

## **Paul and Culture: Inculturation of the Gospel in the Letters of Paul**

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*Abstract:* Paul is seen as a contextual, pastoral or missionary theologian than a systematic theologian. His letters are “unrivaled in offering examples of doing contextual theology for diverse Christian communities,” and are “case studies in contextualizing of the gospel.” We shall briefly discuss the gospel Paul inculturated, present his cross-cultural personality as a model agent of inculturation, and analyse Paul’s methods of contextualizing as affirmation of culture, use of cultural language and imagery, relativization, confrontation and transformation of culture, and indicate some pointers for possible relevant Indian readings of Paul.

The question whether Paul is relevant or not to India will depend whether we can preach and live the gospel Paul preached and lived. The gospel Paul preached and lived was the radical newness God accomplished in Christ Jesus: “A new creation” or “a new humanity,” which is but another version of the old story of enabling “people and communities to be restored into the image of God.

*Keywords:* Culture, inculturation, relativising of culture, confrontation of culture, transformation of culture.

### **Introduction**

Culture is one of the most difficult things to define exactly. A working definition could be that it stands for “the more or less integrated system of ideas, feelings and values and their associated patterns of behaviour and products shared by a group of people.”[1] A simpler definition could be: “The sum total ideas, images, myths,

language, laws, values and institutions that express a given society's analysis of itself and of the world as it knows it.”[2] Christianity, according to the West African missiologist, Lamin Sanneh, has been able to enter such living cultural worlds with relative ease, and is compatible with all cultures. He calls this the “translatability” of Christian message.[3] Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles initiated this process. Today, Paul is seen more as a contextual, pastoral or missionary theologian than a systematic theologian. His letters are “unrivalled in offering examples of doing contextual theology for diverse Christian communities,” and are “case studies in contextualizing of the gospel.”[4] We shall briefly discuss the gospel Paul inculturated, present his cross-cultural personality as a model agent of inculturation, and analyse Paul’s methods of contextualizing[5] as affirmation of culture, use of cultural language and imagery, relativization, confrontation and transformation of culture, and indicate some pointers for possible relevant Indian readings of Paul.

## **What God has done in and through Jesus Christ: The Gospel Paul Inculturated**

What was Paul “actually contextualizing in his letters? If Paul’s theology takes many shapes, what keeps it from becoming a “chameleon-theology”?[6] In Galatians 2:14, Paul speaks about the “truth of the gospel” in a context of the gospel under threat, something “normative, something *trans*contextual about the faith he conveys.[7] The uncovering of the transcontextual is the problem. In the past, the search was for “some controlling idea or core doctrine” like “justification by faith” or “participation in Christ” or “salvation.”[8] This approach failed to capture the contextual nature of Paul’s theology. But Paul, the theologian, cannot be cut off from Paul the missionary pastor.[9]

Recent scholarship sees the normative aspect of Paul’s thought in terms of a foundational narrative or story about God and Christ that underlies Paul’s theological arguments in his letters.[10] It is also an abiding coherence in Paul’s thought that is constantly interacting with the contingent circumstances of the mission field.”[11] As a pastor, Paul was to proclaim the gospel (1 Cor 9:

22), and shape the lives of his converts in accordance with the gospel (e. g. Phil 1: 27), not to formulate a theology. The gospel was the singular passion of Paul's life and ministry (1 Cor 9: 23).[12] His letters are reflections on how the gospel intersects with the world in which his readers live, and how they are to think and act in that world.[13] The coherent element that gives shape to everything in Paul's thought is in the "gospel." [14]

Significantly the noun "gospel" (*euangelion*) appears sixty times in the Pauline corpus (forty-eight of them in the undisputed letters). Paul also uses other nearly equivalent terms for the gospel.[15] What did Paul mean by "gospel"? In the OT, it meant the "announcement of the good news of God's coming salvation (e. g. Is 40: 9; 52: 7 = Rom 10:15); and its Christian usage may go back to Jesus himself (Mt 11: 5; Lk 4: 16-21) and the church before Paul (e. g. Acts 10: 36-38)."[16] "Gospel" was also used for the good news about the birth, accession or victory of a king or emperor in the Greco-Roman world.[17] Hence, it would have been associated with political and religious aspects related to the rule of the imperial "saviour." [18] It was typical of Paul to use a term that has both a Jewish and a pagan past and give it a distinctively Christian meaning.[19]

The gospel, for Paul, first and foremost, "stands for the powerful proclamation of Christ for people to believe in him and receive revelation (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 9: 16-18; 1 Thess 1: 5; Col 1: 5-6).[20] It was proclaimed both to pagans and Christians (Rom 1:15) and includes "the full exposition of the gospel that is designed to edify believers and ground them in the faith." [21] It is "the power of God for salvation" (Rom 1:16), has a coherent and stable content (see Gal 1:6-9 and 2: 5, 14 ("the truth of the gospel")), stands for the nonnegotiable message Paul preaches, and is normative for both Christian belief and behaviour (e. g. Rom 1: 1-4; 10: 16; 1 Cor 15: 1-2; 2 Cor 9: 13; 11: 4, Phil 1: 27; Col 1: 5; Eph 1: 13; 2 Thess 1: 8; 1 Tim 1: 11).[22] The letters of Paul assume and interpret the gospel.[23] The gospel is Christological ("the gospel concerning his Son" Rom 1: 3-4) and soteriological ("the power of God for salvation" Rom 1: 16-17).

