness is doing good things or living for others. Especially in Chin culture, love and care are highly valuable because this is the seed of our culture. In our culture, people do not kill each other, steal from others, or disrespect others. Our culture has love towards others, care, and sharing what we have. And Chin people love to connect with others. Our culture is not individual but a community. Chin people want to live with Chin people. Much of our culture is similar to the Bible: love, care, respect, sharing, and others. "Love your neighbor as yourself." We Chin people practice this Bible verse deeply because this is our culture. Our culture encourages us to love others as we love ourselves.

What is cultural or traditional holiness?

Rev. Thin Hmung: Our grandfathers thought that holiness is following the laws such as not stealing, not fighting, not telling lies, and others. Rev. Thin Hmung said that no one stole things from others in the early years. We do not have any stealing from others. Basically, we can say that cultural holiness is honest living and not doing bad things to others. Even when people fight each other, they never use weapons to hurt someone. After the fight, they still can have fellowship. Cultural holiness is outward holiness. And I asked Rev. Thin Hmung, is it kind of similar to the Bible, or did we get this culture from someone? He said no, this culture is originally from Chin.

How did the early missionaries teach them about holiness?

Rev. Thin Hmung: The early missionaries taught them very well, I

think, because we Chin people did not know anything. We did not wear clothes; we just did not know anything. But when the missionaries came to Chin State, they changed almost everything. Rev. Tin Hmung believed that the missionaries taught them about both inside holiness and outside holiness. He said that when Chin people accepted Jesus, the missionaries cut their hair. This is one of the pieces of evidence that they were Christian. Rev. Tin Hmung gave an example: when Christians drank or smoked, they were not allowed to go to the pulpit and had to sit in the back chair of the church for three months. I can say that this penance really helped early Christians to grow spirituality. Rev. Thin Mung believed that the missionaries taught them first outside holiness, and after that, they taught them inside holiness. Missionaries were the best gift from God, I can say.

Dr. Robert: The early missionaries taught them about outward holiness and not inward holiness. The way they taught holiness was not to drink, smoke, or make traditional alcohol, and if you did any of these, they would not go to heaven but go hell. The missionaries did not teach them that we are holy by the blood of Christ. I asked Dr. Robert why this happened. He said that this was because it was one of the doctrines of the Baptist church and also that Chin people were not ready to hear other things. I asked him if the missionaries had taught them that we are holy by the blood of Christ. Do you think Chin people could understand? He said yes because the missionaries taught them to read the Bible and understand. What are the benefits of outward Holiness, I asked? He said education, health, buildings, and relationship with others.

Rev. Lian Bik: According to my understanding, the early missionaries did not preach about holiness nor tell people about Christian holiness. They taught them outside holiness because Chin Christians did not understand Christian holiness and about being born again until 1971. That was when That Nuai, who was one of the greatest revival preachers in Chin History, preached about holiness and being born again. Chin Christians began to understand and said to him that they had never heard these things. We clearly see that, based on the revival movement, early missionaries did not teach them about holiness according to the Bible. Early missionaries taught them about outward holiness, which was great because, although we only knew about outward holiness and not inward holiness, this helped Chin

people's physical health and care of their bodies.

Rev. Thawng Ling: The early missionaries taught them outward holiness but not really inward holiness. They abolished or destroyed much of our culture. For example, Chin culture plays the drum called the *Kuang*, and this *kuang* is played in festivals and ceremonies. But when the missionary arrived in Chin State, they suggested that Chin people not use those traditional things for any occasion. The missionaries said that it was unholy for Christians to do so. When someone becomes a Christian, he or she needs to leave many aspects of Chin culture, such as dancing, playing *kuang*, hairstyle, and others. Then missionaries introduced the guitar. We Chin people cannot pronounce "guitar," so we called it *ting tang*. Basically, the missionaries did not teach them about holiness that comes from Christ's blood. We did not have any music when we were worshiping the Lord because the missionaries did not allow us to use the *kuang* because they considered it unholy. But in 1960-70, the Mizoram (India) revival arrived in Chin State, and the *kuang* and other traditional music were back and used in churches. This is one reason that some denominations spread out from the Baptist church.

In the early years, our ancestors sacrificed to their gods. Was this for holiness?

Rev. Thin Hmung: No, this was not for holiness, but they sacrificed because they were afraid that their gods would curse them if they did not sacrifice. When they sacrificed, they used black chickens, which they cooked first and then gave to their gods. They were not allowed to eat even a little. One of the customs that most amazed me was that they believed the soup of the chicken was holy. He described how he had experienced this when he was 13, and his father showered him with the sacrifice soup because they believed that by this, a person is healed from the disease. People will be blessed if they are washed by sacrifice soup. This is similar to the idea that all our sins are washed by the blood of Christ. Unhealthy animals are not allowed to be used for sacrifice. While people sacrificed with the soup, they said these words: "Do not curse our mighty ones, bless our farm, save us from diseases; you are our gods." And no one was allowed to go to the sacrifice place, only the priest. We have the tradition that we are not allowed

to drink at water island on the top of the mountain because they believe that this water is for their gods. They believed “Letsi” won this island. Letsi is the most beautiful goddess, and she has everything they still believed in. Here is a short story on Letsi: when someone captures Letsi, she can become a big snake, a big tiger, or a big lion, but she cannot bite or eat anyone. If she is not released, she will say to them, “What do you want from me?” They can ask one thing, whatever they want, and she will give it to them. This Letsi appears only a very few times in a year. Many Chin still believe and wait for the appearance of Letsi.

Dr. Robert: No, they did not sacrifice for holiness at all because holiness is not from their gods but only from themselves. They had three kinds of sacrifices. One was when they did something wrong. They sacrificed and asked for forgiveness from their gods. A second was a “happiness sacrifice” when they were blessed: for example, if none of their animals died for a whole year or their rice field was blessed. They assumed that this was from our gods; therefore, they offered a “happiness sacrifice.” A third was a sacrifice of blessing for all. Only the priest could sacrifice for all people. For example, in one family, their son had an illness. His father could sacrifice not only for him but for everyone, and only the priest could do it. Normally, they used black chickens for the sacrifice. I think that the black color represented evil or the devil. In 1991, one of the Jewish authors said that the Chin people are the race of Ephraim because of the ways they sacrifice, and their culture is quite similar to the people of Israel. Especially, the Mizo think of themselves as more Hebrew people than Chin.

Rev. Lian Bik: Yes, they did sacrifice because it was our culture before. They sacrificed to big trees and rocks, symbols of their gods, because they wanted a blessing from them, and as well, they were afraid. For Christians, we understand God as a loving Father, but early Chin people understood their gods as very dangerous. Therefore, they had to make their gods always happy. They had no idea about holiness related to their gods. For example, if someone killed somebody accidentally or intentionally, they forgave that person by killing animals and eating together. They did not ask for holiness from their gods but asked the gods not to hurt them. Simply, they sacrificed for blessing and not to suffer from the gods, but not for holiness.

Rev. Thawng Ling: Yes, they did sacrifice a lot. Sacrificing had two

meanings. First, they were afraid of their gods (big tree, big rock, mountain) because their gods were dangerous rather than loving. Second, they believed that their gods gave blessings. If they sacrificed more, they got more benefit from their gods. They could not use every animal but had to use the animal according to their gods' prophet. Their gods had prophets called Kua Vang, who appeared among people. Their gods did not directly talk to people but talked through Kua Vang and Kua Vang. Normally, their prophets (Kua Vang were women) told people what animal should be used for a sacrifice and how to offer it. Many people think that this idea of sacrifice came from where we were (China) before we arrived in Chin State.

What is the same culture or tradition that we have with the Bible?

