

- **Mobilising the Church for Mission**
- **Vers une théologie biblique de la Foi: pour stimuler l'Eglise à la Mission,**
- **Hin zu einer biblischen Theologie des Glaubens—Die Kirche zur Mission mobilisieren**

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RÉSUMÉ

'La foi' occupe une place centrale dans l'enseignement biblique en tant que moyen par lequel les hommes peuvent entrer en relation avec Dieu. Amener des personnes à la foi en Dieu est le but premier de la mission chrétienne. Pourtant le mot 'foi' est utilisé dans le monde actuel, tant religieux que profane, dans des acceptions très diverses et parfois contradictoires. Brevard Childs note qu'une large part de la confusion qui prévaut dans l'Eglise aujourd'hui provient d'une ignorance très générale du sens et du contenu de la foi. Cette confusion et cette incertitude ont démobilisé de vastes secteurs de l'Eglise et les ont empêchés d'entreprendre une oeuvre missionnaire dirigée vers la culture ambiante de manière efficace.

Curieusement l'Eglise est souvent la cause de cette incertitude et de cette confusion, en ce qu'elle a adopté pour le mot foi des sens spécifiques et exclusifs. Ceci en privilégiant à l'extrême la foi en un objet extérieur (foi en des faits), ou

bien en privilégiant l'intériorité de la foi (subjectivisme). Au contraire, la théologie de la foi fondée sur la Bible sera nécessairement équilibrée et comprendra des nuances variées.

Cet article esquisse un itinéraire qui aboutisse à une conception intégrale de la théologie biblique de la foi. Cette voie doit prendre en compte la diversité tout en élaborant une structure unifiée pour ainsi mettre en lumière le sens et le contenu de la foi dans la Bible. La terminologie biblique, ainsi que certains passages-clés de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament, contribuent à une notion inclusive du concept de foi. Il y a aussi d'autres concepts et d'autres termes qui apparaissent dans la Bible et qui nous aident à définir les paramètres théologiques de la foi biblique—en particulier toute la notion de salut dans ses rapports avec la foi. En saisissant d'une manière plus globale la notion centrale de la foi, l'Eglise sera en mesure de mieux percevoir sa propre identité et de se préparer à une oeuvre missionnaire plus fructueuse auprès du monde moderne.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der 'Glaube' ist ein zentraler Aspekt der biblischen Lehre hinsichtlich der Frage, wie die Beziehung des Menschen zu Gott aussehen sollte. Glauben an Gott hervorzubringen ist das herausragende Ziel christlicher Mission. Doch der Begriff 'Glaube' wird in der modernen religiösen und säkularen Welt auf

äußerst verschiedenartige und manchmal widersprüchliche Weise verwendet. Brevard Childs bemerkt, daß ein Großteil der gegenwärtigen Verwirrung in der heutigen Kirche auf eine weitverbreitete Unklarheit über die Bedeutung und den Inhalt des Glaubens zurückgeht. Diese Verwirrung und Unklarheit in bezug auf den Glauben hat viele Teile der Kirche regelrecht

immobilisiert und davon abgehalten, sich an einer effektiven missionarischen Begegnung mit der sie umgebenden Kultur zu beteiligen.

Ironischerweise muß man häufig der Kirche selbst die Schuld für diese Unklarheit und Verwirrung geben, da sie für polarisierte und exklusivistische Glaubenskonzepte eingetreten ist. Diese Polarisierung erfolgte meistens entweder durch eine Veräußerlichung des Glaubensverständnisses (d. h. 'Glaube an Tatsachen') oder durch eine extreme Verinnerlichung des Glaubens (Subjektivismus). Im Gegensatz dazu wird eine biblische Theologie des Glaubens unwillkürlich ausgewogen sein und eine Vielzahl von Nuancen umfassen.