In simple words the gospel Paul preaches is "Christ." [24] Paul is not concerned with Christology as such, but in the good news of

God's loving and saving intervention in Jesus Christ "for us" (Rom 8: 31-32).[25] He tells the Corinthians: "We proclaim Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1: 23). The focus is on Christ's death and resurrection as the saving events (1 Cor 15: 3-4; Rom 4: 24-25; 2 Cor 4: 14; 1 Thess 4: 14), which includes his present lordship (2 Cor 4: 5; Phil 2: 0-11) and future return (1 Thess 1: 10; 4: 13- 5: 11; 1 Cor 1: 7-8; 15: 23; Phil 3: 20-21). Christian faith and life are not based on some timeless theological truth but on a contingent, historical happening: the event of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. All of Paul's theological reflection is around the one gospel of what God has done in and through Jesus Christ.[26]

## **A Cross-Cultural Paul: Model Inculturator of the Gospel**

To inculturate the gospel, a missionary must first insert himself/herself into the culture of the community. Paul was such a missionary. Christ, Son of God, inculturated himself into human culture. In imitation of Christ "the missionary seeks to become an adopted child"[27] of the community to which he preaches the Gospel. Paul was the adopted child of the Gentile world because he was called by God even before his birth to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles (cf. Gal 1: 15-16). Scholarly debate has been: How should we understand Paul's identity and thought?[28] Are the letters of Paul witnesses to his Jewishness[29], or are they influenced by the Graeco-Roman philosophy, rhetoric and social practice?[30] The answer to this question will influence our perception of how Paul interacted with the Jewish and Graeco-Roman cultural and social worlds of his day.[31]

Paul himself never mentions where he was born and was brought up. Luke tells us he was born in Tarsus in the province of Cilicia (Acts 22:3), and was a "citizen of no mean city" (Acts 21:39). Indirect support for this is found in the Hellenistic outlook and style of the undisputed Pauline letters. If Paul was born in Tarsus, did he live long enough there to be influenced by Hellenistic environment?[32] Acts seems to contradict it: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city of Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3). A generation ago, scholars argued for the historicity of

this reference, suggesting that Paul grew up in the centre of Judaism where the Torah prevailed in the home and in the street.[33]

Recent research, however, indicates Tarsus rather than Jerusalem may be where Paul grew up and was educated. His preference for the Septuagint, familiarity with Stoicism, ability to use its idioms and rhetorical strategies, close acquaintance with Hellenistic literary styles, all seem to be in favour of Tarsus as the environment where Paul grew up.[34] Though of pure Hebrew blood, Paul was “bilingual at least, and could express himself fluently in Aramaic as well as in Greek.[35] Being bi-lingual also means being bi-cultural. Paul was, in fact, a cross-cultural person, one “who crossed cultures,” the Jew who lived like a Gentile. To embrace another social identity, for Paul, was not only a missionary strategy, but a matter of principle, a way of being true to God’s equal love for all human beings with impartiality toward their differences as peoples[36]. Paul can be described as a child of mixed parents of Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures. He was “at the same time and completely both Jew and Greek, a perfect example of the crossbreeding. His bicultural background was the providential equipment that enabled him to be the bridge between the Jewish matrix of the Christian faith and its universal reach.”[37] Greeks, Romans and Jews of Paul’s time were “ethnocentric,” regarding themselves generally superior to others.[38] The Jews hated the rest of the world, and the rest reciprocated.[39] The Jewish religion was considered a “barbarous superstition” and the Jews, “the vilest of peoples.”[40] The Jews too consider the rest of the world as “Gentiles,” a “bunch of sinners, radically impure and hated by God.”[41] In this situation, Christianity needed a man to form a bridge between the two antagonistic worlds. Paul was the man: A Jew to the core, born outside Palestine in the midst of Gentiles and thoroughly trained in Greek culture,[42] Paul represented the best of both worlds. He was at home in both, and his aim was to make Christianity be at home in both. In him were both Christianity and Judaism at their best.

### **How did Paul Inculturate the Gospel?**

Born in the Jewish cradle, Christianity’s first contact was the Graeco-Roman world. There was no better agent than Paul of Tarsus to spread its good news. For Paul, incarnating the gospel within the

dominant Graeco-Roman culture meant more than “simply exchanging Jewish categories and expressions for Greek ones without any loss of meaning.” It involved “affirming, relativizing, confronting and transforming culture.”[43]

### **Affirming Culture: First Step of Inculturation**

Paul never directly addressed the question of culture,[44] but the implications of his writings are clear. Culture has a theological dimension. It is rooted in God’s creation and his ongoing commitment to the world. Paul assumes God’s creative presence in the created order, which includes culture.[45] In the beginning of his letter to the Romans, Paul speaks of God’s gracious activity in creation and conscience. Using the Hellenistic religious vocabulary of the Stoics, Paul affirms that God’s “eternal power” and “divine nature” are visible to all people through his creative order, providing them a genuine knowledge of the Creator (Rom 1: 19-20). They have no excuse for their sins. Their conscience makes people know what is right and wrong (Rom 2: 14-15). This moral consciousness is not simply the innate human capacity, but the grace of the Holy Spirit working in individuals and cultures and religions.[46] When cultures and their ethical and religious values reflect God’s truth and right action, grace is at work.[47] Thus, Paul affirms the particularity of cultures and uses it as a vehicle of the gospel message which is powerfully expressed in his statement of 1 Cor 9: 19-23: “I have become all things to all people... I do it all for the sake of the gospel.” This is “the incarnation principle”[48] of being born into the community to which one preaches the Gospel Christ, as Christ was. Physical birth into a community is not possible, but psychological rebirth out of love into a new people is possible, and “knows no limits.”[49] The radicality of Paul’s declaration is often not appreciated sufficiently. “By affirming the basic equality of every culture and cultural group, Paul rejects the ethnocentrism of his time. By voluntarily identifying with Jews and Gentiles, Paul validates their distinctive cultural commitments.”[50] Accepting another culture for Paul was “more than merely tolerating or indulging the other person with his or her ethnic and cultural features; it entails accepting, giving space for, respecting the distinctiveness of the other.”[51] Paul wanted to safeguard the cultural particularity of a