Rev. Thin Hmung: We have pretty much the same with the Bible, especially in the Old Testament in Exodus 20, which said not to steal or lie, respect one's parents, love one's neighbor, and other commands. These are all the same with our culture. Our culture does not allow a person to steal or lie, and we have much respect for our parents. Rev. Hmung even said that a neighbor is one of the essential people in our culture. When we have something, we share it with our neighbors. If my parent hunts an animal, we have to share it with our neighbors, and if we do not have salt or chili, we just go to our neighbor and get it. We are like just one family. Therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church believed that we are descendants of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, because we have many similarities with them, such as the way we sacrifice, we do not steal, and we love our neighbor.

Dr. Robert: We have many of the same customs as the Bible. For example, we do not steal, we respect parents, do not tell lies, and others. We can see these things in the Bible. Therefore, no one can say that on the judgment day, I did not know about God because no one told me about these things. According to Romans 1, God showed himself to people in culture in order for them to understand him. God showed himself to Chin people through our culture. Therefore, when missionaries preached the gospel, Chin people accepted it easily because our culture had Christ already.

Dr. Lian Bik: We have several of the same customs compared with the Bible. I believe that Chin Culture has so much love and care for others. This is what the Bible teaches us. I visited more than ten countries and have

many friends from different cultures. I did see some cultures with love and care, but we cannot compare this with Chin culture because other cultures do not have as much loving care for their neighbor and others. In Chin culture, when someone suffers or dies, we bear the suffering with the family. We leave our homes and stay in their house for two to three weeks because we do not want them to be lonely. We want them to forget their loss. We eat with them and sleep with them, just like one family. Other cultures do not do this, as far as I know. I believe that this is what the Bible encourages us to do as Christians. Mourn with those who mourn and be happy with those who are happy.

How important is holiness?

Rev. Tin Hmung: Without holiness, we cannot go to heaven because God is holy, and we are called to be holy. Hebrews 12 said that no one will enter the kingdom of God unless they are holy. Rev. Hmung said that one of the identity markers of Christianity is holiness. We all are born with a sinful nature, and we need someone who can wash all our sins away from us, which happens by Jesus Christ's blood. I asked him, where will you put holiness like 1, 2, 3 in our Christian life? He said that he puts it in number 2, and number 1 would be faith.

Dr. Robert: Since we are Christian, holiness is essential in our life. Our holiness should preach the gospel to Buddhist people. Unfortunately, many Christians live the same as unbelievers. They drink, smoke, and do other behaviors like what non-believers do. As Hebrews 12 says, without holiness, we cannot get to heaven because God is so holy. We should try to live a blameless life before others. Our holiness should continue day by day. Holiness is a gift from Jesus Christ while we are still sinners. He bears our unholiness and shares his holiness with sinful human beings. Therefore, holiness is so important in our Christian life.

Dr. Thawng Ling: As I mentioned above, holiness is the identity of Christianity. For example, you buy a car, but you do not have the ownership title, which means it does not belong to you officially. Just the same, we are Christian, but without holiness, we are not truly Christian. As Hebrews 12 says, no one will see the kingdom of God without holiness. Holiness should

be our daily food; we cannot do something without eating any food. Likewise, our holiness should shine before unbelievers. Christian holiness should start first from ourselves, family, church members, and Christian society. We should bear Christ's holiness in our daily life.

Do you think evangelists and pastors preach about holiness like in the early years?

Rev. Tin Hmung: Yes, we even need to preach about holiness more than before because nowadays, people are wise and do many bad things. Christianity seems to be influenced by the social world. We seem to be the same as unbelievers. Therefore, we need to preach a lot. I asked him, in the early years, how many people changed when they heard about holiness, and why not now? He said that people are "wise" now and do not really care about the sermon anymore, but in the early years, people were eager to hear the gospel. Therefore, even though we preach the same, they do not change easily. He also said that this is one of the symbols of the second coming. People do not want to hear the gospel and do not care when the time is near. But we still need to preach whether they want it or not.

Dr. Robert: Yes, they still preach holiness like the early years. Especially, Evangelicals and Pentecostals preach about holiness more than any others. For example, Thawng Hluai's family went to villages and bought all the unholy things sold in stores. They burned all of them because only preaching was not enough. We need action, they believed. The Tluang Za Uk group and Evangelist Tha Neih Fine are two teams that preach a lot about holiness wherever they go. Unfortunately, people do not change like before because the listeners are different now. Especially, young people do not like it because it affects their social life.

Dr. Paul: Yes, many evangelists and pastors preached about holiness, but of course, not all of them did. Some evangelists and pastors focused on propriety more than holiness. In the early years, when someone preached about the gospel or holiness, the audience took it very seriously and applied it in their daily life. But nowadays, we doubt many things and do not really want to hear about holiness. And people think of themselves as wise and do not care about holiness because they want to live free lifestyles. They do not want anybody to care about them. For example, in Chin state, when the

pastor preached about holiness in the morning service, they applied it directly. In the afternoon, members asked each other how effective their lives were by following the teaching of their pastor. But nowadays, pastors and evangelists preach many times, but it is so difficult for people to change. We need a holiness revival in Chin state because people are dying by their unholy life. We lost the beautiful message of holiness in Chin State. He also added that people do not like holiness anymore because some pastors and evangelists preach that we cannot be holy or have no need to be holy because we have Christ in our life. He is the one who makes us holy in the eyes of God. We do not need to be holy by ourselves.

What is the best way to teach holiness to Chin people?

Rev. Tin Hmung: For me, the best way to share holiness is by our own examples. If a preacher himself or herself is not holy, there is no way we can teach others about holiness. We have to show them holiness by our actions and lifestyles.

Dr. Robert: We should not scare them. For example, do not scare them with, if you drink alcohol, you will never go to heaven. But we should teach them according to the Bible. The Bible should be the foundation of our teaching. Christ died for us, and when we believe in him, we become holy. We are not holy by ourselves but only through his blood. His holiness will lead us to do good works and be holy in our daily life. And we should teach them about holiness from a different perspective. First, the religious perspective is based on the Bible. The second is the health perspective. The third is the economics perspective. Last is the social perspective and self-discipline.

Dr. Paul: We Chin people need to understand the Bible, not the preacher. Many times, we obey the preacher's ideas more than the Bible. This can lead us to be unholy. The Bible should not be number two in our life but must be number one. Pastors and evangelists really need to study the Bible deeply rather than only teaching their members about ideas. For example, some evangelists preached that we cannot be holy, or we do not need to be holy because we have Christ in our lives, and he is the holy one for us. Holiness is not our responsibility but the responsibility of God. We can live freely because we are holy and loved by God, whether our love is

holy or not. When the Bible is not number one in our Christian life, we follow and practice so wrongly. Therefore, in Chin State, we should teach them about holiness according to the Bible. And also, we should teach them that we can only be holy through the blood of Christ and not by our good work.

Dr. Thawng Ling: Firstly, we cannot teach them about holiness unless they understand being born again (John 3:16) because it is impossible to be holy unless Christ is living in us. So, we have to teach them first about being born again, and then holiness will follow. Secondly, it is important to be a good example for others. Many pastors and evangelists preach about holiness, but there is no holiness in their lives. So, people cannot believe what they say. Our action should show our sermon. Therefore, people can understand biblical holiness through a preacher's life. And we have to have patience because normally, Chin people are not educated and cannot understand the Bible well. They believe things very easily, and they can also change their minds easily as well. Therefore, we cannot quickly teach them but have to teach them patiently and show them what we teach by our actions. Without action, they cannot understand what holiness is.

Bible Verses

I asked those being interviewed to tell me what the Bible verses are that relate to Chin Holiness.

Rev. Thin Hmung: Leviticus, Psalm, Gospel, Exodus 20, Leviticus 11: 44, 19:2.

Dr. Robert: Psalm 96:9; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Dr. Lian Bik: 1 Peter 1: 15-16, 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:9, 2.

Dr. Thawng Ling: Philippians 2: 5; 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17; Exodus 19, 20; Roman 6.

