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# EPHREM'S *Theological Journal*

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Ephrem on Eucharist

*Filioque* and Ecumenism

Homosexuality

Founder of Religious Institutes

Prosperity Gospel

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***Ephrem's Theological Journal***

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# Ephrem's Theological Journal

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## **The Love Commandment in Deut 6:5 as a Corollary of the Monotheistic Confession in 6:4**

**Manoj Thomas**

Rev. Dr. Manoj Thomas is a member of the Missionary Society of St Thomas (MST). He holds an LSS from PBI, Rome and doctorate in Biblical Theology from PUU, Rome. At present, he serves as the Rector of Santhome Minor Seminary of MST at Thamarassery and visiting professor at various theological institutes in India. In the present article Dr. Manoj discusses Deut 6:4-5 which records the Old Testament concept of the love of God in the history of the people of Israelites as His chosen ones. The special call addressed to Israel in loving 'the one and the only' YHWH has greater significance and relevance in the cultural and religious context of that time. The present study, with its special reference to Deut 6:4-5, argues for the importance of the love commandment which bases itself in the monotheistic proclamation of Deut 6:4. The tripartite formula of loving God with all your heart, all your soul and all your might is the consequence of this monotheistic confession. It also reiterates to the world of today that the commandment to love remains always a challenge and an ideal to be imbibed and practiced in one's life.

**Key words:** Deut 6:4-5, love commandment in the OT, Deuteronomy, Monotheistic confession of Israelite people

### **Introduction**

The Love Commandment is the central theme in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 presents the great commandment 'to love God' given to the people of Israel in the direct discourse of Moses. This also contains 'the fundamental truth about the Jewish religion', i.e., the oneness of the Israelites with God. The whole book of Deuteronomy is a commentary on the exhortation given by God, especially as seen in Deut 6:4-5.

We can even speak of a deep concern which runs through the book, that the Israelites could fall away from the faith of their fathers as they possess the land and rely on their own abilities and follow other gods (Deut 13:1), forgetting Yahweh's blessings and providence (Deut 8:17, 9:4-6). It is in this context of religious lethargy and the dangerous break up of their tradition of faith, that they are to be exhorted to hear, to love, to obey, to remember and not to forget Yahweh (Deut 6:4-5; 10-12, 8:11, 14, 19). This was the situation in which Deuteronomy found the people of Israel.

The term “*Shema*” derives of course from the initial word of Deuteronomy 6:4, the imperative form of “to hear.” The centrality and keynote significance of Deut 6:4-5 is clear for numerous reasons.<sup>1</sup> First of all, this is an expression of the essence of all of God’s person and purposes in sixteen words in the MT. Secondly, the history of interpretation has singled this text out. This has been the text in Torah that has defined the Jewish religious identity down the ages.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, the Old Testament context itself indicates the centrality of the text.<sup>3</sup> The word *Shema* finds its place in the beginning of the address of Moses delineating the covenant between Yahweh and Israel in the context of the Decalogue (Deut 5:1-22) which Moses receives from Yahweh. This also leads to the consequent confirmation of Moses as the prophet par excellence (5:23-33). Thus, with authority after his encounter with Yahweh, Moses uses the term *Shema*.<sup>4</sup>

### 1. Significance of the Study

The book of Deuteronomy plays a central role in the Hebrew Bible with its theology: One God, One Temple and One Law. The present study, with its special reference to Deut 6:4-5, argues for the importance of the love commandment which bases itself in the monotheistic proclamation of Deut 6:4. This proclamation was not just a theoretical statement but was a

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<sup>1</sup> The oldest Hebrew manuscript, the Nash Papyrus, dating to about the mid-second century B.C. attests to a version of the Decalogue immediately before Deut 6:4. For a brief discussion of the text and its significance see L. Jacobs, “Shema, Reading of,” *Encyclopedia Judaica* XIV (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971) 1370-1374.

<sup>2</sup> While the earlier growth of the tradition is not certain, there is evidence (Mishnah Tamid 4:3-5:1) for a formal stage of development. We are told that the liturgy associated with daily temple sacrifice included the reading of four biblical passages which are separately entitled: the Decalogue, the *Shema*, Deut 11:13 and Num 15:37 (-41). See I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962; reprint of 1931<sup>3</sup>) 14-26.