Jew as a Jew and a Gentile as a Gentile, but challenged both the Jews and Gentiles to find in Jesus Christ their true affirmation.”[52]

Paul never gave up his identity as a “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3: 6; cf. 2 Cor 11: 22; 1 Cor 16: 8) when he was called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, nor did he try to make Jewish Christians into Greeks and force them to give up their cultural symbols like circumcision or dietary laws. He continued to identify with his “own people,” his “kindred according to the flesh,” and agonized over their unbelief (Rom 9: 2-3). Paul never gave up his conviction that God had a plan for the Jews as *Jews* (Rom 1: 16; 11: 26-29). Jesus remained a Messiah of the Jews and the gospel continued to make a home within the Jewish Scriptures and culture.[53] Paul also came to realize that the gospel had to come to live within the language and culture of the Hellenistic world.[54] The gospel was “translatable” from Aramaic and Hebrew into new linguistic and cultural forms. Hellenistic culture became the natural extension of the life of the Christian movement.[55] Thus, affirming culture was Paul’s first step in inculturating the gospel.

## **Gospel Inculturated Expresses Itself in Cultural Language and Imagery**

The translation of the message of Jesus was crucial for Christianity to transcend its Palestinian cultural roots and be intelligible to the wider Hellenistic world. People’s perception and interpretation of reality (world view) is built into the language.[56] Language provides the symbolic world of a linguistic community. By language, the community orders and maintains its world, confirms and communicates it.”[57] With Greek, Paul was able to express the gospel with a new vocabulary and a new set of images to communicate with urban Gentiles.[58] Paul’s letters are full of theological language taken from the life of its readers, Graeco-Roman philosophical and religious circles.[59]

Words like “wisdom” (*sophia*) or “knowledge” (*gnosis*), already used in the Greek Bible, were familiar to Paul. The word “conscience” (e. g. Rom 2: 15; 1 Cor 8: 7-12; 10: 25-29; 2 Cor 4 2; 5: 11) is new, virtually absent from the Jewish writings, but is found in popular Greek sources like the writings of the Stoic philosophers.[60] The

word *reconciliation* occurs exclusively in Greek secular literature or in materials heavily influenced by Hellenism.[61] It means restoring peace between enemies and exchanging friendship for hostility. This secular image became the key way of picturing God's reconciling work on behalf of humankind in the death of Christ.[62]

In his ethical teaching too, Paul co-opts the vocabulary of Hellenistic moralism. Philippians 4: 8 is a typical example. The series of virtues listed here would have sounded familiar to his audience: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." What Paul tells his Christians is to embrace the good wherever it is found, provided it is seen in the light of Christ, and whatever we do that is pleasing, commendable and excellent is sanctified by life "in Christ." [63] For Paul, cultures have virtues and values that can be affirmed and drawn into the service of the gospel.[64]

While Jesus used primarily the rural imagery in his preaching and teaching, Paul drew from the symbols and imagery of the city dwellers of the Roman Empire. From the sporting world, he made use of images like the track and boxing which were highly significant for urban gentile culture (1 Corinthians 9: 24-27; cf. also Gal 2: 2; 5: 7; Phil 3: 13-14; 1 Tim 4: 7-8; 2 Tim 2: 5; 4: 7). From education, he borrowed the figure of the pedagogue. The family slave in Hellenistic society functioned as guardian, teacher and disciplinarian of the children until their adulthood (Gal 3: 23-25).[65] Paul made use of commercial symbols like "seal" (2 Cor 1: 22; Eph 1: 13; 4: 30) which signifies the mark of ownership, and the "guarantee" (*arrabon*) is applied to the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1: 22; 5: 5; Eph 1: 14).[66] The Stoic expression "gentle ...as a nurse" (1 Thess 2: 7) portrays Paul's tender care for his readers and their responsibility to one another.[67] These images are drawn from daily life in urban Hellenistic society providing people a lens through which they can gain a fresh vision of God's saving work and their response to it. Paul's use of new forms of imagining the gospel from the cultural world of his communities not only facilitated communication with the Gentiles, but it also enriched and deepened his understanding of



the Christian message itself.[68] Most of all, it made the gospel message belong to the people. Paul happily embraced whatever linguistic and cultural resources were available to him in order to convey the significance of Jesus Christ to his audiences.[69]

In spite of protesting that the message he was preaching did not imitate the ornamental rhetoric of the Sophists (cf. 1 Cor 2: 1-5; 2 Cor 11: 6), Paul made extensive use of the cultural forms the ancient rhetoric.[70] “What is important to point out is not so much how exactly Paul followed the classical rhetoric, but his use of rhetoric to effect change in his audience, as well as to aid their retaining of what they heard.”[71] Paul was using the best method of conveying a message available in his time. The example of Paul should inspire us. The ‘medium is often the message too.’