Dr. Paul: John 3; Hebrews 12, 11; and Galatian 2.

They felt that these Bible verses are related to Christian holiness in the Chin context.

Assessment

I believe that the Chin Christian leaders whom I interviewed deeply understand holiness. They answered most of the questions biblically. Firstly, most of them said that Christian holiness is not possible by our own goodness or our own effort. Holiness only comes from God, and when we receive the Holy Spirit in our life, we share his holiness in our daily life. No one can be holy by good work or ability. We are washed by Jesus Christ's blood. There is no holiness without having Jesus in our life. I expected that someone might say that the blood of Christ is not enough to be able to be completely holy because this is the teaching of many evangelists and pastors. But fortunately, no one answered it that way.

Secondly, they focused more on biblical than cultural holiness. They all said that cultural holiness is important because this is very similar to the Bible in many ways, and we should keep those things. But this culture will not lead to heaven because only the blood of Christ can wash away our sins. When they said those things, they had full confidence, and I believe that they told me in truth what they thought. One of my questions was whether or not they knew very well about holiness and why their members did not understand it. However, they all believed that the Bible should be the foundation of our holiness. I am surprised that one of the interviewees said that the early missionaries destroyed some of our culture instead of keeping it. For example, they did not allow us to play the drum called *kuang*; but for me, I think that the missionaries did the right thing because those customs led us away from Christianity and returned to idolatry. They played the *kuang* and danced all night, drank, and did other bad activities.

Finally, they understand well what cultural holiness and Christian holiness are. The good thing is that they all support very much Christian holiness and also believe that our members should know those things in order to mature in their spiritual life. They believe holiness is love, care, mercy, passion, kindness, and humbleness. I like what they all said that we are called to be holy like our heavenly Father is holy. No one will see the kingdom without holiness, and this holiness only comes from God. I am very glad to have had a chance to interview them and gained a lot from them. It is like reading books. Many of them have experiences and shared with me

very openly. I strongly believe that they understand holiness very well. Likewise, Chin people need to understand what holiness is. We all have a responsibility to preach the truth about holiness. We should not be afraid to teach them. Some pastors are afraid because they do not want to lose their members. This does not lead to a healthy church. Everyone deserves the truth about holiness.

Biblical Resources: Hebrews 12, Roman 6, and John 3 from a China Point of View

Hebrews 12:14-17

I believe that Hebrews 12 will help Chin people to understand more about holiness in our daily lives. The situation of writing was almost the same for Chin people who considered themselves to be the holiest men and women. I would like to write briefly about the background of Hebrews. No one exactly knows who the author of Hebrews was because the author did not write his or her name. But many scholars believe that the author could be the Apostle Paul because some of the words are similar to the letters of Paul. In particular, the Alexandrian church believed that Paul was the author, and this influenced the judgment of Eastern Christianity and ultimately Western Christianity from the middle of the fourth century. F. F. Bruce notes that for Alexandrians, “Hebrews was written by Paul for Hebrews in the Hebrew language, but that Luke translated it and published it for the Greeks. Thus, Alexandrians endeavored to account for the similarity in style between Hebrews and the Lukan writings.”¹⁵

However, though we do not know who the real author was, we know surely that the author was one who knew the Old Testament very well because he quoted many times from the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews assumed that his audience had extensive knowledge of the Old Testament. Of all the writings of the New Testament, says George Guthrie, none is more “saturated with overt references to the Old Testament. The author so filled his discourse with Old Testament thoughts and passages

¹⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 15.

that they permeate every chapter.”¹⁶ One of the purposes is that the receivers or the audience seemed to consider that we are holy when we follow the teaching of Moses or the law. They thought to themselves that they were special in the eyes of themselves and others as well. Bruce wrote, “The whole argument is conducted against a background of Old Testament allusion; considerable familiarity with the Levitical ritual and interest in it are presupposed.”¹⁷ These people sacrificed to God and asked forgiveness through the sacrifice of animals’ blood. The book of Leviticus and the law of Moses were the most crucial texts for these people. I might say that these people tried to please God by their good works and tried to be holy by their effort and ability. Chapter 11 of Hebrews talked about the importance of having faith in God and that it is impossible to please God without having faith in him.

We should ask ourselves, then, why did the author of Hebrews encourage the audience to live holy lives while they thought themselves to be the holiest people? This question is the same with Chin people, who consider themselves holy or perfect.

Hebrews 12:2 says, “Fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” I like what George Guthrie said, “We are called to fix our eyes on Jesus. Looking to a king or leader as a model, or to God for inspiration was a common motif in various rhetorical literatures of the ancient world.”¹⁸ Jesus should be the model for Chin people, and we should not have a model like a priest. When I interviewed Chin leaders, they said that in Chin culture, the priests or village leaders were their models according to what they did to them. Their followers copied them whether it was bad or not. They looked upon them as their gods. And they considered them holy or perfect. When they did sacrifice, only their priest could offer the sacrifice for all people.

¹⁶ George Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 18-19.

¹⁷ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 16.

¹⁸ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 398.

Hebrews 12:14 says, “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and women and to be holy, without holiness no one will see the Lord.” The word “holiness” has two meanings in this specific verse. Firstly, Guthrie said, “Holiness has a profound impact on our relationships with other people. Secondly, it is clear that holiness is indispensable for an authentic Christian life. The person who chooses to live an unholy life can be offered no assurance of seeing the Lord.”¹⁹ In Chin culture, what we call “phun” means “clan,” which refers to someone of the same or a different clan among us. This is so essential, especially in the early years. For example, my father’s clan is Mangpa. When two people of the same clan meet each other, they become like true brothers or sisters. And also, even in marriage, the clan is very crucial, with some people finding a wife according to the clan. Likewise, other Chin have different clans and are at peace with their own clan but do not really like others. If they are of a different clan, there is no peace. This custom, I could say, disappeared when the missionaries went to Chin state because they taught them that we all are the same and are one in Christ. But, sadly, nowadays, people started to follow this custom again. For example, on their Facebook name, they added their clan’s name. It did not bring peace, but instead, people could care less about those who were not of their clan. A peaceful life is a part of being the family of holiness. We should live peacefully with others even though we are of a different clan in Chin State.

Secondly, Christians should live a holy life that is from God, not from ourselves. We cannot be holy by ourselves but only by the blood of Christ. F. F. Bruce says, “Apart from sanctification, no one will see the Lord. The words themselves make plain that this means that sanctification is not an optional extra in the Christian life but something which belongs to its essence.”²⁰

I really like what the *Enduring Bible Commentary* explained about Hebrews 12: “The *Pharisee*: confident in outward ceremonies instead of true holiness. The *moralist*: feels no need for holiness because his life is so good.

¹⁹ Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 348.

²⁰ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 346.

The *experimentalist*: their entire Christian life is lived inward, never looking to outward conduct but only to feelings.”²¹ This is exactly how Chin people understand holiness. They think holiness is doing things outwardly. But Christian holiness should start inwardly and be shown by our actions. I hope that Hebrews 12 will help Chin people see that no one can be holy by themselves but only through God.

Next, Romans 6:1-14 is similar to Hebrews 12 because they both talk about the law or tradition. According to Romans 1:1, the author of Romans is the Apostle Paul. Paul himself wanted to visit Rome physically when he was living in the world. But before he had a chance to visit there, he wrote this letter to the Jewish and Gentile Christians. The Christian receivers or the audience of this letter in Rome was mixed. Some were Jewish and had believed in Christ, and some were Gentiles. Some authors said that the Roman Christians were led by the Apostle Peter because he was the one who preached the gospel to them and converted them to Christ.²² F. Watson said, “Paul writes specifically to convert the Jewish Christians in the community to his view of a ‘law-free’ gospel so that they will separate completely from Judaism and join the Gentile Christians in forming one Pauline congregation.”²³ As they were newly converted Christians, they still had the concept of following the law, or the law of Moses specifically. They believed that Christ died for us and was raised again, but at the same time, they also believed that we still need to follow the law of Moses in order to be free from our sins. Therefore, this is one of the reasons that the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to them. He encouraged them and let them know that we cannot be free from sin by ourselves but only through Christ.