<sup>3</sup> According to the tradition, the faithful are required to recite the text twice daily, upon rising in the morning and before falling asleep at night (cf. Deut 6:7). It is not just a pious action but dedication of the whole self toward the rule of God. See *Sifre Dt 6:4* (31); E. Cortès – T. Martinez (ed.), *Sifre Deuteronomio. Comentario Tannaitico al libro del Deuteronomio vol. I: Pisqa 1-160* (Collectània Sant Pacià 40, Barcelona: Herder, 1989) 94; R. Clifford, *Deuteronomy with an Excursus on Covenant and Law* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1982) 46-47.

<sup>4</sup> R. W. L. Moberly, “Toward an Interpretation of the Shema” in C. Seitz- K. Greene-McCreight (ed.), *Theological Exegesis. Essays in Honor of B. S. Childs* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 127.

## The Medicine of Life Saint Ephrem's Musings on the Holy Eucharist

Naiju Jose Kalambukattu CMI

Rev. Dr. Naiju Jose Kalambukattu contributes regularly to ETJ. Currently he is the Prefect and Master of students in Samanvaya Theology College, Kolchur, Chathisgarh, India. In the present article he discusses Ephrem's understanding of the Eucharist as the medicine of life. Eucharist becomes the medicine of life because of the hidden presence of the Lord in the Eucharistic body. Ephrem emphasizes the hidden presence of the Holy Spirit and the life giving presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. It cleanses the participants from all the stains of sin and imparts life. Ephrem says, "He baptized him with the Holy Spirit, He nourished him with the medicine of life." The Eucharist, the medicine of life, transforms the receiver, for "he who eats of the Bread of the heavenly One, becomes heavenly without doubt." Ephrem's Eucharistic theology is a meditation on the unfathomable riches of the Medicine of Life.

Key words: St Ephrem, Eucharist in St Ephrem, Medicine of life

### Introduction

Ephrem, the fourth century poet-theologian<sup>1</sup> is the "pride and boast of Syriac tradition."<sup>2</sup> He preferred to express his theological insights through poetry. As Duval states, in poetic art "Ephrem was a master often imitated but rarely equaled."<sup>3</sup> Due to his enormous literary output and his strenuous efforts to defend orthodoxy, he won the attributes such as "the Harp of the Holy Spirit," "the pillar of the Church," "the prophet of Syrians," "the Sun of the Syrians" and "the possessor of wisdom" and is the most popular of all the Syriac Fathers. Though he was never a monk in the conventional sense of the term, he had the reputation for sanctity of life. He was a single man

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<sup>1</sup> S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1992) 23, 160-161; T. Koonammakkal, "Ephrem on the Icon of Nature," in L. Greisiger – C. Rammelt – J. Tubach (ed.), *Edessa in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit: Religion, Kultur und Politik zwischen Ost und West* (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2009) 97-98.

<sup>2</sup> J.P. Amar, "Perspectives on the Eucharist in Ephrem the Syrian," *Worship* 61 (1987) 442.

<sup>3</sup> R. Duval, *Syriac Literature: An English Translation of La Littérature Syriaque* (tr. O. Holmøy; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2013) 11.



(*ihidaya*)<sup>4</sup> living among the ‘Sons of the Covenant’ (*bnay qyama*),<sup>5</sup> an ascetical and austere pattern of life developed originally in the Syriac Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

Ephrem presented his theological reflections in the form of poetry and so he is very rich in symbolic expressions.<sup>7</sup> His theology and its presentation has little Western influence, for he writes not in philosophical language.<sup>8</sup> He expressed his faith “based on the concrete images of Scripture, not on the conclusions of abstract philosophical speculation.”<sup>9</sup> Murray classifies the theology of Ephrem not as *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding) but as ‘*fides adorans mysterium*’ (faith adoring the mystery).<sup>10</sup> Griffith explains the style of Ephrem: “His style of religious discourse was not academic; it was deeply contemplative, based on a close reading of the scriptures, with an eye to the telling mystic symbol (*raza*) or ‘type’ in terms of which God chose to make revelations to the Church.”<sup>11</sup> Due to his theological reputation, Pope Benedict XV proclaimed St Ephrem a doctor of the Universal Church in 1920.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> S.H. Griffith, “Monks, ‘Singles,’ and the ‘Sons of the Covenant’: Reflections on Syriac Ascetic Terminology,” in E. Carr et al (ed.), *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft S.J.*, Rome: St. Anselmo, 1993) 142-145.

<sup>5</sup> S.H. Griffith, “St Ephraem, Bar Daysan and the Clash of Madrashe in Aram: Readings in St. Ephraem’s Hymni Contra Haereses,” *The Harp* 21 (2006) 450; S.H. Griffith, ‘*Faith Adoring the Mystery*’: *Reading the Bible with St. Ephraem the Syrian* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1997) 9; S.P. Brock, “Asian Christianity: The Need for a Historical Perspective,” *Asian Horizons* 10 (2016) 447.

