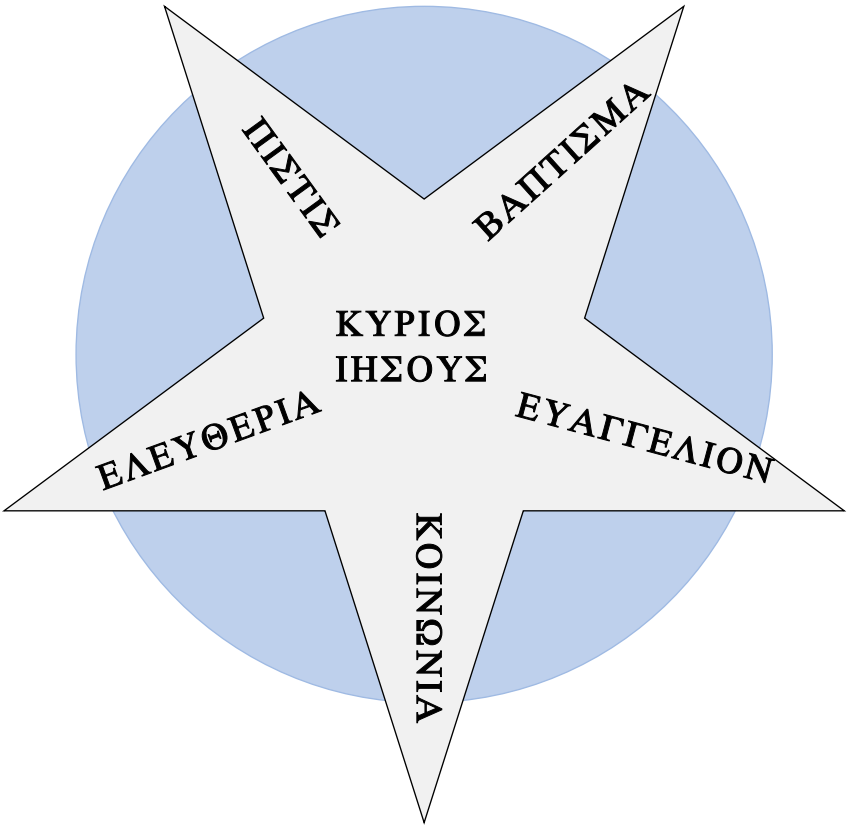
Journal of Baptist Theology
in context



Issue 1

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Editorial

Does the world need a new academic journal? It would be easy to answer, 'no'. 'Of the writing of many books there is no end,' asserts the wise, if jaded, preacher of Ecclesiastes, 'and much study wearies the body'. Samuel Taylor Coleridge is reputed to be the last person to have read everything published in English; two centuries on, it is a herculean effort even to keep up with just the academic publications in one narrow field. Why publish more?

Just because a massive volume of material is printed does not mean that every voice that deserves to be heard is being published. Many of the missing voices have recently become notorious, and we of course applaud—in various ways we each have contributed to—long-overdue efforts to publish and promote the writing of those marginalised by gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and so on.

That said, the editors of this journal are British Baptists, and as such we are also acutely aware that many of the best minds of our own Baptist tradition also go unheard. It is a reality at present that most of our co-religionists who are capable of making an academic contribution are in pastoral ministry, serving powerfully and well there, but excluded by that service in a whole series of ways from the wider academy.

Those serving as pastors are almost inevitably time-poor: the dedicated space for reflection necessary for developing a worthwhile intuition into a published paper is available only to a very few ministers. Similarly, unless they happen to be close to a good and accessible academic library, they will lack access to the material needed to bring an idea into conversation with what others have helpfully said about a subject. (The current move to open access academic publishing will help this in one way, but will also create a different problem; more on this later.)

Mentioning conversation raises a further point, however. One of the privileges of the academic life is being part of a community where books and articles are read and discussed, where conversation is often

enough about ideas. Those who work in academic communities can easily ask a specialist in another field for a quick summary, or a suggestion as to what to read, and so can short-circuit a process of familiarisation which will take the individual scholar scores of hours.

Those working as pastors but with scholarly leanings will not need this enumeration of the problems they face; they know them all-too-well. The temptation to despair, to regard the problems as insurmountable, is strong. It must, however, be resisted, or so we believe as editors.

We believe, and we have founded this journal on the belief, that the voices of pastor-theologians need to be heard. As Baptists we believe that the local congregation is the primary context for discerning how the unchanging gospel call is relevant to, and instantiated in, each particular context. As Baptists, that is to say, we have to believe that if we do not hear from those on the front line of ministry and mission in their particular contexts, we are not able to do proper theology for our time and place.

It is a Baptist conviction that the call of God is most properly heard and interpreted in the local congregation. Because of this, we need to hear the considered insights of our pastor-theologians. This new journal is designed to be a vehicle for that.

To be such a vehicle demands a slightly different editorial practice, which is what finally justifies—indeed, demands—starting a new journal. We imagine the pastor-theologian who has something worth saying, discerned from her context, but who lacks the library resources to locate her insight within recent scholarly discussion. All modes of publishing currently available would judge the lack of engagement with recent scholarship as a major failing, and so reject her proposed article.

We want to model a different editorial practice in this journal, one that begins with evaluating the worth of her idea. Generally, a lack of exposure to the last few years of scholarship does not devalue the insights of a pastor-theologian, but it does pose a challenge: how can their contributions be taken fully seriously, if they are unable to access key recent scholarship? The answer must be to spot the genuine and

valuable insight, and then to help the writer to engage adequately enough with the recent scholarship (or whatever is missing) that their contribution can be heard.

So, for this journal, we want to invite contributions from pastor-theologians and others with the promise that, if you have something worth saying, we will work with you to help you to say it. On this basis, we expect our editorial processes to be more 'hands on' than is typical for academic journals, but our goal in this is to enable voices that we believe deserve to be heard to be heard.

We do not propose lower editorial standards than other journals; rather we want to work with our authors to help them meet normal academic standards. Of course, some articles will arrive meeting every academic standard we could wish—several in the issue that follows did; but where a piece needs development in one way or another, we want to work with authors to develop it, so that their unique and valuable contribution can be received into the world of academic discourse.

Not Staring but Gazing: A Disability Reading of Healing in John's Gospel

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Abstract: The 'othering' of people with disabilities is a key part of their experience of exclusion. Theologians have noticed that stories of disability in Scripture are often read from a majority perspective that unintentionally perpetuates this 'othering'. This article explores the difference between an analytical appraisal of the other (the 'stare') and a true interpersonal engagement (the 'gaze') and offers a reading of the two healings in John's gospel from this perspective.

Keywords: disability, staring, gazing, marginalisation, exclusion, Bethesda, blindness, transformation, taboo, discipleship, encounter.

One beautiful day I took my daughter, who has severe and complex disabilities, to an arboretum with a small animal park. Families with children were present in large numbers, the children squealing with delight over the quirky behaviour of the cute meerkats and wallabies. However, on seeing my daughter, people simply **stared**.

The animals, of course, do what is expected of them and the visitors respond by photographing them and including them in the story of their day. My daughter 'should' look and behave like an ambient human, but she does not: and people (especially children) frequently respond with the classic taboo behaviour described by Mary Douglas: keep your distance from this thing that is out of place.[1] This response is not, of course, intentionally designed to cause hurt to the 'out of place' one. In her discussion of 'anomalies' in human culture and experience, Douglas explains that their existence reinforces social order: 'a rule of avoiding anomalous things affirms and strengthens the definitions to which they do not conform'.[2] Groups of humans find

[1] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo,* with new preface by the author (London: Routledge, 2002). See especially chapter 2: 'Secular defilement'.
[2] Douglas, *Purity*, 49.

agreement and security in maintaining social structures, which harmonise the co-existences of multiple free, 'untidy' persons. The ongoing challenge for any group is to become reflexively aware of the tenor of its exclusions.

Unintentional the hurt may be, but it is painful to be excluded, or to be perceived as a threat. When setting the scene for her linguistic study of sensory impairment in the Hebrew scriptures, Yael Avrahami notes the existence of 'the gap between knowledge by which we live, and the knowledge through which we explain life. This gap between action and doctrine, practice and theory, experience and idea is inherent to daily reality.'[3] In other words, what we say, think, believe and project does not always match what actually happens – and this applies not only to what we moderns might deduce about the world of the Bible from the written narrative, but also to what we might *say* we think about 'others' as compared with how we might actually *respond* to them. A person with disabilities may thus live 'in the gap' in which theory does not match practice – and this discrepancy may not even be perceived by the majority.

Avrahami argues that society renders those with sensory disabilities as 'betwixt and between, part person, part non-person, between life and death, between society and the outside'.[4] I am interested in this liminal and taboo place of not-fitting: 'the gap'.