Dieser Artikel ist darum bemüht, den Kurs in Richtung auf eine umfassende biblische Theologie des Glaubens aufzuzeigen, der versuchen muß, die Vielfalt zu berücksichtigen und zugleich

eine einheitliche Struktur anzubieten, anhand derer sowohl die Bedeutung als auch der Inhalt des biblischen Glaubens eindeutig identifiziert werden können. Die biblische Glaubensterminologie sowie Kernstellen des Alten und Neuen Testaments tragen zu einem umfassenden Verständnis des Glaubenskonzepts bei. Das biblische Material enthält zudem viele andere, auf den Glauben bezogene, Konzepte und Begriffe, die dabei helfen, die theologischen Parameter des biblischen Glaubens festzulegen; vor allem das gesamte Konzept der Rettung sowie dessen Bezug zum Glauben. Wenn die Kirche das zentrale theologische Konzept des Glaubens auf eine ganzheitlichere Weise versteht, wird sie eher in der Lage sein, über ihr Selbstverständnis Klarheit zu gewinnen und folglich zu einer effektiveren missionarischen Begegnung mit der modernen Welt fähig sein.

Introduction

'Faith' is central to the Bible's teaching about how people should relate to God. To elicit faith [in God] is the primary objective of Christian mission (e.g., Mark 1:14f; John 20:31; Rom 1:17; etc.). Yet the term faith has come to be used in the modern religious and secular world in the most diverse, and sometimes contradictory ways. Brevard Childs observes that 'much of the present confusion in today's church rests on a widespread uncertainty over the meaning and content of faith'.¹ This confusion over such a key theological and missiological concept has virtually immobilised a large sector of the church in the West from participating in any effective missionary encounter with its surrounding culture.

Ironically, much of the blame for this uncertainty about the meaning and content of faith must be assigned to developments within the church itself. Earlier in this century Emil Brunner pointed to a 'fatal displacement in the interpretation of the word "believe" which in turn was

responsible for a gross misunderstanding of faith in the Christian tradition.'² Brunner identified various forms of the misunderstanding of the Greek noun *pistis* within that tradition. The primary failure is due to the fact that the object and content of faith have been reduced to a non-personal set of facts, a dogma, an institutional authority or even, in the case of orthodox Protestantism subsequent to the Reformation, to a sort of bibliolatry—an aprioristic faith in the Bible itself.³

In contrast to this 'externalisation' of faith, the church and Christian tradition at the end of the second millennium also bear witness to the trend of an intense 'internalisation' of faith. In this instance faith becomes an internal, spiritual and highly individualised experience having more to do with emotive response to an inward stimulus than a rational response to outward data. Obviously we may locate in this inward shift a reaction against previous church tradition which placed so much emphasis upon the external. Again ironic, however, is the fact that this rather subjective kind of faith is shared by the

most unlikely of theological bedfellows in the larger context of the modern Christian church. For the internalisation of the faith experience is at once the hallmark of the Bultmannian existential tradition as well as the hallmark of a large sector of conservative evangelicalism. For the former tradition a rational belief in many of the traditional, external facts and dogmas is no longer held to be possible so that an internalisation is required in order to maintain faith. The latter tradition, on the other hand, while upholding the validity of the traditional, external facts, finds itself hard-pressed to express their relevance for faith apart from the individual, subjective experience. This situation illustrates the confusion in today's church and underscores its missiological dilemma.

What we see from these developments of externalisation and internalisation respectively is a basic polarisation of the concept of faith in the lives of various Christian traditions. It is not the externalisation or the internalisation as such, but rather the polarisation of faith which falls miserably short of a biblical theology of faith, not taking into account the many facets of faith as they emerge from the biblical understanding.

In this article I propose to map out a route towards an integrated biblical theology of faith. This route must attempt to account for the diversity and at the same time provide a unified structure, by which both the meaning and the content of biblical faith can be clearly identified. Along the way it will be necessary to give attention to key passages from the Old and New Testaments, as well as any faith-related concepts, which help to define the theological parameters of biblical faith. Our route begins with a look at the faith terminology itself.

Biblical Faith Terminology

'There are two, and in the end only two, types of faith', declared Martin Buber in his highly influential monograph *Two Types of Faith*.⁴ The two types of faith which, according to Buber, stand in direct contrast to one another are identified as

the Hebrew *'emunah* of the Old Testament-Jewish tradition and the Greek *pistis* of the New Testament-Christian tradition. The former, Buber argues, is understood in terms of trusting someone and the latter in terms of acknowledging something to be true—there being in neither instance sufficient reason for the trust or acknowledgement.