<sup>6</sup> T. Kollampampil, “Syriac Spiritual, Ascetical and Mystic Legacy,” *Journal of Dharma* 36 (2011) 42-43.

<sup>7</sup> K.D. Biesen, “Ephrem the Theologian: Perceptions and Perspectives” in *Saint Ephrem: Un poète pour notre temps* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 2007) 155; A.G. Kollampampil, “The Theme of Sheol in the Syriac Liturgy: The Path to Its Reception,” *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 113 (1999) 298.

<sup>8</sup> J.F. Healey, “Ephrem the Syrian,” in K. Parry et al (ed.), *BDEC* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) 181; K.D. Biesen, *Simple and Bold: Ephrem’s Art of Symbolic Thought* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006) 4.

<sup>9</sup> Amar, “Perspectives on the Eucharist,” 442.

<sup>10</sup> R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004) 89; Biesen, *Simple and Bold*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> S.H. Griffith, ‘*Faith Adoring the Mystery*,’ 8; L. Arangassery, *Subsidiary Mysteries in the East: An Introduction to the Sacramentality of the Mysteries* (Kottayam: OIRSI, 2014) 39.

<sup>12</sup> Benedict XV, “Principi apostolorum Petro,” *AAS* 12 (1900) 7-29.



Although no specific treatise on the Eucharist by Ephrem exists, he highlights its significance, challenges and effects in the life of the believers, for he knew that the Eucharist has a bearing on the life of the believers. His musings on the Eucharist challenge us deeply even today, for they were more pastoral than dogmatic, and emphasized what happened and should happen to a believer who received Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The present article is only an attempt to expose Ephrem's teachings on Eucharist, the medicine of life.

### **Holy Eucharist: The Medicine of Life**

Medicine of life (*sam hayye* / *صم حايه*) is one of the most favourite titles that Ephrem employs for the Eucharist. He teaches that the bread became the medicine of life by the Lord's blessing during the last supper.<sup>13</sup> According to him, the Eucharistic bread and wine are medicine of life for the faithful,<sup>14</sup> and the hidden presence of Christ in the Eucharistic Body and Blood is the medicine of life.<sup>15</sup> In other words, the Eucharist becomes medicine of life because of the hidden presence of the Lord in the Eucharistic body.<sup>16</sup> Hence the Eucharist becomes a treasury of healings as his physical body.<sup>17</sup> The invisible power that dwells in his physical and Eucharistic body is the source of healing. Ephrem emphasizes the hidden presence of the Holy Spirit and the life giving presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, which cleanses the participants from all the stains of sin and imparts life to the mortals. Ephrem says, "He baptized him with the Holy Spirit, He nourished him with the medicine of life."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> CSCO 248/249, Scr. Syr. Tom. 108/109, *HAz* 14,16.

<sup>14</sup> A. Shemunkasho, *Healing in the Theology of Saint Ephrem* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2002) 381, 431-432. For an extensive treatment of the title in a sacramental setting see, P. Yousif, *L'Eucharistie Chez saint Ephrem de Nisibe* (OCA 224: Rome: PIO, 1984) 317-325.

<sup>15</sup> CSCO 223/224, Scr. Syr. Tom. 94/95, *HVirg* 31,3; Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 99.

<sup>16</sup> P. Maniyattu, "East Syriac Theology of Eucharist" in P. Maniyattu (ed.), *East Syriac Theology: An Introduction* (Satna: Ephrem's Publications, 2007) 302; L. Malieckal, *The Eucharist: Gift and Task* (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2011) 89.

<sup>17</sup> Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 79-91

<sup>18</sup> CSCO 218/219, Scr. Syr. Tom. 92/93, *HNis* 46,8.

## ***Filioque*: Ecumenical Reflections in the Light of Jerusalem Council**

**Grace Koovayil**

Sr. Dr. Grace Koovayil SD is familiar to the readers of ETJ. In this article she deals with a thorny issue in ecumenical discussions, that of *filioque*. The controversy, even after centuries, still overshadows ecumenical endeavours. A solution to this problem is at the best of interests of all the concerned. How to get out of this ecumenical impasse? Sr. Koovayil proposes a way out, based on the scriptural example of dialogue and respect, recorded in the Book of Acts. In the Council of Jerusalem the apostles could reach an amicable solution to the problem of receiving Gentiles in the community of believers, without compromising the essentials. Could this spirit of dialogue and mutual recognition lead to a solution vis-à-vis the *Filioque* controversy?