Staring and Gazing[5]

My daughter is very sociable and likes to be with people, but she is also language- and speech-impaired and cannot engage in complex or abstract communication about feelings or emotions. She is therefore exposed 'in the gap': she is personally diminished if she is not in a social setting, yet the social interaction for which she longs may deliver a painful experience. 'Disability, like trauma, is a concept on the borderline of the private and the public, an experience that is problematically represented in language', notes Petra Kruppers, a

[3] Yael Avrahami, *The Senses of Scripture: Sensory Perception in the Hebrew Bible* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 40.
[4] Avrahami, 221.
[5] I have used bold type for the **staring** and **gazing** metaphors in this article to distinguish this specific use from the use of 'medical gaze' *etc.*

writer on disability and performance arts.[6] We do not know what to do socially or linguistically with this perceived 'misfit': where to locate the one who is both like, and not like, 'us'. I have no accurate knowledge of how my daughter feels about being the subject of **staring**, but it is quite possible that she perceives it as hostile.[7] Can I imagine a world in which a detached reaction to otherness is changed to an interpersonal engagement? I want to explore this idea as moving from an analytical '**stare**', as I have termed it, to the '**gaze'** of love. In brief:

- **staring** is the forensic, reductionist response that excludes the other;
- **gazing** is the holistic, compassionate response that does not simply include, but *joins* the other to subvert the landscape, so that the discomfort of otherness is mitigated and the categories of acceptability are subverted.

It would be difficult at this point not to acknowledge the most commonly used models of disability. In the so-called 'medical' model, a person with disabilities is perceived as an object requiring interventions to make him/her 'fit in' better with what Amos Yong and other writers would call the 'normate' environment.[8] The 'social' model perceives the roots of exclusion to be embedded not in the person, but in the person's surroundings (physical and cultural). In the social model, the surroundings are adapted to include those with disabilities, rather than making the person adapt to fit the surroundings. There are other models: existential, relational, cultural,

[6] Petra Kruppers, *Disability and Contemporary Performance: Bodies on Edge* (London: Routledge, 2004), 91.

[7] I notice that she drops her head in such situations. As her parent, **staring** certainly makes me feel uncomfortable (although being studiously ignored is also problematic: I would prefer dialogue). My discomfort, potentially referred from my daughter, also makes me reflect that true independence is a shadowy thing, if indeed ever humanly achievable: the disability of a child is a disability of the whole family, affecting social interactions, educational options, financial stability and so on.

[8] For example, used in Amos Yong, *The Bible, Disability and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

etc.[9] I believe that while all these models are helpful in developing understanding and response, certainly the common ones (medical and social) do not expose sufficiently what it is to exist 'in the gap', to be condemned to the hinterland of humanity. In developing this further I will first consider some aspects of a (problematic) hermeneutic of **staring**, and then suggest what I hope is a more helpful hermeneutic of **gazing**.

As mentioned earlier, 'othering' has an anthropological and sociological dimension that emerges across different cultures and periods. In the 21st century we are not exempt from these generic human responses, but we are also impacted by the modern context that has shaped our dependence on medicine and technology. The powerful 'medical gaze' (not to be confused with the concept of **gazing** to be developed in this article) is a recognised western perspective on the body that has developed over the past 200-300 years from a combination of developing anatomical scholarship, improved clinical practice, and ever-increasing diagnostic success.[10] The medical gaze itself is not 'bad' but neutral; however, its character is analytical and to some extent reductionist. One of the consequences of the medical gaze is a shift in power away from patient and family, and towards professionalism (expert opinion): this is experienced as a move away from relational encounter (tell me your story) and towards transaction (let me analyse your symptoms, explore what is 'wrong' with you).[11] D.C. Tolley invites us to compare the medical gaze with the compassionate **gaze** of Christ, in which the other is 'acknowledged

[9] See, for example, the summary by Marno Retief & Rantoa Letsosa, 'Models of Disability: A Brief Overview', in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 74(1) 2018 at http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf

[10] See, for example, S.R. Kaufman and L. M. Morgan, 'The anthropology of the beginnings and endings of life', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34 (2005), 328, referring to the work of Michael Foucault. We can immediately see parallels with the widely discussed 'medical model' of disability.

[11] I have explored this idea in terms of religious significance in Sally Nelson, 'Medical rites: priestly power in modern healthcare', *Scottish Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy*, 12.1 (2009), 18-23. There is a body of writing about 'narrative medicine' exploring the idea of dialogue *vs* transaction (see, for example, the works by Trisha Greenhalgh, Arthur W. Frank; Rita Charon.

as a person worthy of respect and love'.[12] In a similar manner I want to draw attention to the structural-cultural reductionism that leads to the experiential distinction between the '**stare**' and the '**gaze**' for those with disabilities, and to ask whether our reading of scripture is (unintentionally) complicit with **staring**.

Disability theology is a younger discipline than liberation theology but was initially predicated upon similar principles of marginalisation and inclusion, being influenced by and indebted to secular disability studies.[13] It has become increasingly sophisticated, with much recent and substantial scholarship in biblical and performative theology being related to the key challenge of interpreting the biblical narratives about people with disabilities. Like Avrahami, Thomas Reynolds, author of the significant book, *Vulnerable Communion*, warns of the challenge of trying to use the Bible uncritically as a model for our approach to disabilities. He encourages us to wrestle with the text:

A hermeneutic of disability, then, is not merely a matter of hunting through the biblical witness and finding select passages on disability that can subsequently be applied to our theological task in some straightforward manner. We must instead wrestle with the text, like Jacob wrestled with the angel and refused to let go until granted a blessing. ***And because the Bible is ambiguous on the account of disability,*** *this means becoming less cautiously selective as interpreters, choosing certain themes over and/or against less favorable alternatives…*[14] [emphasis mine].

One can collate four main 'problem categories' identified by disability theologians about the reading of scriptural stories, which are listed below. Arguably, each of these hermeneutical categories reinforces **staring** because there is an underlying objectification of the person.

1. People with disabilities in scripture can appear to become accessories or examples allowing Jesus to demonstrate his

[12] D. C. Tolley, 'Aesthetic christology and medical ethics: the status of Christ's gaze in care for the suffering', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 61.2, (2008), 171.
[13] See John Swinton, 'Research Report: Who is the God we Worship? Theologies of Disability; Challenges and New Possibilities', *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 14 (2011), 273-307.
[14] Thomas E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008), 35.

divinity. Louise Lawrence suggests that we take a perspective from performance theory to correct this tendency, and give people with disabilities a key role in the plot: they are subjects, not objects; characters in a story, not props in a play; people to be encountered, not observed.[15] The gospel accounts are not trying simply to present Jesus' actions as resolving the 'problem' of disabilities.

2. The apparent gospel interest in the healing of people with disabilities confirms the perceived inferior status of those with differently abled bodies, because the subtext is that you are 'not OK' as you are.[16] Some theologians[17] also identify a negative eschatological dimension: we aspire to what we hope for, and if we hope uncritically for 'perfection' in the life to come, we may over-prioritise what we perceive to be the perfect in this life.[18]
3. The underlying intuitive connection between sin and bodily sickness or impairment is not consistently challenged in scripture. In saying this we need to be aware of our possible hermeneutical assumptions, since ancient worldviews did not presume a modern causal understanding of sickness or

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[15] Louise J. Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma in the Gospels: Depictions of Sensory-Disabled Characters* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 3. As with **staring** and **gazing**, here we understand that we are affected by the encounters and experiences of life. Ben Quash discusses the idea that we do not simply observe but participate in the things we experience: we do not merely interpret our experience from a distance, but our experience is shaped by us (Ben Quash, *Theology and the Drama of History* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), chapter 1). See also Kathy Black, *A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability* (Abingdon: Nashville, 1996, 13).

[16] A research study conducted by the organisation Through the Roof into how people with disabilities felt they were perceived in churches comments '…the desire to get disabled people "healed" has often unwittingly come across as, "We want God to change you", with the implication, "You're not acceptable as you are"'. *All of Us Complete in Christ*, 4. Available at <https://www.throughtheroof.org/abd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/All-of-US-Complete-WEB-FINAL.pdf>, [accessed 1/2/19].

[17] See, for example, Yong, *Bible, Disability*, chapter 5.

[18] It is important to explore what we mean by perfection – it need not mean classically symmetrical nor unchanging; a more useful definition might be 'completely fit for purpose', which could also serve for the nature of the divine.

disability: the perceived source of such things in ancient times was spiritual/moral – *ie* one is sick/disabled because one is afflicted by an evil spirit and one is chosen by that spirit because of moral culpability.[19] It would be unfair to critique the Bible's view of sickness in its own cultural settings by the scientific standards of modern times; but it is equally unwise to try to transfer biblical worldviews directly onto our own.

4. The gospels use metaphors which can reinforce the inferior status of people with disabilities – being blind, deaf, lame, weak *etc* are figures of speech frequently used as biblical metaphors for spiritual inadequacy.[20] John Hull, the blind Anglican theologian, goes so far as to say of John's gospel: 'the symbolism made me feel uneasy and I soon came to realize that this book was not written for people like me but for sighted people. No other book of the Bible is so dominated by the contrast between light and darkness, and blindness is the symbol of darkness'.[21]

This discussion is not about whether we should ask Jesus to intervene in someone's life with a miraculous healing. Such an action must be contextually determined, with the participation of the person with the disability, and there is no generic right or wrong. The issue here is about the assumption that disability reduces a person by objectification, and to question whether we unintentionally use scripture to bolster our pre-existing assumptions about difference, and thus to lend a biblical legitimacy to **staring**.