“Death to sin” through union with Christ is the theme of Romans 6:1-14. Verses 1-3 talk about being baptized into his death. The theology of baptism in these verses refers to our death with Christ and life with Christ again. Douglas Moo said that “dying and rising with Christ refers to the

²¹ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/hebrews> (accessed /5/5/2021).

²² Douglas Moo, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle of Roman* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 18-19.

²³ Moo, *The Epistle of Roman*, 19.

participation of the believer in the redemptive events themselves; and the ultimate basis for Paul's appeal in this chapter is not what happened when we were baptized, but what happened when Christ died and rose again."²⁴ He also added that Christ himself is raised in order to show Christians that the gospel of grace, properly interpreted, leads not to licentiousness but to righteousness, now understood as godly living.²⁵ Verses 4-14 mostly talk about death to sin and rising to new life. In verse 6, our old man refers to the first Adam who sinned. But our second Adam refers to Christ who died for all and frees those under the law. In this passage, the word "sin" refers to "a habitual practice of sin such that one's life could be said to be characterized by that sin rather than by the righteousness God requires."²⁶ We cannot be free from sin by ourselves but only by the resurrection of Christ.

I chose this passage because I saw that this is related to Chin culture when I interviewed our leaders. In our culture, good work is necessary to define that we are Chin people. At the same time, good work is part of our Christian life. Many Chin Christians think that the blood of Christ is not enough for our holiness. We still need to do good and follow cultural holiness in order to become holy to God. In a sense, I can say that we are under our culture or tradition because we value cultural holiness more than biblical holiness or Christian holiness.

For example, when I interviewed our leaders, one person said that in Chin culture, we believe that when we have a farm or rice field (in Chin State, the rice fields are on the mountains), before we plant rice, we have to cut all the trees, but we do not cut the *ri rang kung* tree because we believe that demons are in it. We have to take care of that tree very well in order for us not to suffer. We cannot urinate around that tree; we can say that the specific tree is one of our gods. This is like the Roman Christians who followed the law, but the law could not give them freedom from sin. The law should not reign or be our master but Christ alone because we are crucified with Christ and are raised with Christ again. We Chin people believe that

²⁴ Moo, *The Epistle of Roman*, 355.

²⁵ Moo, *The Epistle of Roman*, 356.

²⁶ Moo, *The Epistle of Roman*, 358.

if we take care of that tree very well, our farm will produce lots of things. This is our kind of cultural holiness.

I believe that we should not be under corrupt cultural laws because these laws will not make us holy. Instead, we Chin people must believe that the death of Christ makes us free from sins. Cultural laws come from the devil. Culture and sins should not reign but Christ. Christ is our righteousness and our holiness. There is no holiness and righteousness beyond or outside of Christ. We cannot be holy and righteous by following cultural laws, but we are holy through the blood of Christ. Romans 6 reminds us that we need to honor Christ as our Master by the way we live, not cultural things. We need to make sure that when it comes to our Christian faith, our talk matches our walk. We must ensure consistency between what we affirm with our mouth and what we do with our hands. We need to demonstrate that Christ is our master by refusing to let anything, including culture or tradition in the world, master us.²⁷ We must resist the powers of sin and self (the flesh) that would enslave us to unworthy lords. We can serve only one sovereign.²⁸ I strongly believe that Roman 6 will really help Chin people who still believe and practice unbiblical culture and ritual. Culture should not reign over us but only Christ as our Master.

Next, I believe that John 3 will really help Chin people who do not know about being born again. Many scholars believe that the Gospel of John was written by the Apostle John, one of Jesus' disciples. Likewise, some scholars believe that this was not written by John but Lazarus because the book said that this book is written by the one whom Jesus loved (21:20-24). The Bible mentioned that Lazarus was loved by Jesus. However, the power of the word of God does not change due to the author. The Gospel of John is different from the Gospels of Luke, Mark, and Matthew. John sees Jesus as a Savior and Lord for all people, not only for Jews but Gentiles also. I will focus on the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus and compare this with Chin

²⁷ William Greathouse and George Lyons, *Roman 1-8: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2008), 187.

²⁸ Michael Bird, *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Romans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 207.

culture.

In John 3:1-13, Nicodemus is described as a Pharisee and ruler or leader of the Jews. He was also a member of the ruling council or Sanhedrin and a teacher of the law.²⁹ He went to Jesus at night. Andrew Lincoln said that “at night suggests that although he is attracted to Jesus, he does not wish this to be known openly and his attempt to understand Jesus has as its contest the potential disapproval of other members of the Sanhedrin.”³⁰ But Ramsey Michaels believes that night in this Gospel has a negative association. Night was when Judas departed (13:30). Night was when the disciples caught no fish (21:3). Night is when no one can work (9:4).³¹ This suggests that Nicodemus was trying to test Jesus or attempting to know Jesus’ opinion because Jesus had done some miracles (chapter 2), and Nicodemus knew it. Nicodemus said, “Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher.” The word “Rabbi” literally means “teacher.” This name was used by Jesus’ disciples. And Jesus replied, “Truly, truly I say to you, without being born from above, a person cannot see the kingdom of God” (v. 4). In Greek, “Truly, truly” is translated from “Amen, Amen.” A literal translation is, “Unless a man be born anew, he cannot see God’s rule.”³² Nicodemus had no idea about being born again or born anew because the Jews had no law about being born again.

In a similar way, we Chin people have many customs, traditions, and rules that we follow and practice every day. But unfortunately, we have no idea about being born again. Like the Jews of Jesus’ day who followed the laws of Moses, we think that we are the holiest people in the world. One of the best revival preachers, That Nuai, said, “Chin people never heard about

²⁹ Andrew Lincoln, *Black’s New Testament Commentary the Gospel According to Saint John* (London: Hendrickson, 2005), 149.

³⁰ Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, 149.

³¹ Ramsey Michaels, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 179.

³² Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 135.

being born again until 1970. Missionaries never taught them about the importance of being born again. When I preached John 3, pastors, deacons, and a lot of members came to me after the service ended and told me that they had never heard this kind of sermon. One member asked, “Where did you get this sermon? Our pastor never preached like this.”³³ We Chin people did not know about being born again, and it is sad to say that they were Christian in name only and did not know the importance of being born again. According to John 3, unless they are born in the Holy Spirit, they will not see the kingdom of God. We Chin people should know that being a Christian does not mean we are going to heaven. Unless we are born again in the Spirit, we will not be going to heaven even though we follow the law.

Pastors and evangelists should preach more about holiness and the essential importance of being born again to our members. As the Logos Bible Commentary says, the phrase “born again” literally means “born from above.” Nicodemus had a real need. He needed a change of his heart—a spiritual transformation. New birth, being born again, is an act of God whereby eternal life is imparted to the person who believes (2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1-4, 18). John 1:12, 13 indicates that being “born again” also carries the idea of “becoming children of God” through trust in the name of Jesus Christ.³⁴ We need to be born again by the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus was a pure Jew who was highly respected by people and followed the law of Moses, but he could not go to heaven without being born again. We Chin people should know that our cultural and traditional holiness cannot lead us to heaven, but we can go to heaven only if we are born again by the Holy Spirit. I hope that John chapter 3 will help Chin people understand the importance of being born again and that they will realize that our good works cannot lead to heaven.

Theological Resources: John Wesley, John Calvin, and Theodore Beza

I believe that these three theologians will help Chin people understand what

³³ That Nuai, Lai Ram Au Thawng.