Paul also made use of conventions and institutions of the Graeco-Roman society like the ‘household’ which could comprise not only the extended family, but also the slaves, hired workers and even tenants and business associates.[72] A household was the place of gathering for the Pauline communities (Rom 16: 5; 1 Cor 16: 19; Col 4: 15; Philem 2). Paul used the household concept to describe the church (Gal 6: 10; Eph 2: 19; 1 Tim 3: 15; 2 Tim 2: 20-21) as well as his own ministry (1 Cor 4: 1-2; 9: 17; Col 1: 25).[73]

Paul, thus, did not stigmatize the dominant Graeco-Roman culture of his time as inherently sinful to be shunned. On the contrary, he recognized God’s grace in human culture. He became a catalyst for the inculturation of the gospel within it.[74] Paul was also flexible in his use of the cultural materials: language, religion, philosophy, ethics, rhetoric, literature, politics, social institutions, family, and community life – as long as they did not conflict with the gospel.[75] Was it a conscious decision? Paul was at home in the urban Graeco-Roman world of his time. It would have been quite natural that his theologizing should tap the language and life of that world as the gospel came into contact with the cultural and religious contexts of the Mediterranean world. He was not concerned as to whether a particular expression or language was Jewish or Greek in its origin, provided it could be used in the service of the gospel and the mission of Jesus Christ.[76]

## Gospel Inculturated Relativizes Culture

True, the gospel expressed in one's cultural language, images and conventions makes the gospel at home in one's culture; the gospel, in fact, becomes one's very own. However, when I express the gospel in my cultural language and images, I also become aware that the gospel cannot be contained totally in my own cultural expressions. It cannot be so in any cultural setting too. The gospel of Jesus far exceeds what my culture can express. Hence, a genuine search for understanding the gospel will make me open to welcome other cultural expressions for a deeper appreciation of Christ and his gospel. I cannot absolutize the expression about the gospel in my culture. Hence, the gospel makes my culture relative.

Paul believed that God had done something radically new in Christ which signals an end to the old order. A radical view of the world is needed. Paul tells the Galatians: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3: 28; cf. Col 3: 11).[77] Being "in Christ" brings about a new set of relationships for believers. It relativizes the major distinctions of human society.[78] Paul's injunction to the Galatians might have been in response to the Jewish cultural imperialism.[79] When one thinks that one's cultural expression about God or Jesus or the gospel is the only way others must follow, it is cultural imperialism. Here, in the Galatian context, the Jewish Christian missionaries were apparently trying to force Gentile converts to observe the Law of Moses as a requirement of being full members of the people of God. These laws were like circumcision (Gal 6: 12-13), food laws (Gal 2: 11-14) and the observance of the Jewish holidays (Gal 4: 10). Both Jews and non-Jews recognized these as distinctive of the Jews. Hence, those who advocated the necessary practice of these laws by every body were absolutizing the Jewish culture and imposing it on Gentiles.[80]

Paul's position on the matter is very clear: "For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!" (Gal 6: 15; cf. 5: 6). God's new creative work makes every cultural symbol *spiritually* unnecessary.[81] Paul had denounced Peter for refusing table-fellowship with the Gentiles as

a denial of the “truth of the gospel” itself since it draws cultural boundaries for the Christian community other than faith in Christ (Gal 2: 11-14). It forces the Gentiles “to live like Jews” (Gal 2: 14).[82] In the new creation, cultural “border-crossings” that split the Christian fellowship into pure and impure, first-and second-class citizens, no longer apply. For a Jew like Paul, this was no less than a cultural revolution.[83] Many of Paul’s Jewish contemporaries must have thought he was betraying his own culture.

The Roman church had the opposite problem of Galatia. The Gentile majority in Rome had assumed that they had replaced the Jews as God’s favoured nation and wanted to cut themselves off from their Jewish roots.[84] This was Roman ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism, whether coming from the Jews or the Gentiles, was not acceptable in the new order introduced by Christ. The relativizing of the Gentile culture is seen in Colossians 3: 11 where Paul affirms that in the new humanity, “there is no longer barbarian, Scythian..... These terms addressed the cultural superiority of the Greeks. Every culture becomes provisional in the light of the cross.[85]

Paul’s culturally plural stance is reinforced in 1 Cor 9: 20: “To the Jews, I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews.” How is it possible for a Jew to intentionally to decide to *become a Jew*? Paul no longer understands what it means to be a Jew in the same way as he did before he met Christ. In Christ Paul has transcended all cultural allegiances.[86] The former definitions of kinship based on ethnicity and genealogy have been superseded by Christians’ adoption into a single family of believers under one Father (Rom 8: 14-17; 9: 6-8; Gal 3: 26-29; 4: 5-7).[87] Each group must be willing to lay down their cultural rights in order to participate in a community that finds its transcending allegiance in Jesus Christ.[88]

For Paul, the cross of Christ relativizes cultural and social distinctions; but it does not remove them. Paul affirms cultural particularity, but rejects cultural privilege.[89] He deprived each culture of ultimacy in order to give them all legitimacy in the family of cultures.[90]

## Gospel when Inculturated Confronts Culture

Culture not only provides the locus for God's gracious activity, it is also the theatre of human sinfulness.[91] It means culture has its negative, dehumanizing elements that the gospel has to boldly confront. "Paul's analysis of human condition in Romans 1:18-3:20 is still applicable today. It speaks about the plight of individual sinners as well as human cultures and societies in a collective sense. Cultures along with their worldviews and social behaviours can be ridden with the cancer of sin." [92] The gospel cannot be good news without prophetically judging the sinful elements of culture and the "works of darkness" (Rom 13: 12) in human society.[93]

Paul showed us the way to confront culture. He was, first and foremost, a radical critic of Jewish culture.[94] Paul's relationship with his own culture is said to be "*contracultural*" – "deeply embedded in it, but inverting key aspects of it." [95] He was able to critique the law and the Jewish culture as an insider (Phil 3: 3-9; Gal 5: 6; Rom 2: 1-3: 20). He distanced himself enough from his own culture to perceive elements in it that were incompatible with the gospel.[96] To criticize one's own culture is said to be like trying to push a bus while you are still sitting in it.[97] Yet it was essential that Paul "push the bus" if he were to offer a gospel to the Gentiles that was rooted in the Jewish Scriptures but freed from Jewish ethnocentrism.[98]