It is true that the Greek noun *pistis* and the Hebrew noun *'emunah* provide us with the generic terms for faith in the New and Old Testaments respectively. Buber's polarisation of *'emunah* and *pistis*, however, rests upon a broad oversimplification of the respective terms which does justice to neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament concept of faith.⁵ A closer examination of *pistis* and *'emunah*, along with their cognates, is the necessary starting point for the development of an integrated biblical theology of faith.

The substantive *'emunah* is derived from the Hebrew root *'aman*. This common root gives rise to further substantival and verbal forms which likewise belong to the faith terminology of the Hebrew Scriptures. The basic meaning of the root and its derivatives has to do with the concept of firmness, steadfastness, reliability. From the earliest usage, the stem was neither exclusively nor primarily employed as religious faith terminology in the strictest sense. So, for example, in Ex. 17:12, during the Israelites' battle with the Amalekites, Moses' uplifted arms are described as 'steadiness' (*'emunah*)⁶ once they were securely supported by Aaron on the one side and by Hur on the other side. Similarly the hiphil stem of *'aman*, normally conveying the idea of 'trusting' when used in the context of religious faith, appears in Job 39:24 in a purely neutral and profane sense. Here the subject of the verb is a frenzied horse in the midst of battle, which, when he hears the blast of the trumpet, is unable to 'stand still'. From this root meaning of the *'aman* stem, it is not difficult to see how this word group lent itself to theological use and development as faith terminology.

Artur Weiser, who supplied the background on the Old Testament concept of

faith for the article on *pistis* in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, provides a good summary of the use of the 'aman word group as faith terminology.⁷ Perhaps the single most important consideration about the 'aman group as faith terminology is the adaptability of the terms to include many aspects of faith. For example, the hiphil stem may refer either to a person (e.g., Gen. 15:6) or to a message (Isa. 53:1) as the object of faith. In Isa. 7:9 a word play utilising the hiphil and niphil stems of 'aman displays the reciprocal nature of faith/faithfulness between human and divine subjects (cf. Isa. 28:16; Hab. 2:4).

Moreover, the substantival forms of the word group display an important connection between additional nuances and component aspects of faith. The noun 'emunah, for example, may express the subjective idea of (personal) faithfulness (in relationship) to another (e.g., Prov. 28:20) or the more objective idea of trust which is placed in another⁸ or, what is most likely, an integral combination of both subjective and objective elements (cf. Hab. 2:4; Dt. 32:20). But faith/faithfulness does not exhaust the (theological) significance of 'emunah. In almost half of the occurrences of this noun in the Old Testament the LXX translates with *aletheia* rather than *pistis*. Thus there is logically and theologically a very close relationship between faith and truth in the Hebrew Scriptures.

This relationship is further underscored by the noun 'emeth, also derived from the same stem. This noun is translated with *pistis* by the LXX in six instances. Almost one hundred times, however, it is translated with *aletheia* or a cognate form; and in ten instances it is translated by the Greek 'righteous' (*dikaioi*) or 'righteousness' (*dikaioisynē*).

Weiser observes about the passive niphil stem of 'aman, which commonly functions adjectivally, that 'a consistent rendering with one word is quite impossible'.⁹ Normally the term is translated 'firm, secure, reliable' (i.e., 'faithful'), but Weiser holds that these translations are only approximations and do not ade-

quately express the full and final meaning. [The niphil of 'aman] does not express a quality which belongs to the subject at issue and which might apply equally to something else. ['aman] is shown to be a formal concept whose content is in each case determined by the specific subject. It states that the qualities which belong to the subject concerned are really present. It thus has something of the meaning of the term 'specific', indicating the relation of the reality to that which is characteristic of the particular subject. In keeping with the total thinking of the OT the reference is not simply to one feature but to the totality of all the features belonging to this subject.¹⁰