Difference (or being 'in the gap') is not a problem *per se*; and neither is it fundamentally a problem for us to notice difference – indeed, it can be vital to do so (for example, a wheelchair user cannot access an upstairs room without a lift: not to notice this difference is to exclude). Difference is an appropriate locus of **gazing**; difference becomes marginalisation when it is the locus of **staring**. This idea of the quality of our observations is noticed and explored by theologians in other

[19] Explored by Yong in *Bible, Disability*, chapter 2; see also Nancy Eiseland, 'Encountering the Disabled God', in *PMLA*, 120.2 (2005), 584-586.
[20] See Avrahami, *Senses*; Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, and John Hull, *In the Beginning there was Darkness* (London: SCM, 2001).
[21] Hull, *Beginning*, 50.

arenas. Ben Quash, for example, poses the distinction between 'seeing' and 'looking' - seeing is functional and instinctive, while looking is a deeper engagement with the object/subject of attention and offers the possibility of transformation.[22] Tom Wright invites us to speak of an 'epistemology of love' which asserts that knowing is never simply reductive and forensic, but is a holistic encounter with another.[23]

Gazing, then, can be understood as the receiving of the other. It is open, non-judgemental, appropriately curious, respectful. Above all, it is permissive of the transformation of the **gazer** as well as the **gazed upon**. In each fresh encounter with another, something new is initiated that has never existed before, and I can either run from it or embrace it: **gazing** describes the choice of embrace and is the way of encounter that Jesus teaches us.

We will now turn to John's gospel - argued by the blind John Hull to be 'not written for people like me' - to explore two examples of **staring** and **gazing** in Jesus' ministry.

Disability and John's Gospel

Reynolds bids us wrestle with disability in scripture. John's gospel, according to many disability theologians, presents us both with some real encouragement (in John 9 Jesus clearly denies any connection between disability and sin), but also some real dilemmas, in terms of the 'normate' assumptions of the writer and most readers, certainly for readers living around 100AD (see the four-point summary in the previous section). The Fourth Gospel presents us with a series of christological signs, but interestingly it does not record multiple healing miracles (unlike the synoptics) – John's two key incidents of the healing of disabilities are those of the man by the Pool of Bethesda who had been sick for 38 years and seems to be unable to walk (in John 5), and the man born blind whose story is told in John 9. I will not deal with the raising of Lazarus here, although if death is understood as the ultimate human limitation, there are implicit theological questions about disability, healing and eschatology, and the

[22] Ben Quash, *Abiding: The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2013*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 64-66.
[23] See N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (London: SPCK, 2019).

point about John's theological interest in signs remains. The healing of the official's son in John 4 is also omitted, since it does not seem to refer to a disability, if such is understood as a long-term limiting condition.[24]

The first thing I notice is that neither man initiates the approach to Jesus to ask for healing: both appear to be chance encounters. In some sense Jesus must have selected, or chosen to engage with, these particular men out of many possible others (especially at the Bethesda pool, where 'many invalids' [*sic*, John 5:3 NRSV] went to seek healing miracles) - which makes me question whether the specific healing of disability is John's main interest in these accounts: we have already noted John's focus on signs for a christological purpose rather than simply recording specific experiences that we can later attempt to generalise. John tells us *why* he writes his gospel (John 19:30-31): it is to encourage faith in Jesus, and many would argue for a high christology in John that showcases divinity; while Jesus's own explicitly stated purpose in this gospel is to bring *fullness* of life (John 10:10b), which term invites interpretation. Jesus does not say: 'I have come so that everything will be all right'. Life's 'fullness' need not be dependent upon certain criteria of physical or cognitive ability or social wellbeing, although it would be disingenuous to say that these things do not matter at all: clearly pain, repeated hospitalisation, loss of function *etc* do matter if life quality is impaired as a result.

Beyond Liberation?

The point has already been made that much disability theology has been rooted in liberation theology, although it is developing rapidly into its own space.[25] Liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez, in his classic *A Theology of Liberation* (originally published in 1971), is careful not to be too prescriptive in his definition, and in his conclusion suggests that liberation theology is an attempt to 'reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to

[24] Jamie Clark-Soles says 'In disability studies it is customary to distinguish between impairment (a physiological, medical phenomenon) and disability (a social phenomenon). 'John, First-Third John, and Revelation' in S. Melcher, M.C. Parsons & A. Yong (eds), *The Bible and Disability: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 2018), 334.

[25] Again, see Swinton's helpful critique, referenced at fn 13.

abolish injustice and to build a new society; this theology must be verified by the practice of that commitment, by active, effective participation in the struggle which the exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors. Liberation from every form of exploitation, the possibility of a more human and dignified life, the creation of a new humankind – all pass through this struggle'.[26] However, in his *Introduction* to the original book, Gutierrez speaks of biblical liberation in Christ (*ie* salvation) as 'total gift',[27] and I believe this idea of gift is very useful in relation to the Fourth Gospel's christological project of 'fullness of life', and can help us to expand the idea of liberation in disability theology.

A second key point of interest is that Jesus does not simply normalise things for the two men by healing them. Both healings occur on the Sabbath, and we must pay attention to this repeated theme in John. Why did not Jesus, whom we might reasonably assume to have been an observant Jew, simply acknowledge the men that day (neither of them being unusually or critically ill at the time of the encounter), and then return to heal them *the next day* – still demonstrating compassion and love, still liberating them, but without 'violating' the Sabbath? I will try to offer possible readings of the two healings in terms of my chosen metaphors of ***staring*** and ***gazing***.

If liberation is understood here as the deliverance from bodily impairment and a return to mainstream society (following the Luke 4 manifesto), I challenge whether that is enough: and I want to suggest that to embrace the practice of ***gazing*** goes beyond liberation, or at least critiques our more usual understandings of it. Liberation, while revealing and sometimes altering the balance of the marginalised and the mainstream, does not normally (and maybe it cannot) remove these social categories. The uncomfortable liminal space we saw described by Avrahami (the 'gap') may be revealed and displaced by such a liberation, but ultimately it is maintained, and those with disabilities remain compromised within society.

Social structures can be highly resilient. Anthropologist Victor Turner explores the idea of rituals of 'status reversal' in *The Ritual Process*. Here

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[26] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Rev. Ed.; London: SCM, 2001), 269.
[27] *ibid*, 2.

there is a liminal space in which people deliberately change places with others in the hierarchy. He gives an example in which British army officers wait on NCOs at Christmas dinner,[28] but notes that the next day, when normal practice is resumed, the officers will berate the NCOs for making them run around after them (even though they have simply taken part in a tradition). These reversal rituals in fact reinforce the structures of the group. Turner claims that 'Not only do they [rituals of status reversal] reaffirm the order of structure; they also restore relations between the actual historic individuals who occupy positions in that structure'.[29]

However, the work of Jesus is not a ritual action whose purpose is to maintain social harmony. Here are just two ways in which his healings are transformational.

(a) In healing on the Sabbath, Jesus subverts the whole socio-cultic landscape. Instead of **staring** analytically from the safety of the norm at the men with disabilities, who are taboo and excluded from cultic life because of the ancient and intuitive association of disability or sickness with immorality, Jesus **gazes** with compassion on the excluded and *himself becomes taboo* by tearing open the structures of the Sabbath. The Lord of all becomes unacceptable within his own creation.

To the social mainstream Jesus' Sabbath violation is the wrong thing, at the wrong time, to the non-people, who do not fit. His healing actions on the Sabbath challenge the whole social edifice, placing compassion above legal rectitude, the **gaze** of love replacing the analytical **stare**.

(b) Both accounts arguably involve at least a suggestion of ritual washing. The Bethesda pool is the place where the water is stirred and healings are supposed to happen, while at Siloam, Jesus encourages the now-seeing, once-blind, man to go and wash. This latter washing in particular has been interpreted by some to prefigure baptism and the new society of the

[28] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Cornell University, 1969), 172.
[29] *Ibid*, 177.

> church; but could it be that both accounts are indicative of a profound subversion of social expectations?
>
> In John 5 the pool of Bethesda is a healing pool: you get in the pool to get back into society. Jesus heals *on this site* but bypasses the pool altogether, subverting its local significance. In John 9, the pool of Siloam is probably a water supply or reservoir, though some have seen it as a site of ritual washing. Either way, a blind person is ritually 'substandard' and surely cannot acceptably enter the water. At Siloam Jesus heals the blind man, who then shows himself to be socially acceptable by entering the pool. In both cases, the social structures and rituals are circumnavigated to allow the excluded one to be encountered as a person: to experience fullness of life. Taboo is broken.

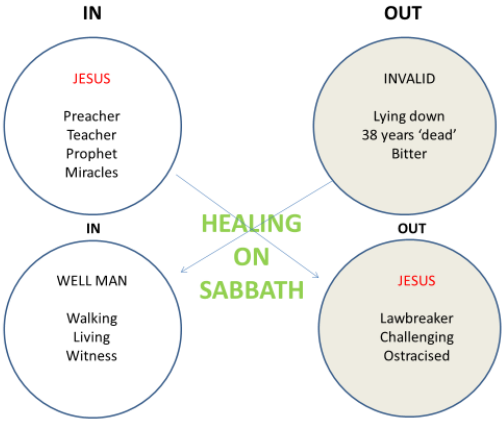
However, I have suggested that Jesus' actions are not just about liberation from exclusion, although that is very important. They are about *going beyond* liberation. There is a three-stage process of invitation here: Jesus' *encounter with difference* (and his refusal to **stare**); his *active transformation of the difference* (healing); and then the *call to discipleship* (or to become one who can **gaze**), which means that each disciple's next encounter with difference will also be patterned on transformation and discipleship (**gazing**). In this way, the exclusive structures are subverted permanently: 'he has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us' (Ephesians 2:14).