Like Paul, the gospel must challenge the presuppositions of the missionary's culture, if it has any hope of speaking prophetically to the new culture in which the gospel is being contextualized.[99] Not only a missionary, but each Christian community must grapple with the gospel's critique of its own culture, particularly when that culture claims in some sense to be "Christian." It is much easier to recognize the cultural speck in another's eye than to come to terms with the log in my own. [100] The gospel is not only a searchlight that I use to uncover the sinful in the cultures of others; it is also a mirror that I must hold up to my own face.[101]

## Gospel Inculturated Transforms Culture

Speaking about the interpretation of the Bible from the perspective of the indigenous cultures of Latin America, Pablo Richard says: "The indigenous community that reads the Bible begins to transform the biblical text, but at the same time the biblical text begins to transform the indigenous community. The community reads the text, and the text reads the community." [102] Something similar happens when the gospel is inculturated into a culture. In the interface, the gospel also transforms itself into the text of the community in so far as it is expressed in its symbols, language and images. Once the cultural symbols of the community become the vehicles of the gospel, they become "signals of transcendence" [103] and are thus transformed.

The gospel's judgment on culture is never the last word. Grace opens up the potential for cultures to be re-formed from within. [104] Just as sin has a negative impact on culture, so the new creation in Christ the gospel proclaims will affect culture. [105] Paul does not envision Christians retreating from their earthly cultural existence to form some kind of new "Christian culture." They stand "with one foot outside of their own culture while the other remaining firmly planted in it." [106] Christians function within their society as a prophetic subculture, whose cross-shaped living offers a visible alternative to the ethos of the dominant culture. [107]

One way of transforming culture is by transforming its cultural language through "re-signifying it." Paul often converts language from pagan belief system to give a transformed meaning. For example, he uses the notion of "transformation" (*metamorphosis*), a term of the Greek mystery religions, and injects a new meaning of "the inner renewal of the believer in conformity with Christ" (Rom 12: 2; 2 Cor 3: 18). [108] Similarly, Paul takes words like "mystery" (Rom 16: 25-26; 1 Cor 2: 7; Eph 1: 19; 3: 3, 5; Col 1: 26-27), "libation" (Phil 2: 17), and even "gospel" itself which had associations with pagan religious practices or the Caesar cult and gives new meanings that in part alters and in part replaces the old. [109]

Unfolding the implications of the Christ-event also transforms the values, ethical teachings and conventions of behaviour. Paul's teaching on "humility" (Phil 2: 3; Eph 4: 2; Col 3: 12) calling the disciples to follow the humility of Christ himself (Phil 2: 5-8) is a counter-cultural message. In the Graeco-Roman understanding humility meant servility, having the image of a slave.[110] The 'household codes' in Ephesians and Colossians were taken from the Graeco-Roman cultural world. Materially the codes may be the same, but relationship within the household becomes a concrete expression of what it means to live under the lordship of Christ. Paul adds a phrase like "in the Lord" (Col 3: 18, 20) to his instructions to wives or children, or he tells slaves that by working for their earthly masters they are really serving their heavenly Lord (Col 3: 23). [111]

If Paul can call for sweeping changes as regards relationship between Jews and Gentiles, why was he so conservative as regards slaves and women? Within the first century Roman world, advocating sweeping changes in society was simply not an option for the church which was a minority and marginalized community in the midst of a dominant culture. Calls for such changes would have endangered the very existence of the community.[112]

## Pointers towards Indian Readings of Paul

In a recent book, *Cross-Cultural Paul: Journey to Others, Journeys to Ourselves*, [113] three biblical scholars, Charles H. Cosgrove, Herold Weiss and K. K. (Khiok-Khng) Yeo (European American, Argentine, and Chinese respectively) each interpret Paul from two different socio-cultural locations – their own and another. India offers almost infinite possibilities of reading Paul from a variety of socio-cultural locations. It could be challenging as well as rewarding. The second pertinent teaching of Paul could be the radical newness he proclaimed in Galatians 3: 27-28. Thirdly, only cross-cultural followers of Christ like Paul of Tarsus would effectively proclaim of the Good News of the Kingdom of God in India.

## Multi-Readings of Paul

Indian theology or efforts at inculturation in India, so far, have been, by and large, from the perspective of the dominant culture. The experience of the *Dalits* and Tribals has been largely ignored. "If there is an Indian theology it must be based on the experience of Christian people. If 60-70 percent of the Christians in this country come from the Scheduled caste and the Scheduled Tribe communities, one may again ask: to what extent are the experiences of these people made part of the theological reflection in this country." [114] The same thing can be said about the interpretation of Scripture. An Indian reading of Paul should include the *Dalit* and Tribal readings of Paul too. The late Fr. George M. Soares Prabhu said: "The Bible is particularly responsive to a tribal interpretation. It is a book steeped in tribal ethos. The Old Testament expresses the faith of the tribes of Israel, and remains faithful to its tribal ethos even when its tribal structure was replaced by a monarchy. The teaching of Jesus can be seen as a return to the tribal ethos." [115] The teaching of Paul too, I am sure, can be read and interpreted from a tribal or *Dalit* perspective.