The point to be made here, without going into great detail concerning the individual nuances and aspects of faith bound up together in the 'aman root, is that there are a variety of nuances inherent in this Hebrew terminology. Furthermore, it is precisely this quality of the 'aman word group which enabled the various derivatives to be developed as the key Old Testament terms for faith. What this indicates about the nature of (biblical) faith is a comprehensiveness as opposed to an exclusiveness. Weiser observes that 'where the [hiphil verbal stem of 'aman] itself is used, one can hardly fail to note its tendency to extend into the most comprehensive possible sphere of application, just as [the noun 'emunah] too embraces the whole attitude of a life lived in faith'.¹¹ Adolf Schlatter insists, with particular reference to the noun 'emeth, that the rich variety of nuances which together produce 'reliability'¹² cannot be broken down into the isolated components:

That Good Will which is closed to hatred and jealousy, that Truthfulness which neither conceals anything nor practices deceit, that Trust which harbours no suspicion against one's neighbour, that Steadfastness which endures by his side through fortune and through misfortune, that Courage and that Skilfulness which know how to perform service and to offer assistance—not the one or the other of these, but all of these together constitute 'emeth.¹³

With regard to the Greek noun *pistis* and its cognates, I have argued elsewhere that these terms in the LXX and, subsequently in the New Testament, correspond directly to concept of faith presented by 'aman and must therefore be interpreted in light of this Hebrew word group.¹⁴ Thus we would expect to find evidence, particularly in the New Testament writings, of the same rich combination of nuances and component aspects of faith in the use of the *pist-* word group. While it is difficult to maintain that *pistis* fulfils precisely the same function as the 'aman root in all its facets demonstrated in the OT, it is possible to show that the *pist-* group in the NT does indeed reflect the usage of 'aman in the OT as faith terminology.

As with 'aman in the OT, so also with *pist-* in the NT, faith can have as its object a person (Gen. 15:6; cf. e.g., Jn. 12:11) or a message [about a person] (Isa. 53:1; Mk. 1:15). The reciprocal relationship of faith(fulness) between divine and human subjects noted above (esp. in Isa. 7:9; Hab. 2:4) is also very much a part of the NT understanding (cf. Rom. 1:17; Mk. 9:24). Paul is almost certainly thinking of faith in terms of the root meaning of 'aman when on various occasions he exhorts Christians to 'stand firm [in the faith]' (1 Cor. 16:13; cf. Gal. 5:1; Rom. 11:20; Phil. 1:17; etc.). Moreover, it is clear that the Pauline letters also understand faith in connection with the important (for the OT) related concepts of truth (e.g., 2 Thes. 2:13; also vss. 11, 12) and righteousness (Rom. 1:17; 3:21ff.).

The above does not exhaust the list of ideas, nuances or related concepts of faith—either in the OT or in the NT. Nor have we provided an exhaustive list of the faith terminology. There is, for instance, in addition to the 'aman root a specific Hebrew root meaning 'to trust' (*batah*). Of special note concerning this verb is that it is commonly used in the OT referring to trust in idols. ('aman never appears with reference to faith in idols.) Parallel to *batah*, when used in reference to Yahweh, is the verb *hasah* which means 'to seek refuge in'. In addition, there are several

Hebrew stems which express the idea of hope.¹⁵ In the NT, while *pisteuein* adequately expresses the element of trust, we find the additional specific terminology for hope (*elpis*, *elpizein*).

Indeed, the NT knows many facets of faith (*pistis*), just as the OT displays many facets of the word group 'aman. Thus it is hardly permissible to single out, as for instance Martin Buber does, one component or another and claim for that component an exhaustive definition of NT faith or OT faith respectively. In reality the terms are much more fluid in their use and much more inclusive in their portrayal of the rich, biblical concept of faith. Anyone who is engaged in a modern missionary encounter with men and women of any culture, with the view to eliciting a 'response of faith', must seriously consider the rich totality of what constitutes—in biblical terms—this desired response of faith.