Key words: *Filioque*, ecumenical relations, Jerusalem council, kenotic relationship

### **Introduction**

The *Filioque* in itself is not an insurmountable hindrance to communion. But still, “it remains an issue, perhaps because its continued presence in the Creed of the Western Churches is a constant reminder to the Orthodox of a centuries-old wound.”<sup>1</sup> Are we, the Christians of this century justified in front of the Holy Spirit in whose name this tug of war is still continued, though in the form of a cold war? Does our cold combat contribute to the fullness of our life or to declension and death? When we fight on this issue, do we side with the Triune God, or our own ecclesial egoism? Why can’t we side with the Holy Spirit himself and try to understand the mind of God in this issue as the Apostles and primitive Christians did at the Jerusalem Council? This article on *filioque* is a venture to respond eagerly to the challenge of Pope John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) to find fresh ways of thinking and acting that would facilitate true communion. I hope that this will assist contemporary ecumenical theologians to consider the *filioque* clause from a different standpoint. It is my sincere belief that these reflections can contribute a spark to the doctrinal, liturgical and ecumenical renewal in the contemporary Christian world and help illuminate ecumenical discussions.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward A. Sicienski, *The Filioque* (Oxford: OUP, 2010) 215.

## **The Annulment of Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code and the Approach of the Catholic Church towards Homosexuality**

**Saji Mathew Kanayankal CST**

Rev. Dr. Saji Mathew Kanayankal belongs to the Little Flower Congregation (CST Fathers). He has secured MA in Religious Studies, MTh and PhD from KU, Louvain, Belgium. A prolific writer, he has published extensively and is one of the section editors of *Jeevadhara* Theological Journal. He also teaches Moral Theology, Ecological Ethics and Theology of Justice in various Seminaries and Institutes. At present he is serving as the Superior and Rector of *Vidyabhavan*, Bengaluru, India. In the present article he discusses the implications of the annulment of Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code by the Supreme Court of India on 06 September 2018. It is observed that this particular Section of the IPC was widely used to discriminate the LGBTQI. However, the annulment also caused a lot of confusion, doubts and dilemma in the society and many people have expressed their concern. In this context, this article discusses the rationale for the annulment, some of its unseen consequences and the approach of the Catholic Church towards homosexuality.

**Key words:** homosexuality, LGBTQI community, fundamental rights, constitutional morality, innate instinct, human dignity, irregular situations

### **Introduction**

The discussion on homosexuality becomes all the more relevant today with the annulment of the Supreme Court of India on the IPC Section 377 on 06 September 2018. However, this process of annulment is the result of a long way journey started with a lawsuit given by NAZ foundation, a non-governmental organization, fighting for the rights of the gay to Delhi High court in 2001.<sup>1</sup> On 2 July 2009 Chief Justice Ajith Prakash Shah and Justice S. Muralidhar ruled that this Section of IPC is violative of certain Constitutional Rights such as Right of Protection of Life and Personal Liberty (article 21), Right to Equality before the Law (article 14), Prohibition of Discrimination on Grounds of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex or

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<sup>1</sup> For a description on the annulment of Section 377, see Litto Palathingal, "Section 377 of Indian Penal Code and the Supreme Court 2018 Judgement," *Jeevadhara* 47, no. 288 (2018) 11-18.

Place of Birth (article 15).<sup>2</sup> Further, it is noted that Section 377 also denies the basic human rights to the sexual minorities - the LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex) community in the country. However, on 11 January 2013 the Supreme Court overturned the previous verdict that decriminalized consensual sex among adult homosexuals. Later on, on 08 January 2018 in response to a fresh plea, the then Chief Justice Dipak Misra decided to re-examine the constitutional validity of Section 377 and on 06 September 2018 the Supreme Court annulled article 377 by telling;

Section 377 IPC, so far as it penalizes any consensual sexual activity between two adults, be it homosexuals (man and a man), heterosexuals (man and a woman) and lesbians (woman and a woman), cannot be regarded as constitutional. However, if anyone, by which we mean both a man and a woman, engages in any kind of sexual activity with an animal, the said aspect of Section 377 IPC is constitutional and it shall remain a penal offence under Section 377 IPC. Any act of the description covered under Section 377 IPC done between the individuals without the consent of any one of them would invite penal liability under Section 377 IPC (252).<sup>3</sup>