³⁴ https://www.logos.com/free-bible-study-software?utm_source=gotquestions&utm_medium=advertising_display&utm_campaign=promo-basic-fundamentals&utm_content=solo-man-300x250 (accessed 5/10/21).

holiness is according to the Bible. I will compare some of their doctrines to Chin culture and tradition in order for Chin people to understand more deeply.

John Calvin

I do not agree with all of John Calvin's theology, but I think that his understanding of holiness will help Chin people. John Calvin and John Wesley are similar in their views of holiness, according to my understanding, because they both believed that we cannot be holy by our good work. John Calvin believed that we are totally depraved. We cannot do good work and cannot see the light because we are in darkness. We cannot be holy and cannot love God because we are sinners. This means that it is impossible for human beings to love God unless God loves first. Calvin said, "We shall never be clothed with the righteousness of Christ except we first know assuredly that we have no righteousness of our own."³⁵ And he also said that "being reconciled by the righteousness of Christ, God becomes, instead of a judge an indulgent Father; and being sanctified by his Spirit we aspire to integrity and purity of life."³⁶

John Calvin also believed that God elects people who are going to heaven. I believe that we should not teach Chin people this. Calvin said, "Predestination we call the eternal decree of God by which he has determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny, but for others. Every [person], therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say is predestined either to life or to death."³⁷ This doctrine destroys Christian holiness and especially for new believers, even though others of Calvin's teaching are so good.

³⁵ https://www.azquotes.com/author/2355-John_Calvin (accessed 5/11/21).

³⁶ John Calvin, *Calvin's Institutes* (N.p.: MacDonald Publishing Company, n. d.), 381.

³⁷ Clyde Manschreck. *A History of Christianity's Readings in the History of the Church* (Grand: Baker Rapids, 1964), 81.

Theodore Beza

I believe that the doctrine of Theodore Beza also will help the Chin people. Beza was a follower of John Calvin but was more striking than John Calvin. The way he understood holiness is the same with John Calvin. We can never be holy by ourselves because we are sinners, but when we receive the Holy Spirit, we are holy, and our holiness shows or is proven in our daily life. He also said, “If the tyrant forbids what God commands, you should not at all judge that you have performed your duty if you have merely refused to obey the tyrant, unless at the same time you obey the command of God.”³⁸

John Wesley

After reading a couple of his sermons, I can see clearly from John Wesley that loving God is the most essential in our Christian life. I personally believe that if someone asked John Wesley what the meaning of Christianity is, he simply would say love and holiness. These two are the main sources of Christianity. Love and holiness are the first steps of Christianity, and others will follow according to the time and situation. I contextualize almost every time I read John Wesley’s sermons because they relate so well to our Chin society. Sometimes, it seems like he knew Chin people because his sermons are really effective for us, and the sermons can lead many Chin people to Christ. We can see how much he cared for poor people during his lifetime, and he did not have favoritism toward the poor and rich. He shared the gospel and spread the word of God wherever he went. The idea about Christianity, which we Chin people have, is the same with John Wesley because love and holiness cannot spread without each other in the Christian life. I think that Chin culture is very much about love and care for others, just like John Wesley showed. I remember in Dr. Dick Eugenio’s class, I asked about Matthew 5: 48, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”: Is this possible? And he answered, yes, if we totally depend on the Holy Spirit. I think this is the same idea as John Wesley. When the Holy Spirit is living within us, he controls everything. We Chin people need to depend on the Holy Spirit and not our culture or traditional laws. Christ

³⁸ https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ref-rev/12-2/12-2_beeke.pdf (accessed 5/20/21).

should be the foundation of Christianity in Chin State.

What is love according to John Wesley and Chin Culture?

John Wesley said, “Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment, it is not only the first and greatest command but all the commandments in one. Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, they are all comprised in this one word love.”³⁹ Wesley mentioned that we should love creatures because this love leads to the Creator.⁴⁰ This encourages me personally, and I believe it will also encourage Chin people because loving even small creatures can lead to God because our God is the one who created everything. Perfect love now casts out all fear; we rejoice forevermore. “Yea, his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, how according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again unto a living hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for me.’”⁴¹ And loving God is loving our neighbor as ourselves. Perhaps, this can be interpreted in many different ways, but I will interpret it from a Chin perspective.

We Chin people are generally poor and lack knowledge, but how we share our love with each other is remarkable. For example, when we harvest our farms, pastors are the ones who eat first whatever we harvest. And also, when a hunter hunts an animal, we give the best part to pastors and also share with our neighbors. We share almost everything we have. I heard a couple of times that Buddhists usually say that Christians are lovely in taking care of each other very well. I think that if John Wesley came to Chin State, he would say, “Wow, this is what I mentioned many times: Christianity is loving each other and sharing what we have.” He said, “Love has purified his heart from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind temper. It has cleansed him from pride, whereof only cometh contention, and he hath now

³⁹ John Wesley. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Reprint, Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1966), 12.

⁴⁰ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 13.

⁴¹ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 18.

put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.”⁴² Many Reformers believed that Matthew 5: 48, “Thou shalt love the Lord the God with all thy heart,” is impossible for us to do. I like how John Wesley responded, saying, “from the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead but to the living.” “Therefore,” he continued, “thou shalt love God with all thy heart cannot mean Thou shalt do this when thou diest but while thou livest.”⁴³ Yes, I agree that the command is not for dead people but for us. Loving God means loving our neighbors and friends. The pure love of our neighbor, springing from the love of God, “thinketh no evil, believeth and hopeth all things.”⁴⁴

What is holiness?

Hebrews 12:14 says, “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness, no one will see the Lord.” I think that John Wesley is the one who spoke the most about holiness. Being Christian and holy cannot be separated from each other. This does not mean that if we are holy by ourselves, we will go to heaven, but that holy people who are washed by the blood of Christ will go to heaven because God calls Christians to be holy and righteous. This is one of the main points that we Chinese people should understand because we cannot be holy by ourselves. It is impossible to be holy by human effort, ability, or culture. Only the blood of Christ can wash our sins from us, only his blood, not animals’ blood anymore. I would like to quote his hymn: “The sanctifying Spirit pour, to quench my thirst and wash me clean, now Savior, let the gracious shower, Descend, and make me pure from sin. Purge me from every sinful blot; my idols all be cast aside; cleanse me from every evil thought, from all the filth of self and pride.”⁴⁵

John Wesley and Tertullian are similar in some ways. Tertullian believed that after being baptized, Christians cannot sin because the Holy

⁴² Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 19.

⁴³ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 39.

⁴⁴ Wesley. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 45, 46.

⁴⁵ Wesley. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 39.

Spirit is in them. Likewise, John Wesley also emphasized so much about holiness because he wanted Christians to be different from unbelievers. It seems to me that Christians can live without sin after having received the Holy Spirit. Living in a Buddhist country that worships untrue gods has shown me that when Buddhists see the holiness that we have, they might change or convert to Christianity. Holiness is a part of Christian perfection. We are not holy by our own effort, but the Spirit of the Lord makes us holy and righteous. Holiness is the assignment for all Christians to do in our daily life.

Views on Christian Perfection

Wesley's sermon on Christian perfection and the culture of Chin is similar, and this will help Chin people to love God more than before. Wesley talked about Christian perfection in two ways. In what sense are Christians not perfect, and in what sense then are they perfect? Firstly, Christians are "not perfect in knowledge, and they are not free from ignorance, no, nor from mistake. They are not free from infirmities, such as weakness or slowness of understanding, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination."⁴⁶ Secondly, Wesley also mentioned that we are not free from temptation and behavior. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not admit of a continual increase.⁴⁷ This is important for Chin people because we should know that we cannot be perfect by following cultural rules. It is impossible to be perfect by doing our good work without having Christ.

In what sense are Christians not perfect, and in what sense then are they perfect?