Key Biblical Passages and Faith-Related Concepts

At this juncture we shall proceed on the basis that the OT concept of faith is at least to a large extent definitive, but in any event formative for the NT understanding of faith. Having affirmed the importance of the 'aman word group as the OT expression for faith, we immediately observe that these words for faith appear relatively seldom in the OT as compared with the virtual explosion of usage of faith terminology in the NT. One of the reasons for this, as I have shown elsewhere,¹⁶ is that the faith terminology itself—both the Hebrew 'aman and the Greek *pist-*—was undergoing a process of development within the religious context. An extremely significant step in this development process was the exclusive identification of the *pist-* word group with the Hebrew 'aman group in the LXX translation of the Hebrew scriptures. This identification of *pist-* with 'aman is unparalleled in the secular Greek of this time. This important development allows for even further development of the use and understanding of the *pist-* words in a

similar vein. Therefore what we find in the NT is a coming into full bloom of the concept of faith which is, by comparison, only seminally, but nonetheless significantly, present in the OT.

The following seven OT passages are worthy of special consideration: Gen. 15:6; Ex. 4 (esp. vss. 1,5,8,9,31); Ex. 14:31; Isa. 7:9; Isa. 28:16; Isa. 53:1; Hab. 2:4. These are of course not the only OT passages referring to faith. The Psalms in particular make repeated use of faith terminology, as perhaps one might expect. There are other occurrences as well. However these seven passages are both seminal and significant in their contribution to the OT faith concept and they are echoed by the NT use and understanding of faith.

The golden thread which is common to all seven passages, besides the use of faith terminology, is the theme of salvation. Each of the references to faith occurs in the larger context of a salvation oracle. On the one hand this is significant for what each passage has to contribute to a biblical theology of salvation. For example in the instance of Abraham in Gen. 15 the salvation oracle was, in the first instance, one having to do with Abraham's personal salvation (i.e., through procreation; cf. vss. 2–5). The blessing of salvation would not end with Abraham, however; eventually it would extend to his descendants (Gen. 15:12–16, 18–21) and ultimately it would take on cosmic dimensions (cf. Gen. 12:3; 18:5; 22:18). In the Exodus accounts, particularly Ex. 14, the salvation oracles had to do with a most concrete situation where the deliverance required was literally a matter of life and death. The salvation oracle of Isa. 7:9 has to do with political deliverance in the light of a threat of war and enemy aggression, whereas the later salvation oracles of Isaiah (28:16; Chs. 52–53) point to the eschatological salvation of God's people through the establishment of God's (messianic) reign in Zion.

One of the most important points to make in the present discussion is the fact that faith is integrally linked to the theme of salvation as the appropriate—indeed,

the required—human response to God on the basis of the divine salvation oracle (cf. Hab. 2:4). Foundational to any discussion of a biblical theology of faith is this integral relationship between faith and salvation. This evolving connection between faith and salvation may be sufficient in itself to explain to a large extent the sudden explosion of the use of faith terminology in the NT. In particular, if the eschatological, messianic salvation hope of Isaiah was seen by the NT authors—indeed by Jesus himself (compare Isa. 53:1 and Mk. 1:15; cf. also Mt. 8:10ff., 13)—to be realised through the exercise of faith, then it is no wonder at all that faith has become such a central NT theme (cf. Mk. 16:16; Jn. 20:31; Acts 16:31; Rom. 1:16; etc.).

It is not possible within the scope of our present discussion to go into the amount of detailed discussion of the relationship between salvation and faith which will be required for a more comprehensive study of the biblical theology of faith. I should, however, like to highlight one aspect of this relationship which seems to me to be especially significant—particularly in light of Christian mission. The fact that certain OT 'faith texts' (e.g., Gen. 15:6; Isa. 28:16; 53:1; Hab. 2:4) have had at least some influence upon the NT understanding of faith is fairly apparent from the instances where these passages are directly quoted or where there exists strong evidence of allusion. What is perhaps not as clear is any 'implicit' influence upon the NT understanding of faith by OT texts which are neither quoted nor where any overt allusion is readily detected. I am referring now to Ex. 14:31 and Isa. 7:9 (though there may indeed be other OT texts which fall into this category).