The Brazilian biblical scholar, Carlos Mesters' efforts to read the Bible from the perspective of the native South Americans, through the lens of their myths and stories, [116] can give us insights into our reading of the Bible from the tribal and *Dalit* perspectives. According to Mesters, "Paul defined his mission as that of a 'fellow worker with God.' We, too, are called to collaborate with the God who is already at work in the life of the Indians. If we attempt to enforce our ways on them, we are obstructing the treasures the God has placed in their lives." [117]

Paul not only used the Hellenistic cultural language, images, institutions, etc. to express the gospel, he also developed his theological language from the life experience of people. He did not limit himself to using fixed terms for a particular reality. For example, Paul expresses the meaning of the death of Christ in many ways: it is reconciliation (2 Cor 5: 18-20; Rom 5: 10-11; Eph 2: 16; Col 1: 20-22), sacrifice (Rom 3: 25; 8: 3; 1 Cor 5: 7) representation (1 Cor 15: 14-15), redemption Rom 3: 24; 1 Cor 7: 21-23; Gal 4: 5), righteousness (Rom 3: 21-26; 5: 9; 2 Cor 5: 21), curse (Gal 3: 13), self-giving/emptying (Rom 8: 32; Gal 1: 4; 2: 20; Phil 2: 7), victory

over the powers (Col 2: 15), paradoxical power and wisdom (1 Cor 1: 24-25; 2 Cor 13: 4). These are some examples among many.[118]

The use of this variety of images, first, conveys the richness of the meaning of the death of Christ which can hardly be described with one terminology. Secondly, Paul could tailor his interpretation of the meaning of the atoning death of Christ to fit the needs and circumstance of his audience.[119] In Galatians, Paul uses the word redemption. His opponents were trying to enslave the Galatians by trying to impose on them the yoke of circumcision and the Mosaic Law. The word redemption would have not only evoked the ransom of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, but also would have been familiar to the Gentiles from the practice of buying back slaves. The power of the word for Galatians is obvious. Christ's death means ransom and release from those who have been enslaved under the law and its curse (Gal 3: 15; 4: 1-5).[120] Hence, "[a] preacher would have delighted ...to contrast the price paid by the slave in the secular world with the free gift of God in Christ." [121]

Paul's description of the believers' experience of the new life in Christ is even more varied, drawing from Scripture and secular culture, including those from everyday life experience (inheritance, putting on or off clothes, salvation/rescue, putting on armour), commerce (redemption, "seal" of ownership), agriculture (grafting, first fruits), customs and practices of society (justification, reconciliation, freedom/liberation, citizenship), religious practice (sanctification, washing, cleansing, anointing), major life events (birth, adoption, marriage, death and life) as well as various others (new creation, transformation, union with Christ).[122] One must not exalt one single out or absolutize any single metaphor or theme. Paul shows us the way of both the richness of language available to describe the church's multi-dimensional experience of salvation and the variety of situations to which the language must be applied.[123]

Which of the metaphors Paul used to express the meaning of the death of Christ would be more meaningful for our communities is our task to search. Paul is free to use whatever theological themes or images that enable the gospel to be incarnated into the life of the communities to which he writes. He is compared to a military field



command centre that is able to dispatch then required material according to the needs of the various field outposts.[124]

Reading Scripture through one's own cultural eyes makes the Scripture one's own. To illustrate this, let me refer to two examples: An Australian Aborigine Lutheran Pastor's experience and the experience of the Mizos in Mizoram (Northeast India). These examples are illustrative, and so are appropriate to quote fully:

I have been able to understand and communicate Western Christianity [to other Aborigines] because I have been trained in European culture. But it was still very painful for me when I noticed that my people were straining desperately as they attempted to understand and grasp the deep meaning of the gospel. Only when I began to learn their stories and customs and used them as pictures to see and understand the gospel did I notice their faces light up. To hear comments such as: "Ah! It's like our story!" made me very happy to share the gospel with my people.[125]

Similar was the experience of the Mizos according to the report of the pioneer missionaries to Mizoram, Rev. J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge:

Our first message, as soon as we could speak the language, was to proclaim a Saviour from sin. But the people had no sense of sin and felt no need for such a Saviour. Then, we found a point of contact. We proclaimed Jesus as the vanquisher of the Devil as the One who had bound the "strong man" and taken away from him" all his armour wherein he trusted" and so had made it possible for his slaves to be free. This, to the Lushais, (now known as Mizos) was "Good News" indeed and exactly met their great need.[126]

## **Radical Newness in Christ: All are One**

If Paul had been in India, what would have been his approach to the problem of caste? We have already mentioned that Paul's apparent conservative stance as regards the status of women and slaves of his time might have been prompted by the minority and marginalized status of the Christian community of the first century Roman world. It was simply no option for the church advocate sweeping changes in to society. But if Paul were to be

in today's India, things would be different. He would boldly proclaim and promulgate the radical newness God has brought in Christ Jesus: *As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus* (Gal 3: 27-28) because he would know he has the backing of the Constitution of the country (Section 15) which guarantees the right to equality irrespective of caste, creed, place of birth, etc. as the fundamental right of all its citizens.[127] The Church in India has not been able to proclaim the radical newness God accomplished in Christ effectively because she herself is still plagued with the menace of a caste-ridden mentality. The church, especially its leadership, needs the Damascus experience of Paul in order to gain the "surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord" (Phil 3: 8). Only then can the church boldly proclaim the radical newness of what God accomplished in Christ Jesus. Until then, the church will have to stand as a hapless spectator to the injustices of caste, ethnic and religious conflicts as well as injustices to women, the poor and the marginalized of India.

## **Formation to be a Cross-Cultural Person**

One of the most powerful images that emerge when one reads Paul's letters is his cross-cultural personality powerfully expressed in his celebrated declaration in 1 Corinthians 9: *"I have become all things all people... and I do it all for the sake of the gospel."* While being deeply rooted in and fiercely loyal to Jewish culture, Paul was a man at home in the Hellenistic culture. His birth in a cosmopolitan city of Tarsus together with his education and training made him a cross-cultural person singularly equipped to translate the gospel of Christ cross-culturally. Agents of the same gospel of Christ in a multi-ethnic and cultural milieu of India also need to be like Paul. A recent issue of *Missiology*[128] devoted its entire issue on training church personnel for cross-cultural mission. The India of recent days is becoming more fragmented. Regional politics, parties and issues are occupying the main stage. The situation is likely to become worse than better if proactive steps are not taken.