The social structures and rituals that we inhabit and inherit, whether observing a Sabbath or going to the arboretum, are broken and potentially exclusive, but we are deeply attached to them. Those who are already comfortably established in the structures want them to remain, and those outside want to be included – but if the excluded simply transition to being included, nothing truly changes and the sinful structures are unchallenged.

Disciples as Gazers

We can look at the two healings in a diagrammatic form.[30] In John 5 (see Figure 1), the healing can be understood as an exchange. The sick man is an outsider who, after healing, becomes an insider. He is not interested in joining Jesus' movement, but he is very interested in becoming part of the excluding community. Jesus, on the other hand, because of his subversive actions in healing the man on the Sabbath and because of the healed man's betrayal, moves from being an admired healer and preacher to an ostracised revolutionary. Jesus **gazes** on the man - but he is unable to teach this man to **gaze** back. While the man is freed from being **stared** at, he is not yet liberated and transformed. Jesus, however, becomes a focus for the communal **stare**.

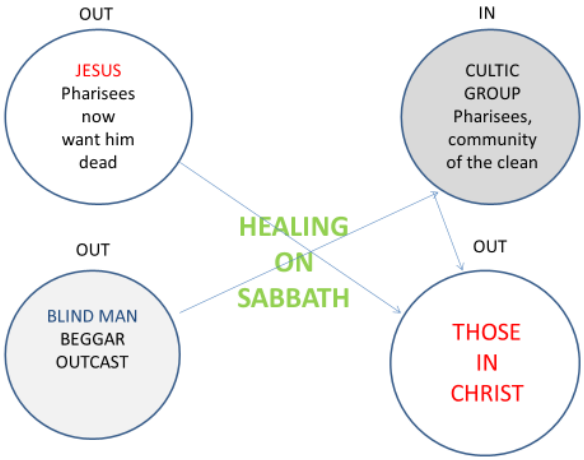
FIGURE 1: The Healing in John 5



[30] These diagrams are my own representation, but the idea of Jesus taking the place of the other in the gospel encounters is explored with respect to John 9 by James Alison, *Faith Beyond Resentment: Fragments Catholic and Gay* (London: DLT, 2001), 3-20, and with respect to Luke 13:10-21 (Jesus heals the crippled woman) by Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke. NICNT* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1997), 516-527.

In John 9 (Figure 2), by which time in the narrative Jesus' status with the authorities has become much more fragile, there is no such simple transaction. The man who was blind does not appear to deserve his healing any more than the sick man of John 5, but he is subsequently willing to interpret his experience in a wider frame (transformation), and the final result of all the interactions with the Pharisees, his parents, *etc,* is that he joins Jesus in the subversive group: those who **gaze** and do not **stare**. He may be delivered from the socially exclusive disability of blindness, but he accepts a new kind of suffering and exclusion in being a disciple of Jesus and seeking the Kingdom of God: he receives a different kind of **stare.**

FIGURE 2: The Healing in John 9



In neither case are we constrained to read the healing of disability as the story of a damaged individual to a whole, or of impurity to purified, but about the redemptive transformation of broken social structures whose function is to separate 'OK' from 'not-OK' (this is what I mean by going 'beyond liberation'). It is important to see that

suffering is not negated as a result of Jesus's healing: rather, it is relocated and absorbed within the body of Christ (Jesus' physical body and *subsequently that of the church*). Fullness of life does not mean a life without suffering.[31] It means a life in which we can **gaze** and be **gazed** upon, for which we may receive a **stare** for the sake of Christ. Suffering is integrated and ultimately transformed; its power to isolate and this diminish is robbed away. We are not promised that we will not grieve, but that we do not grieve as those without hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

So, what about the social **stare** at the arboretum? In our town, on Good Friday, we walk silently behind a cross while, for an hour or so, the police manage the traffic. People **stare** at us: those who have joined the movement. It is uncomfortable to be **stared** at: but the challenge is not to **stare** back, not to return judgement with judgement, evaluation with evaluation, but to subvert this cycle of human evaluation and to cling to the eschatological perspective of the coming Kingdom: the place where **staring** is no more, and the **gaze** of love reigns.

Notes on Contributor

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[31] Explored in S. Nelson, 'Confronting meaningless suffering' (PhD University of Manchester, 2011, available at https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:122315&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF).

Women and the Institution: The Struggle for Women to be Involved in the Baptist Union at the End of the Twentieth Century

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Abstract: While there have been studies of women and ministry in Baptist life, this article focuses on women's relationship to the various institutional structures of the Baptist Union and in particular the discussions in the 1990s.

In a study of English Baptist institutional life during the 1980s and 1990s,[32] it became clear that women were largely absent from the key places of power and influence.[33] It was only by the ends of the 1990s that there is some evidence of real change beginning. This meant that during the major reforms of the life and structures of the Baptist Union that took place in the 1990s, the leadership of the Union and the subsequent decision-making were largely carried out by men (and it should be added white men). In what follows I set out to describe in some detail the story of the struggle to see women have a more significant place in Union life. Previous studies of women in Baptist life have focused on the issue of women and ministry;[34] the focus in this article is on their inclusion within institutional life.[35]

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[32] Andrew Goodliff, *Renewing a Denomination* (PhD Thesis, University of St. Andrews, 2018). By institutional life I refer to the three key Baptist Union Institutions: the Council, the national team (including the Superintendents) and the staff of the five Colleges in covenant with the Union.
[33] For one discussion of the dynamics of power in the context of the church see Roy Kearsley, *Church, Community and Power* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[34] In particular, Simon Woodman, *The Story of Women in Ministry in the Baptist Union of Great Britain* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 2011).
[35] For wider history of women in the UK in the twentieth century, see Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain: Social, Cultural and Political Change* (London: Routledge, 2014).

A Brief (20th Century) History of Women and the Baptist Union

The Baptist Woman's League (BWL) was found in 1908,[36] partly initiated by John Howard Shakespeare, who was supportive of women having an active role in the life and work of churches. It was a lay-led organisation[37] and would largely remain that way. The purpose of the BWL was to fundraise for the Home Work Fund, to promote evangelism and to be a support for women. In 1911 ten women were co-opted onto the Baptist Union Council, above any who might be appointed as association representatives. It had become part of the Union's constitution that at least ten women must be included on its body. In 1938 the BWL developed a more formal link to the Union with the establishment of the Women's Department within the denominational structures. This new Women's Department oversaw the work of the BWL and the Order of Baptist Deaconnesses. From 1970 onwards, the Women's Department would become a Desk within the newly created Department for Mission. This recognises that its purpose remained largely prayer, fellowship and evangelism and not representation. It was Margaret Jarman's view (writing in 1986) that 'the very strength of the former Baptist Women's League implied that a woman's place was there rather than in the general affairs of the Union.'[38] The good intention to see women play a more active role in church life was separated from the male-dominated world of the Union's Council. In this the BWL operated like a para-church organisation.

In 1981 the BWL became the National Council for Baptist Women. Here the purpose was to move the focus of the work from a national level to an association level, like other mission areas (e.g. youth work, education, etc.). Ian Randall claims that it was 'declining involvement' in the BWL that led to the change,[39] although John Briggs' view was that the change was 'not in any sense of resignation but rather as a sign

[36] The Baptist Women's League (BWL) was founded in 1908. It was known initially as the Baptist Women's Home Work Auxiliary, changing its name to the BWL in 1910. For an account of its early history see *Fifty Years' Achievement 1908-1958*.

[37] Although a good number of its leaders were wives of Baptist ministers.

[38] Jarman, 'Attitudes to Women in Baptist Churches', 327.

[39] Ian Randall, *The English Baptists in the Twentieth Century* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2005), 455.

of the new confidence of Baptist women.'[40] In 1993 there was another change when the National Council was disbanded and in its place was the creation of the Baptist Women's Mission Network, which reflected the new emphasis on mission within the Union.[41] This Network retained an emphasis on prayer and fellowship for women within the denomination.[42] In the minutes of the March 1993 Baptist Union Council where this was agreed, it was recorded that there was 'some disquiet' that in the creation of this network this 'may delay the full integration of women into the corporate life and witness of the church.'[43] A new voice within the Union was emerging that felt the existence of women only networks was a means of hindering the full inclusion and equality of women at all levels within the structures of the Union. While the BWL had not been set up perhaps consciously to exclude women from the structures, it had inadvertently given women a space within the Union, but not an equal one. A more ardent desire from women and men within the Union was beginning to be heard who believed that the Council, the Superintendency and the Officers of the Union should be better balanced in terms of gender.