### **A Critical Analysis on the Section 377 of IPC**

Before commenting on the effects of the annulment, it would be better to analyse IPC Section 377 as it was existing till the annulment. It says; “Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend

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<sup>2</sup> Sec, Ajith Prakash Sha and S. Muralidhar , The Judgement by the High Court of Delhi, on 2 July 2009, available at, <http://lobis.nic.in/ddir/dhc/APS/judgement/02-07-2009/APS02072009CW74552001.pdf>; accessed on 19 October, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> The numbers in the brackets are given from the Judgement of CJI (Rtd.) Deepak Misra and Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, for the Writ Petition (Criminal) NO 776 OF 2016 on 06 September 2018, available at [https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article\\_24880700.ece/binary/Sec377\\_judgment.pdf](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article_24880700.ece/binary/Sec377_judgment.pdf); accessed on 16 October 2018.

## Characteristics of the Founder of Religious Institutes

Josy Veliyan CMC

Sr. Dr. Josy Veliyan is a member of CMC Dehradun province. She secured her doctorate from the University of St. Thomas, Rome. At present she is the Provincial Councillor responsible for Faith formation and Publication and stays in Jalandhar. Based on various Church documents, practice of the Church and the reflections of theologians, she attempts in this article to find out a reliable list of criteria to identify the founders of religious institutes. These features will help to determine the essential elements that the founder contributes in the process of the foundation of a religious institute. Undoubtedly, these will be of use for all the religious institutes, whose beginnings are in the distant past and which have problems in determining who their founders are. As a result of the study, she applies these norms in the case of Women TOCD, Kerala, to determine its charismatic founder.

Key words: founder of religious institutes, charism, Salesians of Don Bosco, TOCD, Saint Chavara, Mother Eliswa Vakayil, Leopold Beccaro

### Introduction

Most of the religious institutes have a clear picture about their founder's identity, vocation and charism, and the historical circumstances that led to their foundation. In the case of some congregations, there exists some confusion regarding the role of the founder. This is true of the Third Order Carmelites Discalced (TOCD) for Women, which was founded in 1866 in a small village named Koonammavu, in the present Ernakulam district in Kerala. Later, due to the ritual separation (1887) of the St. Thomas Christians from the Vicariate of Verapoly, it was bifurcated (1890) into the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) in Syro-Malabar Church and the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites (CTC) in Latin Church. Though Saint Chavara was considered as the founder and Leopold Beccaro OCD as the co-founder by all, a controversy concerning the identity of the founder of TOCD has emerged lately. Some argue that Beccaro is the founder and Chavara is the co-founder. Another group considers both these priests as founders without making the distinction of founder or co-founder. Still another group regards Msgr. Bernardine Baccinelli, the then Apostolic Vicar, as founder. A small minority of writers holds the view that Eliswa Vakayil, the first member, is the foundress.

Confronted with these different opinions regarding the founder we were led to enquire about the norms determining the identity of the founder of a given religious institute. Taking the example of the above mentioned religious institute, this study concentrates on the characteristics of the founder of religious institutes. Actually, there does not exist any single Church document that enlists such norms. Therefore, we analyze various documents that speak of the identity of founders and attempt to construct such a list. In support of it, we incorporate into the findings the considered views of some theologians of repute.

### **1. Founder of a Religious Institute**

To the question who is a founder of a religious institute no answer is easily given due to the following reasons:

1. The law of the Church does not give specific norms to establish the identity of the founder of an institute.
2. All through the years, the Church used different measures in specifying the founder. Official documents of the beatification or canonization of persons who were considered foundresses or founders do not give a unified notion about the identity of the founder. Doubts have been raised whether the title of foundress or founder was rightly attributed to a certain person.
3. The figure of the founder is studied under varied aspects. Since there are many means and manners of being the founder and there are varieties of degrees in which a founder may be involved in the life of the institute created by him or her, the founder has been looked upon differently. In order to focus on the individuality of the founders Antonio Romano looks at the founders through the lens of five different aspects.<sup>1</sup> These are: 1) historico-juridical aspect, 2) historico-theological aspect, 3) historico-sociological aspect, 4) theologico-charismatic aspect, 5) and charismatico-analogical aspect. Later he developed this idea in his book, *The Charism of the Founders*.<sup>2</sup> Fabio Ciardi's doctoral research presenting 'The Founders: Men

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio Romano, "Dimensione sociologica, carismatica er analogica della figura dei fondatori, *Vita Consecrata* 23 (1987) 722-741.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Romano, *The Charism of the Founders: The person and Charism of Founders in Contemporary Theological Reflection* (London: St. Pauls, 1994) 29-65.