The Hebrew text of Isa. 7:9 contains a word play using the 'aman root (cf. also 2 Chr. 20:20). Two verbal stems of 'aman—the causative hiphil and the passive niphil stems respectively—appear in this salvation oracle which is directed to Ahaz, King of Judah. The satisfactory translation of this Hebrew word play into other languages has posed a problem since the time of the LXX. The difficulty has to do

with the retention of the faith terminology, which is certainly the issue here, and at the same time expression of the root idea of 'standing firm' which is inherent in the Hebrew *'aman*. Perhaps an awkward, yet meaningful attempt at an appropriate rendering in English would be something like the following: 'If you do not stand firm [with respect to faith in the Lord] you will not be stood firm (or "established") [with respect to faith].' Awkward as this translation may be, it becomes apparent that the Hebrew text is signalling (albeit in the form of negative statements) that faith exercised bears the result of faith confirmed or faith strengthened. Moreover, this process or 'faith spiral' takes place through a salvation event. For Ahaz in Isa. 7:9 the whole process remained purely hypothetical: He neither exercised faith in the first instance, nor did he experience any confirmation or strengthening of faith. It is clear from the passage, however, that the one expression of faith is the prerequisite for the salvation event and the other expression of faith the result of the salvation experience.

The same principle is illustrated in positive terms in Ex. 14 and the salvation event at the crossing of the Red Sea. Hemmed in between the sea on the one side and the advancing Egyptian host on the other the Israelites were in a state of panic immediately prior to the miraculous crossing of the sea and the deliverance from the Egyptians. It was at this point that Moses called upon the Israelites not to be afraid but to exercise 'faith' in Yahweh,¹⁷ promising that they would experience salvation from the Egyptians: 'Stand firm'¹⁸ and you will see the salvation of the Lord which he will perform for you' (Ex. 14:13). Immediately following their passage through the Red Sea, having experienced the Lord's act of deliverance, the faith of the Israelites was confirmed and strengthened: '...The people feared the Lord and put their trust in¹⁹ him and in his servant Moses' (Ex. 14:31).

This interplay between faith exercised—salvation event—faith confirmed/

strengthened is basic also to the relationship between salvation and faith in the NT and the implications are much more far-reaching than we can presently explore.²⁰ However, the principle thus highlighted finds parallels in the teachings of Jesus. For example in the parable of the talents in Mt. 25 the two servants who displayed faith(fulness) in small things were able to pass through the judgement of their returning master and in the end were entrusted with greater responsibilities requiring greater faith(fulness) (cf. vss. 21,23). Likewise the father of the boy possessed by an evil spirit in Mk. 9 recognised the necessity of faith as a pre-requisite for the salvation of his son; at the same time he recognised the inadequacy of his own feeble faith which was in need of strengthening and thus cried out to Jesus (vs. 24): 'I believe; help my unbelief!'²¹ The point can be argued further that this 'faith—salvation—faith spiral' principle is also basic to Paul's understanding of faith and the community of the saved—i.e., that men and women are saved by faith exercised in relation to Christ and are subsequently called to lead lives of faith(fulness) (cf. Rom. 12:3; 15:13; 1:5). This principle could perhaps also help to explain the use and meaning of the notable phrase *ek pisteos eis pistin* ('from faith to faith') in Rom 1:17.

This brief illustration shows how one aspect of the OT concept of faith is implicitly present in the NT, lending further credence to the point that I have argued elsewhere that it is appropriate to speak in holistic terms of a biblical theology of faith (in contrast to OT faith versus NT faith).²² It is likely that there are additional components and aspects of faith in the OT which are implicitly taken over in the NT use of faith terminology. Indeed, there are many avenues which must be explored along the route towards a biblical theology of faith. Among them are the following: the relationship between faith and firmness, between faith and obedience, between faith and righteousness; the relationship between faith, hope and love; the connection between faith and

gospel, between faith and the kingdom of God; the apparent contradiction between trusting God and fearing God; the relationship between faith in God and faith in facts, and also the important consideration of faith in God (Christ) and the faith(fulness) of God (Christ). Our understanding of these important relationships will inform how we go about eliciting a response of faith through missionary endeavour.

Conclusion

Perhaps one of the most frequently misused and abused watchwords of the Protestant Reformation is the slogan 'faith only'. While I sympathise with the original sentiment of *sola fide* as it applies to the Pauline exegesis of salvation by faith versus salvation by human works, I am not in sympathy with the way that the slogan 'faith only' has lent itself in many modern Christian circles to an exclusivistic, polarised and thus narrow understanding of what constitutes faith—as though faith were 'this' and not 'that'; a process of the inward spirit and not of the outward body; a resolution of the will and not a physical act of obedience. Human nature's tendency to polarisation readily exploits this kind of exclusive language. I propose that a more accurate watchword would be something like 'faith wholly'—*omnino fide*—, suggesting in positive, inclusive terms that faith (and everything that belongs to the understanding of faith) is the summa of the Bible's teaching about how men and women must relate to God.