Christian presence in India is strong enough to be the 'the light, 'salt' and 'the leaven' in the country. Christian leadership, especially of the priests and the religious should follow the path of Paul in order to be bridge-builders across the caste and creed divide that is threatening the country. The formation of the priests and the religious should include programmes to train them to be cross-cultural persons or bilingual or tri-lingual, and consequently bicultural or tri-cultural too in order to be 'all things to all people.' Producing leaders who can truly say after the manner of Paul: *To the Dalits, I have become as a Dalit, to the tribals, I have become as a tribal, to the marginalized, I have become as marginalized; and I do it all for the sake of the gospel*, will be a relevant way to read Paul in India and it is the need of the hour.

## Conclusion

The question whether Paul is relevant or not to India will depend whether we can preach and live the gospel Paul preached and lived. The gospel Paul preached and lived was the radical newness God accomplished in Christ Jesus: "A new creation" (2 Cor 5: 17; Gal 6: 5), or "a new humanity" (Eph 2: 15), which is but another version of the old story of enabling "people and communities to be restored into the image of God. And if we begin to learn what that means, there can be no agenda more relevant, attractive and compelling in the world." [129] This will truly be possible, if the church leadership, after the example of Paul, can be 'all things to all peoples, for the sake of the gospel,' because of the "surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord" (Phil 3: 8), making the community "come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph 4: 13) enabling the community to share in the glory of God which means being 'fully human and fully alive.'

## Notes

- [1] Paul Hierbert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985, p. 30.
- [2] John J. Kilgallon, "The Christian Bible and Culture," in *Studia Missionalia* 44 (1994) 45, note 2

- [3] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, New York: Orbis Books, 1989, pp. 50-51
- [4] Dean Fleming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Pattern for Theology and Mission*, Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005, p. 89 (Henceforth, Contextualization).
- [5] The terms contextualization and inculturation are used interchangeably here. Every context may not be cultural, but every cultural element is also a context.
- [6] Ibid., p. 90.
- [7] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 90
- [8] For a detail discussion on the search, see Joseph Fleunik, "The Center of Pauline Theology," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 461-78, esp. 469-76.
- [9] Fleming, *Contextualization*, pp. 90-91
- [10] See Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3: 1-4:11*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2002); Idem, "Crucified with Christ," in J. M. Bassler, ed., *Pauline Theology, Volume 1: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), pp 227-46; N. T Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), esp. pp. 403-9, Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994); Norman R. Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). See also B. W. Longenecker, ed., *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).
- [11] This "coherence-contingency" approach was articulated by Christian Beker. See *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980; idem, "Recasting Pauline Theology: The Coherence-Contingency-Scheme as Interpretive Method," in J. M. Bassler, ed., *Pauline Theology, Volume 1: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991, pp 15-24.
- [12] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 92.

- [13] Paul J. Achtemeier, "Finding the Way to Paul's Theology: A Response to J Christian Beker and J. Paul Sampley," in J. M. Bassler, ed., *Pauline Theology, Volume 1: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991, p. 25
- [14] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 92
- [15][15] Ibid, see note 8, like 'proclamation' (*kerygma*) or 'word' (*logos*, e. g. 'word of the cross,' 1 Cor 1: 18; 'word of Christ,' Col 3: 16; 'word of reconciliation,' 2 Cor 5: 19; 'word of truth, the gospel,' Col 1: 5; Eph 1: 13).
- [16] Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Pauline Gospel," in Peter Stuhlmacher, ed., *The Gospel and the Gospels*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, p. 156-66
- [17] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 92
- [18] R. A. Horsley, "Rhetoric and Empire – and 1 Corinthians," in R. A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honour of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000) 91-92
- [19] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 93
- [20] Ibid.
- [21] Peter T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993, pp. 61-65.
- [22] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 93
- [23] Ibid.
- [24] See Rom 16: 25; 1 Cor 1: 24; 15: 12; Phil 1: 15-18); or "the Son of God" (Rom 1: 9; 2 Cor 1: 19; Gal 1: 16) or "Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor 4: 5), all of which can stand as shorthand terms for his gospel. It is, above all, the "gospel of Christ" (Rom 15: 19; 2 Cor 9: 13; Gal 1: 7; Phil 1: 27), a message about Jesus, God's beloved Son. Yet it is also God's gospel (Rom 1: 1; 15: 16; 2 Cor 11: 7; 1 Thess 2: 2, 8).
- [25] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 94
- [26] Ibid., pp. 94-95
- [27] Ivan Illich, "Selection and Formation of the Missioner," in his book: *The Church, Change and Development*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1970, p. 98.