Wesley said, "Observe, we are not now speaking of babes in Christ, but adult Christians. But even babes in Christ are so far perfect as not to commit sin."⁴⁸ Proverbs 24:16 states, "For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes." Some people

⁴⁶ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 50.

⁴⁷ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 23.

⁴⁸ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 53.

think that it is okay to sin seven times or more. But Wesley responded to those who interpreted this verse wrongly. He said, “But does not Scripture say, A just man sinneth seven times a day? It does not. Indeed, it says, A just man falleth seven times. But this is quite another thing; First, the words, a day are not in the text. Second, there is no mention of falling into sin at all. It just said that falling into temporal affliction.”⁴⁹ Sometimes, it seems that Wesley does not talk about the Old Testament. Instead, he is more focused on the New Testament. He sometimes mentions that we are not under Jewish law but under the Holy Spirit who is in us and leads us to be holy and blameless.

First John 1: 8-10 says, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his word is not in us.” When I read these Bible verses, Wesley came to my mind because he seems to say that Christians can live without sin, but in these Bible verses, it is the opposite. Wesley points out clearly that verse 10 fixes the sense of verse 8: “If we say we have no sin, in the former, being explained by, if we say we have not sinned; in the latter verse. The point under consideration is not whether we have not sinned, heretofore; and neither of these verses asserts that we do sin or commit sin now. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.”⁵⁰

According to my understanding, when John Wesley talked about sin, he only emphasized doing sin, but sin is not only doing something but can also be in our thoughts. He said that a Christian is so far perfect as not to commit sin; this is the glorious privilege of every Christian. We are free from evil or sinful thoughts and evil tempers. Christ delivers from inward as well as outward sin.⁵¹ This is very true and important for Chin people to know and understand. We are not under cultural law, and we should not

⁴⁹ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 25.

⁵⁰ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 28.

⁵¹ Wesley. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 30.

be because Christ died for us and cleanses us of all our sins. Wesley said that “the blood of Christ will clean (at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment), but it cleanses at the time present, us living Christians from all sin and Christians are saved in this world from all sin from all unrighteousness, that they are now in such a sense perfect as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.”⁵² Yes, this can be difficult in practical or real life, but being a Christian means denying ourselves and bringing the cross to every daily life. Galatians 2:20 states, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” This requires living in obedience to God.

And we Chin people should also understand justification because we cannot be justified by ourselves. We should know that we are sinners, not perfect human beings. Therefore, we need to know who justifies us.

John Wesley believed that God justifies those who are sinners and who cannot be justified by themselves. He believed that “it is not a saint but a sinner that is forgiven, and under the notion of a sinner. God justified not the godly, but the ungodly; not those that are holy already, but unholy.”⁵³ After we are justified, unholy people become holy, and sinners become God’s own children. Therefore, John Wesley strongly believed that justification and holiness cannot be separated because justified people should live a holy life. We are justified in order to be holy in our daily life. He said that “where there is no love of God, there is no holiness.”⁵⁴

There is also a difference between John Calvin and John Wesley. Calvin believed that God does not justify everyone but only his elect people. But when asked this question, “Does then the good Shepherd seek and save only those that are found already?” Wesley replied, “No, he seeks and saves that

⁵² Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 32.

⁵³ John Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 1: *Sermons 1, 1-33*, edited by Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 194-196.

⁵⁴ Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” 198.

which is lost. He pardons those who need his pardoning mercy.”⁵⁵ I also believe that God did not just justify only a few people because God is love and sent his only Son to the world for all human beings. The death of Jesus was not for a few people but for all who believe in him. God justifies us to do good work and for a holy life (an especially important message for Chin people). Good work before being justified is meaningless or does not bring glory to God. Wesley said, “No works are good which are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done.”⁵⁶ The Holy Spirit leads us to do good works only after justification. This does not mean that we should not do good work before being justified, but that good work cannot justify us. The only person who can justify us is Jesus Christ.

So, God justifies those who are sinners and hopeless and not those who think of themselves as good people in their own eyes. The death of the Son of God is for everyone and not just for a few. This is essential for Chin people to understand: we are justified by faith, not by our work nor by following cultural law. John Wesley strongly believed that we are justified by faith alone and not by our good works. If good works could save us from our sins, the Son of God did not need to come to the world and die on the cross. Wesley said, “For the righteousness or mercy of God is only by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all of them that believe, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”⁵⁷ God justifies us when we believe Christ died for my sins because he loved me and gave himself for me. Wesley gave the example of Peter. When Peter had faith in Jesus Christ, he could walk on the sea. Likewise, when we have faith in Jesus Christ, we are justified by faith in him alone and not by works.

These three great theologians will especially help Chin people in our daily life. We will understand now that it is impossible for us to be holy by ourselves but only by Christ’s blood.

⁵⁵ Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” 198.

⁵⁶ Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” 205.

⁵⁷ Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” 199.

Conclusion

I strongly believe that this topic is great for me as well as for Chin people. I purposefully chose this subject for Chin people who cannot read the Bible well or are not educated so that they will clearly see that our culture gives us a lot of benefits: love, care, protection, and others. After completing this study, I see our culture in a different way. Ruth Benedict divides cultures into two, saying, “Western culture is called a culture of sin and Japanese culture is called a culture of shame.”⁵⁸ I call Chin culture a “culture of love.” Benedict said that Western culture is very independent, and the people do not have much relationship with others. They only have relationships with their close friends or family. This is a difference between Chin Culture and Western culture. All cultures have different meanings according to their understanding. Chin people have a particular type of culture that we practice and believe is true. I think that love is the foundation of our culture because love was and is practiced in different ways.

Unfortunately, however, the way we understand holiness is not biblical holiness. Our ancestors believed that their cultural holiness would lead to a good place, and they would not be cursed by the gods if they carefully practice cultural rules. They understand holiness as doing good things and following cultural rules. But this was not enough to rescue them from eternal hell. As the Bible says in Hebrews 12, there is no holiness without the blood of Jesus Christ. Our animal sacrifices will not please God because God does not want animals sacrificed but wants us to believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son. There is no way we can be holy unless we have Jesus Christ in our life. It is impossible to be holy by following our cultural rules. God did not give the Ten Commandments to Israel in order for them to be holy but for them to know what sin is and that we are sinners. We cannot be holy by ourselves. No one is holy, righteous, or perfect (Roman 6). Preman Niles said that under the Old Testament, “The holiness which is required of the people is not ethical and moral perfection as an idea, but the concrete demand to observe God’s statutes and commandants faithfully. To transgress God’s

⁵⁸ David Ackerman, ed., *The Challenge of Culture* (Taytay: Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2002), 18.

demands is to invite his holy wrath.”⁵⁹ Indeed, ethical or moral holiness is not enough for us to go to heaven. We need the blood of Jesus Christ. Mother Teresa said, “Holiness does not consist in doing extraordinary things. It consists in accepting, with a smile, what Jesus sends us. It consists in accepting and following the will of God.”⁶⁰ As I mentioned many times, we Chin people will understand that holiness is not by our hard work or ability but starts when we receive Christ in our personal life. I like what A. W. Tozer said, “Holiness, as taught in the Scriptures, is not based upon knowledge on our part. Rather, it is based upon the resurrected Christ indwelling us and changing us into his likeness.”⁶¹ Christian holiness will lead us to Christlikeness in our daily life.

Then, I would like to quote from one of the interviewees, who said that our grandfathers thought that holiness is following the laws such as no stealing, no fighting, no telling lies, and others. He said that no one stole anything from others in the early years. Basically, we can say that cultural holiness leads to honest living and not doing bad things to others. Even when they fought each other, they never used weapons to hurt or hunt someone. After they fought, they still could have fellowship. Cultural holiness is outward holiness. I asked him then, “Is this similar to the Bible? Did we get this culture from someone?” He said, “No, this culture is originally from Chin. This concept really needs to change in Chin society. Many people still believe that without our cultural holiness, we cannot be holy and that the blood of Christ is not enough. One of the purposes of this paper is to help Chin Christians understand that the blood of Jesus Christ is absolutely enough for us to be holy. I have not argued that we should not practice cultural holiness, but what I mean is that the blood of Christ is enough for our holiness after we are washed by Christ’s blood. We can still practice

⁵⁹ D. Preman Niles, “Biblical Viewpoints: Old Testament,” in Emernto P. Nakpil and Douglas J. Ellwood, eds., *The Human and the Holy: Asia Perspectives in Christian Theology* (Quezon City:3008, New Day, 1978), 17-18.