## **The Influence of Prosperity Gospel on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century African Youth: A Theologico-Liturgical Response**

**Emmanuel Chinedu Anagwo**

Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Chinedu Anagwo, a Catholic Priest, a lecturer in the Department of Sacred Liturgy, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Inculturation Theology*. In this paper he examines the trend of Cross-less Christianity among Nigerian youths today. A lot of Nigerian youths are swayed by the impulse of the inordinate desire for wealth and instant miracles. The influence of prosperity gospel has greatly contributed to this trend. The paper, therefore, recommends to the liturgical assembly to checkmate the errors of the over-emphasis on prosperity gospel to the detriment of the Gospel of Cross. Both the clergy and the lay faithful are charged to preach sound moral goodness and not materialism to the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian youth since when the liturgy is authentically celebrated, it becomes a potent instrument of evangelization and sanctification. The study is also relevant and timely in the Indian context.

Key words: Nigerian Youth, prosperity gospel, liturgical response, contemporary culture

### **1. Introduction**

Right from the beginning it is important to assert that in the liturgy of the Church is deposited a mighty potential for human guidance, for the Christian orientation of life and for the mastering of life.<sup>1</sup> However, it is a potential which up till now has been only minimally utilized. Since the Council of Trent, the faithful have learnt how to value the inner heart of the Mass and the sacraments as something to be carefully and meticulously performed by the priest according to the rubrics without corresponding to

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<sup>1</sup> The writer is aware that the primary function of the liturgy is not to teach but to worship God. Nonetheless, certain aspects of the liturgy are designed for explicit teaching, namely, introductions, scripture readings, commentaries, sermons and exhortations. Other areas include prayers and hymns which could be regarded as supplementary resources for inculcating moral and doctrinal truths. In this respect, the liturgy could be said to provide avenues for worthwhile transmission of knowledge, values and skills for human guidance, a potent instrument of evangelization and sanctification.



the fruitful effects on their socio-communitarian participation. In this way, minimal impact of a Christian way of life was guaranteed. In our age, threatened by prosperity gospel, the well-stocked larder of theologico-liturgical response must be opened to checkmate their excesses.

The new trend of prosperity gospel is one of the matters of the moment in many national dailies, broadcasting houses, journals, newsletters, facebook and whatsapp messages. Prosperity gospel has corroded the sanity and serenity of the African nation to the extent that no reasonable citizen can claim ignorance of this fact without being labelled guilty of mendacity. Nowadays, it is common to hear Radio or Television stations, bill board announcements and jingles that if you are sick, have marital problem, looking for husband/wife, want success in exam and land dispute, want to be rich, to mention but a few, come to the crusade ground or Church sessions to receive your miracles and breakthroughs. Some youths spend hours in the mountain, miracle centres, crusade grounds, churches etc praying for these miracles. Riches and wealth are desired by all by crook or hook. One of the reasons Africans live below poverty line is their wrong belief that magic wand will certainly mint money for them. Many youths wrongly believe that success depends on how much 'holy/anoointing oils' they rub themselves.

From the theologico-liturgical perspective, this paper is not intended to portray the African youth in a bad light but to generate a platform which will enable the 21<sup>st</sup> century African youth to brace up for the challenges of prosperity gospel and remain relevant in the African (Nigerian) Christianity. This over-emphasis on miracles has made the people to crave for miracles and when such is not received, it invariably affects their faith and liturgical participation. Today, the African youth are living witnesses to the abuses erupting from the quest to perform miracles and the need to satisfy the hunger of the worshippers, with the resultant effect of all manners of aberrations and falsifications from both the clergy and the laity. In recent times, the Catholic liturgy has been metamorphosed where we are accused of being exploitative and fallen victim of various irregularities, abuses, fabrications and executing money driven ministries. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) expressed concern over the excessive monetary collections that have found their way into the Catholic liturgy in

total disregard of the rubrics and diocesan and universal directives.<sup>2</sup> Inordinate search for prosperity gospel is not a true religion even when perpetuated by churches and pastors who over-emphasize tithing, donations, Novena Mass, Mass Booking, etc to the detriment of Christian spirituality and worship. And it becomes imperative that a drastic measure be taken with an integral and comprehensive Gospel to liberate the Church in Africa from the shackles of prosperity preachers.