A further development of the place of 'women's work' in the Union came in 1997 when the Women's Issues Working Group was created; this would in the mid-2000s be re-named (again) as the Women's Justice Group. (In 1998 the Women's Mission Network ceased functioning.) The Women's Issues Working Group was one in which ministers were much more involved.[44] Its tasks were also much more focused on the place of women within the Union, including 'investigating and discovering the names and skills of women … who might assist the Assembly, Council and Committees of the Union' and that which might relate to 'the positive affirmation, life and place of women within our Baptist family.'[45]

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[40] John Briggs, 'She-Preachers, Widows and Other Women: The Feminine Dimension in Baptist Life since 1600', *Baptist Quarterly* (July 1986), 349.
[41] The 'Women's Desk' within the Mission Department had been removed in September 1992.
[42] 'National Council of Baptist Women: Proposed Restructuring'
[43] Minutes, Baptist Union Council, March 1993.
[44] The Convenors were all ministers: Jenny Few, Shelia Martin, Jo Harding, Rachel Haig.
[45] Women's Issues Working Group Report to Council November 1997.

Re-Structuring Council (1992-1996)

The issue of the representation of women had been recognised by the Listening Day Process (1991-1992), which had been initiated by David Coffey and Keith Jones at the beginning of their tenure as General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary.[46] The subsequent document *Towards 2000* with its fourfold Statement of Intent was agreed by Baptist Union Council in March 1992. One of the four commitments the Statement made was 'to promote the greater sharing of people, money and other resource' and under this heading is the specific objective:

> We affirm the equality of men and women in the sight of God and recognise the ministry of women as a gift of God on an equal basis. We hope to challenge Baptist Christians to examine in a radical way their attitude to the full partnership of women and men at all levels of leadership.[47]

This recognised that there was a problem at a local, associational and national level and set out with the intent to make change. This objective was to be met by setting 'up an enquiry into the equality of ministry of women and men (non-ordained and ordained) at all levels of leadership within the Baptist Union.'[48] It is not clear that this enquiry ever took place.

The Listening Process was part of a longer attempt to see women more represented on the Council. Back in 1975 the November Baptist Union Council had passed a recommendation that said:

> (i) that through education, local churches and associations be encouraged to nominate those women who are able to make a contribution to the deliberations of the Council
> (ii) that women be encouraged to allow their names to be put forward for co-option

[46] Margaret Jarman had named the issues in a *Baptist Quarterly* article written in 1986: 'Attitudes to Women in Baptist Churches in the Mid 1980s', *Baptist Quarterly* 31.7 (July 1986), 236-30.
[47] *A Ten Year Plan Towards 2000* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1992), 10.
[48] *A Ten Year Plan*, 11.

(iii) that this matter be treated with the utmost urgency.[49]

Between 1900 and 1975 the number of women members on Council had increased by four and in 1977 stood at 22 out of 200. In 1987 this had increased to 30 out of 189. In 1987 a paper was circulated to member churches of the British Council of Churches that expressed concern that women were 'not equally represented in the decision-making structures of the church.'[50] Don Black[51] wrote a paper at the request of the General Secretary Bernard Green. Black argued that there was 'systematic exclusion of women from the structures.'[52] This he accounts to an interpretation of Scripture that saw 'women as subservient to men.' A second observation he makes is that women had been directed to use their time and energy into the Baptist Women's League. As a result Black argues that 'the gifts which women had were sifted off into BWL projects and exercises and did not take their place in the denominational structures.'

The issue of representation was picked up in the 1992 *Structures Report* and the 1994 *'Green Paper on Council Restructuring'*. The 1992 *Structures Report* recommended that Associations were expected to have 'at least 30% female representation by 1995'[53] on Council. Another proposed resolution was that the language of chairman should be replaced by 'chairperson.' This reflected that a few women were now chairing Council Committees. The *'Green Paper' on Council Restructuring* says that the proposal to use more inclusive language had not been accepted and as a result 'some Council members and Committees are in open

[49] Minutes, Baptist Union Council, March 1975. In 1976 Roger Nunn wrote in the *Baptist Times* arguing for more women in Council, a woman for president and a woman superintendent, 'Move Over, Men', *Baptist Times* 13 May 1976.
[50] This paper had been written by Jean Mayland who was a consultant to the Women's Interchurch Consultative Committee within the World Council of Churches. In the background was the report from a conference held in Sheffield in 1981 on women and men in the churches, on this see Constance F. Parvey (ed.), *The Community of Women and Men in the Church* (Geneva: WCC, 1983).
[51] At the time, Black was BU Secretary for Social Affairs.
[52] Don Black, 'The Position of Baptist Women in the Decision-Making Structures of the Baptist Church', 23rd April 1987. Baptist Union Archive.
[53] *Structures Report* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1992), 3.

rebellion.'[54] The same report again raised the issue of gender balance and suggested that more important than a balance between lay/ordained would be a more equal balance between male and female.[55] The *'Green Paper'* was followed by another *Report on Council Restructuring* in 1996, which again sought to find ways to make Council more representative in terms of gender.[56] Despite the responses from churches saying that their 'should be no attempt at balance of any sort', the Task Group proposed that Associations should limit the number of male ordained ministers to a third.[57] At the March 1996 Council this was defeated. The issue of language also returned with the proposal to use the terms 'Moderator' and 'Convenor' and this time the resolution was passed.[58] The same report argued for the creation of 'Women's Issues Working Group' to report to Council through the Mission Executive.[59] This was carried and with it the removal of the Bye–Law within the BU Constitution that there be a National Council of Baptist Women.[60] What these different reports demonstrate is both the problem and the difficulty in getting the make-up of Council changed. In 1995-96, which was in the middle of the discussions around the future of the Union, 42 out 225 members of Council were women,[61] and the 1996 Denominational Consultation saw 64 women present out of 294 delegates (22%).[62]

Ahead of that Denominational Consultation Keith Jones, then Deputy General Secretary, wrote in the *Baptist Times* that 'we are impoverished, I believe, by not having the insights of some of our very gifted women

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[54] *A 'Green Paper' on Council Restructuring* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1994), 13.
[55] *A 'Green Paper' on Council Restructuring*, 9.
[56] The membership of the task Group were John Briggs (Convenor), Ruth Bottoms, Philip Cooke, Arthur Jennings, Shirley Miller, David Roberts and Barrie Smith.
[57] *Report on Council Restructuring* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1996), 7-8.
[58] *Report on Council Restructuring*, 10.
[59] *Report on Council Restructuring*, 15.
[60] The argument here was that the National Council of Baptist Women and also the Federation of Lay Ministries received special treatment that other groups like the Baptist Men's Movement and the Alliance of Baptist Youth which were not mentioned in the constitution.
[61] Ruth Gouldbourne, *Reinventing the Wheel: Women and Ministry in English Baptist Life. 1997 Whitley Lecture* (Oxford: Whitley, 1997), 29.
[62] *List of Delegates Attending the Denominational Consultation, September 6-8, 1996*.

ministers on the Board of General Superintendents, more frequent women Presidents and more women in senior staff position within [sic] our associations and Union.'[63] He went on to lay the blame at Council's door: 'we have suffered from an unwillingness in Council and elsewhere to see that we draw on the gifts, skills and insights of women who make up more than 60 per cent of our churches.'[64] There was an evident refusal by Council to both recognise and initiate change.

Although Baptists have had women pastors from the 1920s, the numbers were very small for most of the twentieth century.[65] This is partly because an alternative ministry stream had been created for women in the office of deaconess.[66] It was not until the 1960s that a group of about 8 women went through ministerial training and became ordained.[67] Then from the 1970s the number began to slowly grow, at least in comparison to the previous fifty years. In 1975 the Order for Baptist Deaconness was suspended and all active deaconesses were transferred to the ministerial list.[68] In the 1980s among those ordained for ministry were Ruth Bottoms, Ruth Gouldbourne, Carol Murray, Pat Took and Hazel Sherman, all who would later in the 1990s hold roles within the institutions of Baptist Union. These women and others built on the generation before and continued slowly to see the place and role of women grow in number and significance.[69]

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[63] Keith Jones, 'What shape the Union?', *Baptist Times* 4 July, 1996, 12.
[64] Jones makes a similar point in Keith G. Jones, *A Believing Church* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1998), 43.
[65] For an account of the story see *The Story of Women in Ministry in the Baptist Union of Great Britain* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 2011).
[66] See Gouldbourne, *Reinventing the Wheel*, 24-26.
[67] See Faith Bowers, 'Liberating Women for Ministry', *Baptist Quarterly* 45.8 (2014), 456-64.
[68] Gouldbourne, *Reinventing the Wheel*, 26.
[69] See Gouldbourne, *Reinventing the Wheel*; *The Story of Women in Ministry in the Baptist Union of Great Britain* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 2011) and Paul Goodliff, 'Women's Ministry: An Exploration at a Historic Moment', *Baptist Quarterly* 48.8 (2014), 485-99.

Woman with Particular Roles in Baptist Life During 1980s-1990s

During the 1980s there was one woman President of the Baptist Union, Margaret Jarman.[70] She held the office in 1987 and she was only the second woman to hold this position[71] and the first woman ordained minister.[72] There would be another gap of nearly twenty years before the next woman President, when Kate Coleman was elected to serve in 2006.[73] Since then there have been three more women Presidents: Pat Took, Jenni Entrican, and Dianne Tidball.