- [28] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 120
- [29] The publication of E. P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) is said to have influenced this thinking which gave a "new perspective" on Paul seeking to understand Paul's thought in the light of Palestinian Judaism of his time. See also E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) and James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
- [30] Cf. Troels Engberg-Perdersen, *Paul and the Stoics*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000, and Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989.
- [31] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 120
- [32] C. J. Roetzel, *Paul: the Man and the Myth*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999, p.11.
- [33] Ibid.
- [34] Ibid., p. 12.
- [35] Bermejo, *Paul, Missionary, Mystic, Martyr*, Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2007, p. 1.
- [36] Charles H. Cosgrove, Herold Weiss and K. K. (Khiok-Khng) Yeo, *Cross-Cultural Paul: Journeys to Others, Journeys to Ourselves*, p. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, pp. 3-4.
- [37] Lucien Legrand, *The Bible on Culture*, Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2001, p.138.
- [38] Charles H. Cosgrove, "Did Paul Value Ethnicity?" *CBQ* 68/2 (2006) 273. See also A. N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- [39] L. M. Bermejo, *Paul*, p.11.
- [40] Ibid.
- [41] Ibid.
- [42] Ibid., p.12.
- [43] Fleming, *Contextualization*, pp. 125-126. See also H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*, New York: Harper and Row, 1951.
- [44] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p.125

- [45] William A. Dyrness, *The Earth Is God's: A Theology of American Culture*, New York, Marykuoll: Orbis, 1995, p. 58.
- [46] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 126
- [47] Dean Fleming, "Foundations for Responding to Religious Pluralism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31, Spring, 1997, p. 66-67
- [48] Fleming, *Contextualization*, pp. 126-127.
- [49] Ivan Illich, *Selection and Formation of a Missioner*, p. 98.
- [50] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 127
- [51] Charles Cousar, "Paul and Multiculturalism," in Walter Brueggemann and G. WE. Stroup, eds., *Many Voices, One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998, p. 56.
- [52] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 47
- [53] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 128.
- [54] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 128
- [55] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 1, 51 and passim
- [56] Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, New York/ Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 247.
- [57] M. Robert Mulholland, "Sociological Criticism," in *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*, D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery, (eds.), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991, p. 302.
- [58] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 129
- [59] Ibid.
- [60] Ibid.
- [61] S. E. Porter, "Peace, Reconciliation," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993, p. 695
- [62] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p.129.
- [63] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letters to the Philippians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, 417 n. 17, 421.
- [64] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 130.
- [65] Ibid.
- [66] Ibid., p. 131

- [67] See Malherbe, *Paul and Popular Philosophers*, pp. 35-48
- [68] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 131
- [69] Ibid.
- [70] Cf. Ben Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998) 115-129; G. W. Hansen, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, pp. 822-826.
- [71] Fleming, *Contextualization*, pp. 132-133
- [72] Ibid., p. 133
- [73] Ibid., pp. 133-134.
- [74] Ibid., p. 134.
- [75] Ibid.
- [76] R. David Kaylor, *Paul's Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans*, Atlanta: John Knox, 1988, p. 13.
- [77] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 135.
- [78] Ibid.
- [79] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996, p. 33
- [80] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 135
- [81] Ibid.
- [82] Ibid.
- [83] Legrand, *Bible on Culture*, pp. 122-123.
- [84] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 136.
- [85] Ibid.
- [86] Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997, p. 151.
- [87] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 136
- [88] Ibid., pp. 136-137.
- [89] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 138
- [90] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1996, p. 49.



- [91] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 139
- [92] Ibid.
- [93] Ibid., p. 140
- [94] Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, p. 12
- [95] Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Society and Ideology*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p.187. See also Dean Fleming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 140, n.62
- [96] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 140
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- [98] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 140
- [99] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 140.
- [100] Ibid., pp. 140-141
- [101] Dyrness, *The Earth is God's*, pp. 66-67
- [102] Pablo Richard, "Biblical Interpretation from the Perspective of Indigenous Cultures of Latin America, Mayas, Kunas, and Quechuas," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, Mark G. Brett, (ed.) Leiden/New York: Brill, 1996, p. 310
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- [104] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 142.
- [105] William A. Dyrness, *How Does America Hear the Gospel?*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989, p. 8
- [106] Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, Mark G. Brett, ed., 49
- [107] Fleming, *Contextualization*, Mark G. Brett, ed., 144.
- [108] Ibid., 145
- [109] Ibid.
- [110] Ibid., 146
- [111] Ibid., 148.
- [112] Ibid.
- [113] Charels H. Cosgrove, Herold Weiss and K. K. (Khiok-Khng) Yeo, *Cross-Cultural Paul: Journey to Others, Journeys to Ourselves*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- [114] Jose Kanannaikal, "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the church in India" in *The Catholic Community in India: Towards the Twenty First Century [Report of the National Convention of Catholics, 2-5 June 1989]*.

- Bombay, 1989, 158-70 [166]; see also George M. Soares-Prabhu, Editorial: Tribal Values in India, *Jeevadhara* xxiv/140, 1994, p. 88.
- [115] George M. Soares-Prabhu, "Editorial: Tribal Values in India," *Jeevadhara* xxiv/140, 1994, p. 88.
- [116] Carlos Mester, "Indian Myths and the Old Testament," *SEDOS Bulletin* 24/3, 1992, pp. 67-73; See also Carlos Mesters, "Indian Myths and the Two Testaments," *SEDOS Bulletin* 24/8, 1992, pp. 227-232
- [117] Carlos Mesters, "Indian Myths and the Two Testaments," in *SEDOS Bulletin* 24/8, 1992, p. 230.
- [118] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 106
- [119] Ibid..
- [120] Ibid.
- [121] I. Howard Marshall, "the Development of the Concept of Redemption in the New Testament," in *Jesus the Saviour: Studies in New Testament theology*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990, p.242.
- [122] Cf. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, pp. 328-333.
- [123] Fleming, *Contextualization*, p. 107.
- [124] Beker, *Triumph of God*, p. 131.
- [125] Lynne Hume, "The Rainbow Serpent, the Cross, and the Fax Machine: Australian Aboriginal Response to the Bible," in Mark G. Brett, ed., *Ethnicity and the Bible*, Leiden/New York: Brill, 1996, p. 363
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- [127] M. Ruthnaswamy, *Everyman's Constitution of India*, Madras: Popular Education Publishers, 1958, p. 13.
- [128] *Missiology: An International Review*, xxxvi/1, January 2008.
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