It may be that this brief presentation has raised more questions than it has answered. I have, however, completed what I set out to do: to map out a route towards a biblical theology of faith. The guideposts may be summarised as follows:

A biblical theology of faith must take account of the faith terminology and the various nuances, both explicit and implicit.

A biblical theology of faith must take account of key biblical texts, both in their

immediate contexts and in their broader application in and influence upon other texts.

A biblical theology of faith must take account of related terms and concepts which help to set the theological context for and parameters of faith.

A biblical theology of faith must remain balanced and inclusive as it attempts to integrate many internal facets and many external relationships into a holistic interpretation of this central theological concept.

I submit that this route, if conscientiously pursued, will serve 1) to enable the Church at the close of the 20th century to clarify its self-understanding in terms of the meaning and content of faith, and 2) to mobilise the Church at the outset of the 21st century for effective missionary encounter with the modern world.

- 1 Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Fortress Press, 1992), p. 595.
- 2 Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation; Dogmatics: Vol. III*, trans. by David Cairns (Westminster Press, 1962), p. 185.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 185–89. Cf. my discussion of Brunner's argument in *Josephus and Faith* (Brill, 1993), pp. 180ff.
- 4 Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith* (MacMillan Publishing Co., 1951), p. 7.
- 5 For a fuller discussion and critique of Buber's thesis, see my treatment in *Josephus and Faith*, pp. 165ff.
- 6 This designation of Moses' arms as 'steadiness' is in direct contrast to Moses' own flagging strength to keep his arms lifted as the battle raged on throughout the day.
- 7 Bultmann & Weiser, '*pisteuō k.t.l.*', TDNT, Vol VI, pp. 182–196.
- 8 There is a close relationship between the substantive '*emunah*' and the hiphil verbal stem; cf. *Josephus and Faith*, pp. 24f.
- 9 Weiser, TDNT, Vol. VI, p. 184.
- 10 *Ibid.*; italics mine.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 190; italics mine.
- 12 *Zuverlässigkeit*.
- 13 Adolf Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament* (Calver Verlag Stuttgart, 1982 and 1927), p. 553 (my translation).
- 14 Cf. *Josephus and Faith* (esp. Chapter Two); see also my article 'The Roots and

Development of the *pist*- Word Group as Faith Terminology', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 49(1993), pp. 103–118.

15 Cf. Weiser, TDNT, Vol VI, p. 191.

16 Cf. 'Roots and Development'; also *Josephus and Faith*, esp. Chapters 1–4.

17 Cf. Mk. 5:36!

18 The verb here is the hithpa'el of *yatzab*

rather than the hiphil of *'aman*. The sense of the verb is, however, precisely the same.

19 Hiphil stem of *'aman*.

20 E.g., what is actually implied in concrete terms by the pre-requisite exercise of faith or the resulting strengthening of faith?

21 Cf. also Lk. 17:5f.

22 Cf. *Josephus and Faith*, esp. pp. 188f.

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Hwa Yung

Since World War II, many efforts towards contextual Asian Christian theologies have been made. But how truly contextual are these? Theology and mission are inseparable, and a truly contextual theology is one which empowers the church in mission. This study applies four criteria to representative examples of Protestant Asian theology to assess their adequacy or otherwise as contextual and missiological theologies. These criteria are: relevance to the sociopolitical context, enhancing the church's evangelistic and pastoral ministries, inculturation, and faithfulness to the Christian tradition.

This study reveals certain discernible trends in Asian ecumenical and conservative theologies respectively, as well as their respective strengths and weaknesses. But the greatest problem with most present-day Asian Protestant theologies appears to be that, at heart, they have been dominated by western dualism and Enlightenment thought. Authentic Asian Christian theologies will only emerge when there is a dual recovery of confidence, in a culture and in the gospel within Asian Christianity.

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