Within Baptist House, there was no woman appointed beyond an administrative role until Anne Wilkinson-Hayes in 1992 as Social Action Advisor in the Mission Department.[74] In 1994 Jacqui Shepherd became Communications Manager, in 1997 Viv O'Brien (formerly Lassetter) became Ministries Advisor in the Ministry Department and then in 1999 Myra Blyth[75] became Deputy General Secretary. Hilary Treavis (née Bradshaw) was Ecumenical Administrator from the mid-1990s, and later became Ecumenical Co-Ordinator and is currently now National Ecumenical Officer. Post-2000 other women would

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[70] Margaret Jarman was originally a Deaconess, who was ordained as a minister in 1967. She was the first woman to go to Spurgeon's. See Patricia Raven, 'Margaret Jarman', *Baptist Times* 9 April 1987, 14-15. She would later help found the Baptist Union Retreat Group.

[71] The first woman BU President was Mrs A. (Nell) Alexander in 1978. She had been Chairman of the BU Woman's Work from 1971-76 and a longstanding member of Council. See Patricia Raven, 'First Lady', *Baptist Times* 27 April 1978.

[72] Following her election, the July 1986 edition of the *Baptist Quarterly* was devoted to the question of women's participation in Baptist life. Articles were written by Shirley Dix, Ruth Matthews, Carol McCarthy and Jarman herself. In September to October 1987 the *Baptist Times* published a series of articles about Baptist women in ministry.

[73] That is six in a two hundred year history of the Baptist Union.

[74] Anne Wilkinson-Hayes returned to local ministry in Oxford in 1997 and then in 2002 took up a regional ministry position in the Baptist Union of Victoria, Australia.

[75] Myra Blyth had been ordained in 1978, having trained at Regent's Park, and in 1982 became Youth Secretary of the British Council of Churches, and then held several roles at the World Council of Churches between 1988-1999. She was nominated for the Presidency in 1985, but lost to David Coffey. See 'Myra Blyth: New Role in Geneva', *Baptist Times*, 15 April 1993, 7.

follow – Kathryn Morgan (Mission Department), Amanda Allchorn (Communications), Rosemary Kidd (Faith & Unity), and most recently Beth Allison-Glenny.[76] No woman has ever been appointed as Head or Team Leader of the three key departments of the Union – Ministry, Mission or Faith & Unity.[77]

In terms of the Committees of the Baptist Union Council, from 1980-82, Nell Alexander was chairman [sic] of the General Purposes and Finance Committee and from 1982-87, Margaret Jarman was chairman [sic] of the Ministerial Recognition (MR) Committee and she was followed, ten years later in 1994 by Ruth Matthews as chairman [sic] of the same MR committee. In the 1970s Nell Alexander had been chairman [sic] of the General Purposes and Finance Committee. In 1994 Ruth Bottoms became chairman [sic] of the Church Relations committee and Anne Phillips (formerly Dunkley) was the chairman [sic] of the Children's Working Group. By 1995 Ruth Bottoms was Moderator of the Faith and Unity Executive and Lynn Green[78] of the Mission Executive.[79] In the following decade Ruth Bottoms became the Moderator of Council (2002-2007) and then the first Moderator of the Baptist Union Trustee Board.[80] Sarah Parry was Moderator of the

[76] Allison-Glenny was appointed Public Issues Enabler in the Faith & Society team in 2018.

[77] Ministry is the oldest of these departments. The Mission department was created in 1970 and then disappeared in the structural changes in 2013. The Faith & Unity department was created in 2005. In 2013 it was renamed the Faith & Society Team.

[78] Lynn Green was one of the few women on the Mainstream Executive (joining in 1994) and the only woman to give a plenary address at the Baptist Leader's Day at Wembley in 1999. She would become a Regional Minister in 2011 and then in 2013 she became the first woman to be appointed General Secretary.

[79] Kathryn Morgan followed Green as Moderator of Mission Executive in 2000. Jenny Few was convener of the Women's Issues Working Group and later Chair of the Baptist Minister's Fellowship. See Jenny Few, 'Hats and WI(w)Gs: Personal Reflections on the Baptist Union Women's Issues Working Group' in Steve Holmes (ed.), *Theology in Context* (Oxford: Whitley, 2000), 33-46. Later moderators of the Women's Issues Working Group would be Sheila Martin, Jo Harding and Rachel Haig.

[80] Bottoms was also a Baptist Union representative in the World Council of Churches from 1991 and from 1998 a member of the WCC Central Committee as well as Moderator of the Commission on World Mission and

Ministry Executive (2009-2013) and Sian Murray-Williams of the Faith & Unity Executive (2006-2012).[81]

In 1998 Pat Took[82] was appointed the first General Superintendent of the Metropolitan Area.[83] In 2009 Dianne Tidball would become the second woman to be appointed to the equivalent role (in the East Midlands Baptist Association), now known as Regional Minister Team Leader. From 2002 and the implementation of the changes to the Denomination,[84] there have been more women appointed as Regional Ministers. In 2002 it was four out of thirty-three (12%).[85] The number of Regional Ministers who were women increased to eight by 2011,[86] but had fallen again by 2014 to five.[87] It stands in 2019 at nine out of forty (22.5%), with Beth Powney (in the Eastern Baptist Association) as the only Regional Minister Team Leader.[88]

Evangelism. Bottoms was followed by another woman, Jenny Royal, as Moderator of Trustees.

[81] Murray-Williams was also Tutor in Worship Studies at Bristol Baptist College, 2006-2016. She is currently Moderator of the MR Committee.

[82] Pat Took was General Superintendent and then Regional Minister Team Leader in London between 1998-2012. She was Baptist Union President in 2010. She has a PhD in reformation history (awarded in 1979). Her appointment at the November BU Council was only a few weeks after a vote of the Assembly of the Baptist Union of Scotland which decided not to accept women ministers. For her journey into ministry see 'Serving!', *Baptist Times* 29 October 1987, 6.

[83] 'First Woman Superintendent', *Baptist Times* 20 November 1997, 1.

[84] The twenty-nine County Associations became thirteen Regional Associations. General Superintendents became Regional Ministers and nearly every Association had more than one.

[85] With Pat Took they were Helen Wordsworth (Central), Kathryn Morgan (Southern Counties) and Gill Crippen (South Counties).

[86] Helen Wordsworth (Central), Dianne Tidball (East Midlands), Sheila Martin (Eastern), Pat Took (London), Sandra Crawford (North Western), Jane Day (Yorkshire), Lynn Green (Southern Counties) and Jackie Storey (Southern Counties).

[87] http://andygoodliff.typepad.com/my_weblog/2014/06/a-drop-in-the-number-of-women-regional-ministers-2010-2014.html. The five were Dianne Tidball, Sheila Martin, Sandra Crawford, Jackie Storey and Alison MacKay.

[88] Beth Powney was appointed in 2017 and Susan Stevenson in 2019.

In terms of the key reports presented to Council during the 1990s, woman were present on the working groups or committees, although again few in number. Faith Bowers[89] was Secretary of the Doctrine and Worship Committee and so was part of the Committee that published *The Nature of Assembly and the Council of Great Britain* (1994), *Forms of Ministry* (1994) and *Believing and Being Baptised* (1996). Ruth Gouldbourne[90] was part of the Task Group that wrote *Transforming Superintendency* and also the Task Group that produced *Covenant 21*. Carolyn Green[91] and Jacqui Keenan were members of the Task Group that wrote *Relating and Resourcing.* Anne Wilkinson-Hayes and Hilary Wilmer were part of the Task Group on Core Values that produced the influential *Five Core Values for a Gospel People.*[92] The Denominational Consultation Reference Group (which existed between 1996-1999) was better represented with four of the group being women alongside three men: Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed,[93] Rachel Haig,[94] Jane Thorington-Hassell and Gillian Wood.[95] In 2000 Ruth Gouldbourne was appointed Convenor of the Roundtable on Membership, which in 2004 published *Joined Up Thinking on Membership* and in 2001 Hilary Wilmer was appointed Convenor of the Review Group for the

[89] Faith Bowers, non-ordained, has played important roles in the life of the Union. She was a member the BU council from 1988-2002. She was a member of the conversations between the Baptist Union and the Church of England, 1992-2006. She was sub-editor of the *Baptist Quarterly* 1985-2014. She was a founder member of the Baptist Union's Working Group on Mental Handicap and the Church, which was renamed in 1991 as BUiLD.

[90] Ruth Gouldbourne taught at Bristol Baptist College from 1995-2006, before becoming one of the ministers at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, London. She gave the 1997 Whitley Lecture*, Reinventing the Wheel: Women and Ministry in English Baptist Life* and has written on ministry, the Lord's Supper and other topics. She became the pastor of Grove Lane Baptist Church in 2018.

[91] Carolyn Green was President of BMS in 1996.

[92] *Five Core Values for a Gospel People* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 1998).

[93] From 1998 to 2001 Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed was Racial Justice Coordinator for the London Baptist Association.