## **2. Prosperity Gospel and African Youth: What and Who are they?**

One may ask: what is prosperity gospel? What are the rationale for the promotion of the prosperity gospel? How can the liturgical assembly and the liturgical celebrations be used to remedy the trend? Ordinarily, prosperity is the state of being successful especially in making money. Prosperity gospel is where an individual uses gospel to enrich themselves whether conversion is attained or not. Modern prosperity preaching originated in the United States of America under a cultic framework and a quasi-Christian heresy, known as a New Thought.<sup>3</sup> It equates breakthrough and prosperity with God's blessing and gradual growth whereas relative poverty indicates lack of 'God's blessing. According to Peter H. Hassan, the four cardinal principles of the prosperity gospel can be summarized thus:

- God wants us to always have great relationships.
- God does not want us to have pains/sufferings.
- God does not want us to be victims, but always victors.
- If we really trust in God, we will not have anything to worry about and we will not have any anxiety.<sup>4</sup>

Today many prosperity preachers downplay the message of the Cross. The modern day prosperity gospeller says: “once you are a Christian

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<sup>2</sup> Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), "Religion as Instrument for Peace and Integral Human Development" in <http://stpetersunn.org/catholic-bishops-conference-of-nigeria-communique-religion-as-instrument-for-peace-and-integral-development/no.4> Accessed on 25th January, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> See Russell S. Woodbridge, "Prosperity Gospel Born in the USA" 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 in <https://www.thegospel-coalition.org/article/prosperity-gospel-born-in-the-usa/> accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Peter H. Hassan, "The Catholic Faith and the Lure of Syncretism and Prosperity Gospel" in *Jos Studies: Living and Communicating the Gift of Faith*, Volume 21, June 2013, 142.

## Book Reviews

**Cyriac Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, The Archbishop of St Thomas Christians in Malabar (1508-1597)* ed. K.S. Mathew (Syrian Churches Series 23; Kottayam: Jet Publications, 2016); Hardbound; Pp. XXXII+340; Price: ₹ 500.00; ISBN: 978-81-922337-2-7**

Originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation at the Faculty of Ecclesiastical History at the famed Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1965, T.'s *Mar Abraham* had acquired the status of a classic, always quoted in subsequent studies on the history of St. Thomas Christians as an unpublished doctoral dissertation. It was written under the guidance of none other than Joseph Wicki SJ, an authority of Indian Church History of the Indo-Portuguese period. Now to the satisfaction of many a student of history, the book has been published in an elegant book form, 51 years after the original composition and the death of T. in 2015. The dissertation in its book form is edited and updated by Prof. Dr. K.S. Mathew, himself an eminent historian and a friend of the late T. Before his death T. had consulted the editor about publishing it and the editing and updating have been completed by Prof. Mathew with utmost precision and care and with the devotedness of a friend.

The editor has written a learned editorial note of 21 pages, highlighting the historical background of the study, and supplied occasional notes. The book also contains the original preface written by T. There are three chapters in the book: The first chapter has the title, "Mar Abraham in Malabar" (1-46). The second chapter discusses, "Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians" (47-132). The third chapter deals with "the Last Years of Mar Abraham" (133-212). Conclusion spreads over pages 213 to 233. A list of Archives and manuscript collections consulted and bibliography extend to 15 pages (234-249). There are three appendices. In the first appendix 36 important manuscripts, mostly letters, either in Latin or Italian, related to Mar Abraham are reprinted (250-319). The next appendix contains the details of more than 100 manuscripts, in Latin, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, either published or private, from the years 1565 to 1600 (319-335). In the third appendix names of the Roman Pontiffs, Patriarchs of the Chaldean Church (Rabban Hormizd, Diarbekir, Seert and Saemas), Chaldean Bishops in Malabar, Generals of the Society of Jesus, Jesuit Provincials of Goa, Jesuit Visitors to the Province of India, Jesuit colleges under the Goan and Malabar Provinces, Archbishops of Goa and Bishops of Cochin, contemporary to Mar Abraham are enlisted (336-340).