⁶⁰ https://www.google.com/search?q=mother+teresa&rlz=1C1CHBF_enPH736PH736&oq=Mother&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j35i39l2j0i433l2j46i433j0i10i433j0i433l2j0.5574j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 (accessed 5/18/21).

⁶¹ <https://awtozer.com/>, “Preparing Jesus Christ Coming,” (accessed 5/18/21).

cultural holiness. Cultural holiness should not be number one in the life of Chin Christians. Our culture has much good for us to practice because it emphasizes love, care, and many more.

I would like to conclude with several Bible verses. Second Timothy 1:9 states, “He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time” (NIV). Philippians 2: 14-16 states, “Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.” Ephesians 5:3 says, “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” Finally, Leviticus 20: 26 says, “You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.” We Chin Christians are to be holy as our heavenly Father is holy. The blood of Christ is enough for us to be holy.

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2021 APNTS Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts

Baldo, April Kenneth Joy Abenoja. “The Experiences of the Selected Children in the Northern Philippine Conference of the Free Methodist Churches in Light of Their Social Media Apps Usage.” Master of Arts in Christian Communication (Media Studies), 2021.

This study sought to answer the main question: what are the experiences of the selected children in the Northern Philippine Conference of the Free Methodist Church in light of their social media apps usage? This study looked at children's online experiences in using the internet and focused on social media apps such as Facebook and Messenger. In understanding children's online experiences, this study considered three categories: online skills, online risks, and well-being of children.

This study was guided by Sonia Livingstone's Framework, namely, the “Online Processes Mediating Child Well-being and Rights in the Digital Age.” The framework was used to help understand children's online experiences and how these may affect their well-being and rights.

This current research was conducted among selected children ages 11 to 17 in the NPC of FMC. The design of this research was descriptive using mixed methods: quantitative and qualitative. Nonprobability purposeful sampling (criterion-based selection) was used because criteria were set forth in choosing the respondents of this study. This study used two data-gathering instruments: survey and interview. Both the survey questionnaire and interview guide questions were adapted and used with permission from the Global Kids Online Research. The actual survey questionnaire (Tagalog version) was administered among 44 selected children in NPC of the FMC using Google Forms. From the 44, five participants were interviewed using semi-structured, open-ended questions via Zoom video calls. The data-gathering procedures were done from October to December 2020. This study used a nonparametric statistical Chi-square test in treating the gathered data.

Based on the gathered data, children had positive and negative experiences in using the internet. The respondents attested that the use of the internet (especially social media apps) helped them in their education, gave way to communicate with people (family, friends, classmates, etc.) online, caused them to learn new things, and allowed them to have leisure time. On the contrary, they themselves revealed that the use of the internet (especially social media apps) exposed them to hurtful online behavior such as cyberbullying and sexual grooming, sexual risks such as seeing and receiving explicit images and videos, and it negatively affected their well-being through bad eating habits (forgetting to eat) and by being addicted (high screen time) in using social media apps and online games. Hence, the use of the internet creates opportunities for children, but it also situates the children at risk. In this light, recommendations to the respondents (the children), to the parents, and the church were crafted based on the findings and conclusions of this study.

There are specific issues that came up in the current research but were not dealt with because of the focused design of the thesis. Thus, the following are some research topics that are recommended for further scrutiny: 1) impact study on the effects of online games on the well-being of children; 2) a phenomenological study on online sexual exploitation of children and its implications to family communication patterns and parental mediation; and 3) the perceived effects of COVID-19 on the frequency of online usage of children.

Fernandez, Ernesto Sebastian Lozano. “Rafael Palma and Transformational Learning in the Philippines: Paradigm Shift from the Spanish to the Americans.” Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Learning, 2021.

The historical research focused on changes in education from the Spanish to the American colonial systems as a paradigm shift. The study was based on Rafael Palma’s writings between 1899 to 1933, extending to 1945, considering his posthumous publications. Palma, though relatively unknown today, was a significant Philippine educator. The writer took into careful consideration Palma’s Spanish language sources, especially those available at the University of the Philippines Archives. The research built

upon the primary source material, such as books, articles, speeches, essays, presidential reports, and other documents.

For over three hundred years, Filipinos were under the colonial power of the Spaniards. Education in the Philippines was under the control of the Roman Catholic Church. Though the Spanish brought primary education to the Philippines, higher education was for the elite and was oppressive. Although Spanish education demonstrated improvements over the years, education did not reach the whole country and never changed in its original intent of educating people to remain loyal to the church.

After more than three hundred years of Spanish rule, a new colonial power took over the Philippines. The Americans arrived in the Philippines in 1898. The Americans brought a less oppressive educational paradigm. Everyone deserved an education, and education for the masses would prepare Filipinos for independence.

Bridging these two periods was a name highly respected but now almost forgotten: Rafael Palma (1874 – 1939). By living in both periods, Palma himself experienced the changes and saw the improvements under the Americans but also criticized freely whatever he believed was not right. He was an agent of change.

The philosophies that Rafael Palma developed were closely related to aspects of transformational learning and, in particular, critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is a philosophy that was developed in the late nineteen-seventies by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. His philosophies aimed toward the transformation of oppressive educational systems through developing a capacity for critical thinking, which included freedom from the preconceived notions of others.

What would later be called transformational learning and critical pedagogy were already in the mind of Palma. The philosophies that Palma developed were revolutionary in his time and still remain useful today. Palma advocated academic freedom and education for both service and national development. As well, he related education to hospitality, morality, and religion. All of these were discussed by later educators and philosophers of education.

Palma compared education under the church to education under the state. Each provided what the other did not. For instance, under the Spaniards, education enforced strict morality, whereas the Americans separated morality from education. Palma also compared methods of instruction based on his own experiences. He described the differences between oppressive and liberated educational systems. The Spanish wanted people to remain servants or, in other words, oppressed. Though the Americans ignored morality, they provided freedom in education.

Hkam, Merry Seng. “The Impact of Rituals, Experiences, and Actions of the Environment in Kachin Orphanage Center upon the Faith Development of Selected Orphaned Children in Myanmar.” Master of Arts in Religious Education (Holistic Child Development), 2021.

This thesis aimed to explore whether or not the rituals, experiences, and actions of the environment impact the faith development of the children living in Kachin Orphanage Center (KOC). The study was guided by the theoretical framework of John Westerhoff III on the core sectors for developing faith. Westerhoff articulates that there are three sectors for developing faith: rituals, experiences, and actions of the environment. This current study explored the impact of those three sectors in the faith development of the selected orphaned children in KOC.

The methodology used in the study was qualitative and was descriptive in design. To get the needed information, the researcher employed two data collection methods: interview and personal journals. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted through a Facebook Messenger video call. For the personal journal, the researcher requested the respondents to write at least one journal entry each week for a month. Ten children participated in the study. They were chosen using the purposive sampling method. The researcher used two approaches to do qualitative analysis: coding and condensation. All the interviews and personal journals were transcribed and imported into the MAXQDA software for analysis.