[94] Whilst she was a minister-in-training at Bristol, Rachel Haig was invited to attend the 1996 Denominational Consultation. She was ordained in 1998. She would later become Moderator of the Women's Justice Group.

[95] Gillian Wood was Education Officer for the Free Churches Council.

Presidency of the Union. Of those mentioned, Faith Bowers, Hilary Wilmer, Rosemarie Gotobed and Gillian Wood were all non-ministers.

The first woman tutor in a college was appointed in 1985 – Heather Walton at Northern Baptist College,[96] and this was followed by Debra Reid at Spurgeon's in 1987,[97] Hazel Sherman at Bristol in 1990,[98] Karen Smith at South Wales in 1991[99] and Carol Murray at Regent's Park College in 1993.[100] By 2002 there were six women as Tutors in the colleges.[101] It was not until 2009 that there was a woman College Principal, when Anne Phillips (formerly Dunkley) was appointed Co-Principal with Richard Kidd at Northern Baptist College.[102] Currently all the Colleges have at least one woman on staff, although still in a minority.[103] This may reflect that less women have been less likely to

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[96] Heather Walton is a Methodist, see her book *Writing Methods in Theological Education* (London: SCM, 2014), 24.

[97] Debra Reid has taught Old Testament, but the majority of her time has been with regard to part-time and Distant Learning and more recently as Director of On-Line Learning.

[98] Hazel Sherman was Tutor in Christian Doctrine at Bristol between 1990-93, and lecturer in theology at the University of Birmingham, 1993-95. She was a contributor to the collection of essays on baptism edited by Paul Fiddes, *Reflections on the Water* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 1996) and she edited the *Baptist Ministers' Journal*, 2003-2009. She was followed as Editor by Sally Nelson.

[99] Karen Smith completed a DPhil under Barrie White at Regent's Park College and was Tutor in Church History at South Wales, 1992-2018. She is currently co-editor of the *Baptist Quarterly*.

[100] Carol Murray was Tutor in Pastoral Studies, a position she held until 2011. In 2002 she was President of BMS. More recently, in retirement, Murray is Moderator of the Central Baptist Association. Jane Shaw, an Anglican, taught Church History at the College between 1993-2001 and the Mennonite Ellie Kreider taught liturgy between 1995-2000. Myra Blyth joined the staff in 2004 as Tutor in Liturgy and Ecumenism.

[101] Ruth Gouldbourne (Doctrine and Church History) at Bristol, Carol Murray at Regent's Park College, Karen Smith at South Wales, Anne Dunkley at Northern, Joy Osgood (Old Testament) and Rachel Dutton (Mission and Evangelism) at Spurgeon's. Debra Reid was still at Spurgeon's but responsible for Open Learning and Trisha Mcllory taught Counselling.

[102] On the retirement of Philips and Kidd in 2013/14, Northern would again appoint two co-Principals, Clare McBeath and Glen Marshall.

[103] Dotha Blackwood, Debra Reid and Linda Campbell at Spurgeon's. Myra Blyth at Regent's. Helen Paynter and Lis Pearce at Bristol Baptist College.

do a doctoral degree. Out of the 114 PhDs in theology completed by British Baptists since 1980, 22 have been completed by women (19%).[104] Although since 2010, of the 34 completed PhDs by British Baptists, 9 were by women (26%), so the number has been increasing.

Mainstream, the largest Baptist network within the Union during the 1980s and 90s, also had a poor record of women within its leadership structures.[105] From its beginning in 1979 until the late 1980s it's Executive were all men. Jane Hassell (later Thorington-Hassell)[106] and Anne Wilkinson(-Hayes) had joined the Executive by 1989.[107] In 1994, Lynn Green also joined the Executive.[108] In May 1995, in reference to Lynn Green becoming Mainstream Secretary, there was expressed, by the Executive, a desire 'to try and increase the number of women serving in leadership among us.'[109] Surveying the *Mainstream Magazine* up to 2000, it is apparent the Executive were not very successful in this goal. In summer 2007 the magazine, now called *Talk* was dedicated to the issue of gender. The issue was supportive of women in leadership,

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Rosa Hunt will join South Wales Baptist College in September 2019 as a new co-Principal. Clare McBeath remains as Co-Principal at Northern Baptist College. Mention should also be made of Sally Nelson, who teaches at St Hild (in partnership with Northern Baptist College).

[104] See https://andygoodliff.typepad.com/my_weblog/british-baptist-phds.html. This is not a definitive list and is one I have compiled through research of Baptist college libraries.

[105] In 1986, the *Baptist Times* would write, 'it is surprising that a movement dedicated to reform and renewal should have so little place in its leadership for either women or non-ministerial Baptists', 'Comment: Mainstream comes of age', *Baptist Times* 16 January 1986, 2.

[106] Thorington-Hassell had trained for ministry at Trinity College, Bristol and was ordained in 1985. She moved off the Mainstream Executive in 1996 and become a member of its Council of Reference.

[107] Raymond Brown writing in 1986, when he had decided to step down as President of the Mainstream Executive, said to David Slater that: 'I hope, when you do meet, that you will be able to give some thought to our male-dominated committee and if you are to consider the name of a young, able and suitable woman, might I suggest Jane Hassell.' Letter to David Slater from Raymond Brown, dated 5th March, 1986. Barrie White Papers, Angus Library D/WHB/MNS.

[108] *Mainstream Magazine* 51 (1994), 20. Green stepped down from the Executive in 1998, although she rejoined the new Mainstream Leadership Team in 2000.

[109] *Mainstream Magazine* 53 (May 1995), 34.

but tellingly the contacts for its Network round the country we all men. This demonstrates that the role of women was not just an institutional problem in the Union, but a problem in wider Baptist life. When Mainstream was relaunched as Fresh Streams in 2011, it included women in its leadership and in 2019 it has three men and three women.[110]

Outside of simply male patriarchy, one of the biggest reasons it took so long for women to be appointed to institutional roles was the still very small number of woman being trained for ministry. There were around 8 in the 1960s, another 8 in the 1970s, 11 in the 1980s and then around 27 in the 1990s, which is the most telling explanation to why it is not until the 2000s that things begin to change, as many of these woman became experienced pastors, trusted leaders and an increasing part of the structures.[111] However, writing in 2004, after she had stepped down as Deputy General Secretary Myra Blyth wrote that 'female leaders in the decision-making structures of the Baptist Union are still simply too few to be able to bring an alternative influence to bear on ways of working and relating.'[112]

In 1998 *Five Core Values of a Gospel People* had been agreed by Council and was presented as something that should undergird the whole of Baptist life.[113] One of the values was being 'inclusive communities'[114] and so by 2000 the reform of the Council was on the agenda once again. A report from September 2000 claimed that attempts to achieve

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[110] The women are Ruth Rice, Ali Summers and Amy Wearing.

[111] See Ruth Gouldbourne, 'Identity and Pain: Women's Consultations, 1987-92', *Baptist Ministers' Journal* 243 (July 1993): 8-10 for an account of some of the story of how through several meetings changes began to take place at Association Ministerial Recognition Committees and in the Baptist Colleges. The first meeting in 1987 had been called by Jane Hassell.

[112] Myra Blyth, 'Women in Leadership: A British Baptist Perspective' in Harriet Harris and Jane Shaw (eds.), *The Call for Women Bishops* (London: SPCK, 2004), 136.

[113] Twenty years on it is largely a forgotten report, although its initial impact is arguably still felt.

[114] This included two relevant 'obligations' – 'to address the continued under-valuing of the ministry of women in Baptist life; to challenge continually all racist, ageist and sexist attitudes and structures', *Five Core Values for a Gospel People*, 8.

greater representation on the Council had been 'insufficiently radical' and as such the Council needed to 'face up squarely to the question of quotas.'[115] After no success in 1992 or 1996, by 2002 the work of the Council Reform Task Group saw the Bye-laws of the Constitution of the Baptist Union changed. This now required Association representatives to be more balanced. Those Associations with nine representatives on Council had to ensure at least three were female, and those Associations with twelve representatives on Council had to ensure at least four were female.[116] In 2005, at least 51 were women on Council (out of 212, 24%) and in 2011 it was at least 53 were women (out of 200, 26.5%).[117]

In 1996 David Coffey and Keith Jones asked the question, what kind of Union for the twenty-first century? It is apparent that the journey of reform was as much about issues of gender (and race) as it was about superintendency, associating and ecumenism. The reform of the Union did not end in 2002, but a second process (known as The Futures Process) began in 2012. This came just as the Women's Justice Group were beginning to make further proposals to the Council with regards to how the Union operated. The Futures Process side-lined these plans, as the outcome that followed saw a smaller Council, a shorter Assembly and a Union largely pre-occupied with other concerns, although now led by a woman in Lynn Green as General Secretary. It is only in 2019, as the Union marks a 100 years of women's ministry,[118]

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[115] Report from the National Strategy Group Sub-Group on Reform of Council and Role of Presidency, Baptist Union Council Minutes November 2000, Appendix 1, 43-44. On the sub-group were Ruth Bottoms, Sally Nelson and Myra Blyth as Deputy General Secretary.

[116] Constitution of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, *Baptist Union Directory 2002-2003* (Didcot: Baptist Union, 2002), 9.