Archbishop Mar Abraham of the Archdiocese of Angamali is the last Chaldean Bishop of the undivided St. Thomas Christians. He reached Malabar for the first time in 1555-56 as a simple priest. Later in Babylon the Patriarch

ordained Abraham as bishop and sent to Rome for obtaining necessary documents to avoid troubles with the Portuguese. In spite of the testimonials of his orthodoxy he was detained by the Portuguese in Goa. He managed to escape to Malabar and started to work among the St. Thomas Christians as their legitimate bishop. His relationship with the Portuguese was always strained because he obstructed their designs to abolish the Syrian identity and to Latinise them. The Portuguese were trying to secure their foothold in the East politically and religiously; the various religious congregations like the Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans also pursuing the same goal, though rivals in their own way. Mar Abraham had to fight his battle on many fronts and according to T. “he fell – fell miserably, but victoriously... Miserably because after his death the age old Chaldean jurisdiction over Malabar, for the protection and conservation of which he was sent by the Catholic Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, was abolished, a hybridization of liturgico-ecclesiastical life in the Syro-Malabar Church was effected; and a deep and painful wound in the body of Christ, the Church, was inflicted through the separation of a group of St Thomas Christians who resented the hybridization” (233). Victoriously because he fought valiantly till his death and in spite of the hybridization introduced in the ‘Synod’ of Diamper, the usurpers could not wipe off the Chaldean traditions completely, thanks to the martyrdom of Mar Abraham.

T.’s work is a treasure house of information about Mar Abraham, his right Catholic faith, his times, rivalries of religious congregations and the Portuguese tactics to depose him and gain control over Malabar. The rigorous scientific method of the author leaves no doubt about his conclusions. All those who have assisted in any way in the publication of *Mar Abraham* deserves admiration and gratitude from the users of this volume for making such a valuable work available for the public.

**George Kudilil**

**Kuriakose Vettuvazhy, *The Synod of Diamper in the Ecclesial Life of Syro-Malabar Church in the Light of CCEO (OIRSI 418; Kottayam: OIRSI Publications, 2016); Pp. 442; Price: ₹ 375.00; ISBN: 978-93-82762-45-4***

The “Synod of Diamper” of 1599 is one of the epoch making events in the history of the Church of St Thomas Christians. It exerted far reaching influence in its life which still continues. Apart from the scholarly discussions about its validity and legitimacy, the present work examines how it has been controlling the ecclesial life of the Syro-Malabar Church, as expressed in the legal formulations down through the post-Diamper centuries. The present work, originally presented as a doctoral dissertation at the Department of Canon Law of the PIO, Rome, is a historic-juridical study of the canons of the Synod of Diamper which found place in the CCEO *fonti*. V. has identified 53 such canons

in the CCEO *fonti*, directly deriving from the synod of Diamper. V's study is original and comprehensive. The dissertation of J. Kuzhinjalil in 1975 had dealt with the disciplinary legislation of the Synod of Diamper only.

The book has a Foreword written by Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, an eminent canonist. There is a general introduction by the author. The book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one deals with the historical setting of the synod (33-70). The Synod was convoked and presided over by a Latin Ordinary without any mandate; another glaring defect was that it was convened against the norm *sede vacante nihil innovetur*. The following chapters are devoted to legislations pertaining to Christian Initiation (71-146), Sacrament of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick (147-211), Holy Orders, Rights and Duties of the Clergy (212-274), Sacrament of Matrimony (275-330), Sacramentals and Sacred Space (331-380) and Penal Laws (381-402). The book also has a general conclusion in which V. presents his findings (403-415). Before the Synod of Diamper what controlled the ecclesial life of the St Thomas Christians were Chaldean heritage and practices. Therefore V. examines them before treating each canon of the synod. Next, he discusses the application of those canons in the CCEO and in the particular laws of Syro-Malabar Church.

The study of V. is really refreshing and challenging. He rightly says that the Synod was a tragic event in the life of the Church of St. Thomas Christians as it brought it under Latin ecclesiastical colonial power. It overlooked the ancient Law of Thomas and "inaugurated the diocesan rule of the bishop and monarchical episcopacy among them." Conforming to the practices of the Latin Church, as directed by the Council of Trent, was the only ideal that guided the organizers of the Synod. One gets the impression that the colonial powers moved with the conviction that everything not in conformity with Latin traditions are heretical and illegitimate and therefore in need of urgent correction. Social reforms, purging the Christian populace of superstitions and such progressive measures of the Synod helped the Christians to imbibe the values of renaissance but they pulled back from social adaptation, inculturation and harmonious living in a multi-religious context.

The work of V. will serve as an indispensable tool for anybody who wants to study the canonical legislation of the Syro-Malabar church and its juridical sources. The treatment is simple and lively. V. is convinced of the falsity of the accusation of Nestorianism of the Church, but more judiciousness and discretion were to be exercised in using the nomenclature as well as secondary literature in the course of the study. An omission in the bibliography is the work of Thevarmannil on Mar Abraham. Overall editing of the book is satisfactory. There are only very few misprints.