Based on the findings of this research, it appears that the rituals such as Christmas, Bible Sunday services, New Year services, and other services conducted in the KOC have had a huge impact on the faith development of

selected orphaned children. These rituals have facilitated the opportunities for children to seek God more, feel God's love, and become better Christians. The experiences that the center has provided have helped the children feel God's presence, love, and provision in times of need. Furthermore, the actions of the environment have allowed the children to emulate what the staff and teachers were doing. The people in KOC have proven to be good models before the children on how to live as members of the faith community. Based on the responses of the ten children, the rituals, experiences, and actions of the environment have impacted their faith development in various ways.

Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were offered to the Kachin Orphanage Center and the local church on how to enrich the rituals, experiences, and actions of the environment in nurturing the faith of the children in their care. Additionally, the following are recommendations for further studies: (a) project thesis on creating a curriculum based on Westerhoff's model for the faith development for the orphaned children, (b) comparative study between orphans and children living with their parents on the effects of rituals, experiences and the actions of the environment, and (c) content analysis of Richard's five processes for faith nurturing among orphaned children.

Naw, Hkawng. "Self-Assessment of Children Living in the Dumare Camp for Internally Displaced Persons on Their Well-Being Based on the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving." Master of Arts in Religious Education (Holistic Child Development), 2021.

The thesis explored how the selected children in the Dumare camp for Internally Displaced Persons in Kachin State, Myanmar assess their well-being based on the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving for Children (CIT-Child). This approach is one of the ways where children's voices are heard to improve the ministry services in this camp.

The respondents of the study were 33 children who were between 8 and 18 years old and who have lived in the Dumare IDP camp for six years and above, five of whom participated in interviews via Zoom. The researcher employed mixed methodologies to treat the data gathered, namely, semi-

structured interviews and the survey using the CIT-Child questionnaire adapted from Andolfi, Tay, Confalonieri, and Traficante (2017). The data from the interviews were integrated with the related literature and studies as well as from the statistical treatment of the survey findings. T-Test was used to establish the relationships between demographic variables and the dimensions of Child Thriving.

The findings of the study revealed that there are no significant differences in the assessments of the selected children when they are grouped according to age and gender against the five dimensions of Child Thriving. The five dimensions are relationship, engagement, mastery, optimism, and subjective well-being. The qualitative responses of the selected children provided some understandings of how the children rated their agreement or disagreement with the statements for each dimension of child thriving. Some of the salient findings include: (1) Children need the support of the people around them. They have identified that God, the church, their family, their friends, the staff of the DIDP, the Non-Government Organizations, and their community are important to them. This reflected what Bronfenbrenner espoused in his Ecological Systems Theory, that is, that these systems have continuing impacts on an individual's development (Bronfenbrenner 1999); (2) the activities that they engage in at the camp provide them with mastery and help develop their self-worth; (3) some of these children feel lonely and have some "negative feelings," and they have identified the reasons behind these felt needs. Based on the findings of the research, recommendations were identified for the parents, for the staff of the DIDP camp, and for further studies. Listening to the children who have lived in this camp has led to some specific recommendations as to how the ministries in the camp and in the homes can be improved, so these children thrive in all the dimensions of their lived experiences. The following are some gaps this research study has identified for which there is still a need for further studies:

- a. mixed-methods evaluative study on the strengths and weaknesses of the Dumare IDP camp with parents as respondents;
- b. quantitative research on the knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) of the parents and staff of the Dumare IDP camp on children's spirituality;

- c. holistic analysis of the activities by the Baptist Convention in Myanmar based on the dimensions of child well-being; and
- d. phenomenological study on the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of the children in Dumare IDP camp.

Ong, Blessed Charity. “Church Brand Book Development and Usage in Life Christian Ministries Manila.” Master of Arts in Christian Communication, 2021.

This production thesis was intended to assist Reign in Life Christian Ministries Manila in their brand implementation as manifested in the development and usage of a Brand Book. Moreover, the project, along with the procedures and processes, can help community churches advance their creative communication strategy, as evidenced in the study.

The development and usage of Brand Book used the Shannon-Weaver model of communication as a framework for the flow of the study. The study proceeded with ordered sequences beginning from the processes of Brand Book Development, Church Guided Usage, and Evaluation. Further, the study required multiple methodologies. Hybrid Engagement, Online Ethnography, and FGD were utilized in the course of the study to execute the project with training, implementation, and evaluation to gather the needed data.

As assessed from the responses of the FGD with the Graphic Outputs posted on Facebook last December 2020 and evaluation of Expert Analyses, the resulting Brand Book was deemed efficient in assisting RIL on brand building and creative communication. It achieved the value proposition of informing, inspiring, and enforcing. Moreover, the fulfilling achievement for this production study through the processes and experience documented alongside will fill in the gap on the lack of resources, knowledge, skills, and guidance in branding among community churches and may help create visually appealing graphics and outputs that collectively represent the brand identity.

For future studies, this thesis can be replicated with a wider emphasis on empirical data gathering allowing comparative approaches. An audience

reception study can also be explored since varied responses of audiences were intended by a designed Brand Book. It is also recommended to include the making of modules for the Brand Book Development Usage consisting of the actual procedures from three sequential processes and the proprietary skills needed, such as basic graphic design for the church.

Park, Jungyeon. “Growing Up with an Absent Father and How Selected Korean Adolescents Perceive God as Father.” Master of Arts in Religious Education (Holistic Child Development), 2021.

The main objective of the study was to explore whether or not growing up with an absent father affects how selected Korean adolescents perceive God as Father. The primary finding of this study is that the children’s perception of God is affected when the father is absent in the child’s growing up years. There were five adolescent respondents between 13 to 19 years of age and five mothers who participated in the study.

This study was anchored in the tenets of Attachment Theory set forth by John Bowlby (1958) and Mary Ainsworth (1970). One of the most important concepts in this attachment theory is the Internal Working Model (IWM), that is, a child’s understanding of the world, self, and others. A child’s IWM is reflected in the degree of security or insecurity experienced within the parent-child bond. This study also considered the Father Presence Questionnaire (FPQ) set forth by Krampe and Newton, which examines a child’s relationship with the father and beliefs about the father.

The design principle for the research was based in the qualitative method. The methodology used in the study was a multiple-case study approach. Five case studies were conducted. The data for this study came from the responses of the research participants in the semi-structured interviews. The data from the mothers provided information to triangulate the responses of the adolescents. Data were analyzed using the MAXQDA software to produce Maxmaps for each case.

Based on the data analysis, the following conclusions were drawn. It appears that first, the attachment of adolescent respondents with their fathers is reflected in their attachment with God. This is true even when the

attachment is formed when the father and the adolescent live together. Second, fathers who are physically absent or separated from their children can still be involved in their child's life, but this needs commitment on the part of the father. This involvement also can affect how adolescents perceive God as Father because part of their perceptions of their own fathers is carried over into their ideas of God as Father. Third, it appears that even when the absent fathers are not involved in the child's spiritual life, all the fathers are involved in other facets of the child's life. With the influence of their mothers and other church members, adolescents who grow up with an absent father can still perceive "God as Father" or "Lord God." Fourth, based on this study, how the selected respondents perceived their earthly fathers "corresponded" with their perception of God as Father. An earthly father, even when absent, can affect the child's perception of God.

Finally, based on the findings of the study, the following specific recommendations were identified for the ministry of the local church: (1) invite subject matter experts who can teach the mothers how attachment with their father is important in children's spiritual life; (2) create mother-adolescent programs where mothers in the church plan activities with their adolescents; (3) form mothers' prayer groups; and (4) create a program to teach the mothers how to encourage their husbands to get involved in their child's life.

Call for Papers

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

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3. Authors must provide complete bibliographical information either in citations or in a bibliography at the end. Citation style may be either parenthetical or footnote style, but must be consistent within each article. If used, format as footnotes rather than endnotes. Use shortened form for subsequent citations rather than *Ibid*.
4. Articles must conform to the latest edition of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*.
5. Papers may be of any length, although authors may be asked to condense longer papers.
6. A list of non-standard abbreviations should be provided.

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