[117] Numbers might have been slightly higher. Members of Council in the Baptist directory are indicated by initial rather than names, then detective work is required to determined whether they are male and female. It should also be said that ex-Presidents (nearly almost all men!) were by default members of Council, but many did not attend, so the gender balance would have been slightly better at meetings, although still under a third.

[118] See January 2019 edition of the *Baptists Together* magazine. It was in 1919 that Violet Hedger began training at Regent's Park College, the first women to formally do so.

that it appears new attempts at challenge and change are beginning.[119] In 2019 currently 31% (26 out of 83) women are members of Council and 15% (2 out of 13) are members of the influential Baptist Steering Group.[120] A more gender-balanced Baptist Union remains a work in progress.

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[119] In the summer of 2019 Jane Day was appointed to a newly created post of Centenary Enabler. This post is designed to help encourage a new generation of women in Baptist life and minister, recognizing there still remains significant challenges.

[120] 'The key location of organisational leadership and coordination sits with the Baptist Steering Group', https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220600/Baptist_Steering_Group.aspx. It is made up of representatives of the Association Partnerships, the Colleges and the Specialist Team, in addition to the General Secretary, a member of Council, and the Moderator of the Trustee Board.

‘Did God really command the indiscriminate slaughter of the Canaanite Tribes? Framing the Narrative of Ḥerem’

Tim Carter
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Introduction

When the Lord your God gives the nations of the land of Canaan over to you and you defeat them, ‘you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them’ (Deut. 7:2).[121] In its hiphil form the basic meaning of the verb חרם is ‘ban, devote, exterminate’ or ‘make, pronounce sacred, inviolable,’ and it is often used of ‘devoting to destruction cities of Canaanites… and destroying or appropriating their possessions’.[122] When applied to the inhabitants of Canaan the sense is that complete consecration to God necessarily entails their utter destruction, since the taking of prisoners is not an option. The intensive infinite absolute construction הַחֲרֵם תַּחֲרִים ‘destroying you shall indeed destroy’ indicates that nothing less than complete annihilation is the order of the day. According to Deut. 20:17 the Lord commands the total destruction of the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

And in Joshua, we see the planned genocide being carried out: the command is given that Jericho and everything in it, with the exception of Rahab and her family, should be devoted to destruction (6:17), and the order was fulfilled: ‘they devoted all the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep and donkeys, with the edge of the sword’ (6:21). So, as Joshua’s campaign unfolded, all the inhabitants of Ai were devoted to destruction, and the same fate befell

[121] Unless otherwise stated, biblical quotations are taken from the English Standard Version.
[122] F. Brown, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979), 355.

the inhabitants of Makkedah (10:28), Libnah (10:29-30), Lachish and Eglon (10:34-35), Hebron (10:36-37), Debir (10:38-39), and Hazor (11:10-15): everything that breathed in 'the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings' was devoted to destruction (10:40; 11:21).

In a similar vein, Saul was ordered to destroy the Amalekites: 'Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey' (1 Sam. 15:3). That, with its specific inclusion of children in the ban, is the most chillingly comprehensive of the commandments.[123]

That such language is used of God and that God apparently endorses and commands such a practice presents theists with something of a problem, which Randal Rauser poses neatly and acutely:[124]

> God is the most perfect being there could be.
>
> Yahweh is God.
>
> Yahweh ordered people to commit genocide.

And, if genocide is a moral atrocity,[125] how can a perfect being order his people to commit a moral atrocity?[126] In his worldwide best seller

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[123] In Isaiah 34, such language is used of the Lord himself: in his rage and fury against the nations, 'he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter' (34:2); his sword, which has drunk its fill in the heavens, is about to descend on Edom, 'upon the people I have devoted to destruction' (34:5).
[124] R. Rauser, '"Let nothing that breathes remain alive": On the Problem of Divinely Commanded Genocide,' *Philosophia Christi* 11 (2009), 27-41 (28).
[125] Genocide has been defined as, 'the deliberate extermination of a racial, national, religious or ethnic group,' (*Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap, 1999). Copan has argued that this was not genocide because it was a matter of exercising God's judgment against the sin of the Canaanites rather than their ethnicity: P. Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 158-165; cf. R. Rothwell, 'Did God Command Genocide in the Old Testament?' https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/2017/11/did-god-command-genocide/ accessed 7th December, 2018. However, the command to 'strike Amalek' (1 Sam. 15:3) is clearly a command to attack an ethnic group, and the explicit inclusion of children within the ban means that 'genocide' is an accurate

The God Delusion, Richard Dawkins asserts that the God of the Old Testament is 'arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction… a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser…'[127] This is a serious charge, and looking back over the centuries it is clear that many interpreters have sought to engage with the perceived problem that the scriptures reveal YHWH as the God who commanded his people to commit the moral atrocity of genocide by wiping out the Canaanites.

A survey of responses

An invaluable survey of historical responses to this issue is found in Hofreiter's study on the subject,[128] but for reasons of space this discussion will only offer a brief survey of recent scholarship. Some who read the Old Testament in line with their conscience may be pushed towards concluding that the Old Testament is not without error in its depiction of God,[129] or that it offers merely a human perspective on what God is like, and that we need to interpret it accordingly.[130] Others argue that we need to find progressive revelation in scripture, concluding that God was either accommodating himself to the limited understanding of primitive

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description of what was commanded. Cf. the discussion in P.M.A. Pitkänen, *Joshua* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2010), 75-89.

[126] Cf. J.D. Rissler, 'A psychological constraint on obedience to God's commands: the reasonableness of obeying the abhorrently evil,' *Religious Studies* 38 (2002), 125-146: 'The theist must develop a personal theology that either explains why God will no longer command the abhorrent although He did so in the past, or explains away the accounts of God commanding the abhorrent' (143-144).

[127] R. Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Transworld, 2007), 51. The phrase 'ethnic cleansing' appears to have originated in the Balkans conflict of the 1990s and was used of Serbian guerrillas driving Croats out of towns that were due to be annexed by Serbia: https://www.theguardian.com/notesandqueries/query/0,,-2894,00.html accessed 7th December 2018.

[128] C. Hofreiter, *Making Sense of Old Testament Genocide: Christian Interpretations of the* Ḥerem *Passages* (Oxford: OUP 2018), 22-213.

[129] W. Morriston, 'Did God Command Genocide? A Challenge to the Biblical Inerrantist,' *Philosophia Christi* 11 (2009), 7-26.

[130] E.A. Seibert, *Disturbing Divine Behavior Troubling Old Testament Images of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 163-176; *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament's Troubling Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 95-101.

cultures,[131] or teaching the world that slaughtering sinners actually does nothing to resolve the problem of human wickedness.[132] For Cowles, the lesson to be learned is that the God of the Old Testament is radically different from the God revealed and incarnate in Jesus.[133]

Others argue that historically the ban did not take place and that the narrative was composed centuries after the events it purports to accord, either to call the nation to purity,[134] to separate them from idolatry,[135] or to express the myth of order being imposed on chaos.[136] Others have argued that because the OT narrative employs the kind of rhetorical hyperbole that was common to other ancient accounts of conquest, the accounts of mass slaughter have been greatly and deliberately exaggerated.[137]

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131 H. Junker, 'Der alttestamentliche Bann gegen heidnische Völker als moraltheologisches und offenbarungsgeschichtliches Problem,' *Trier Theologische Zeitschrift* 56 (1947), 74-89, summarised in Hofreiter, *Genocide*, 226-229.

132 E. Stump, 'The Problem of Evil and the History of Peoples: Think Amalek,' in *Divine Evil? The Moral Character of the God of Abraham* (ed. M. Bergman, M. Murray and M. Rea; (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 179-197.

133 C.S. Cowles, 'The Case for Radical Discontinuity,' in *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (C.S. Cowles, E.Merrill, D. Card, T. Longman III; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 11-44. Curley questions whether the god described in the biblical narratives merits our unconditional love, honour and obedience: E. Curley, 'The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,' in *Divine Evil?* 58-78. Fales argues that we such a god must be repudiated: E. Fales, 'Satanic Verses: Moral Chaos in Holy Writ,' in *Divine Evil?* 91-108.

134 G.A. Anderson, 'What about the Canaanites?' (*Divine Evil?* 269-282).

135 C.Seitz, 'Canon and Conquest: The Character of the God of the Hebrew Bible' (*Divine Evil?* 292-308); D. Earl, 'The Christian Significance of Deuteronomy 7,' *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 3 (2009), 41-62.

136 P.D. Stern, *The Biblical ḤEREM: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

137 N. Wolterstorff, 'Reading Joshua' (*Divine Evil?* 236-256); cf. Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* 158-197. Copan mitigates the account by arguing that women and children were not massacred, since Jericho and Ai were military strongholds, manned almost entirely by soldiers and perhaps the reason Rahab was spared was because she was the only woman in Jericho at the time of the Israelite attack. Any children who may have been killed would have gone straight to heaven. The gulf that is thus opened between between the Bible's

Others adopt the stance of the Jewish text The Wisdom of Solomon, which argues that there was nothing immoral about the command to slaughter the Canaanites because Israel was acting as the instrument of God's righteous judgment against them (12:3-7). For Merrill, the extreme measure was necessary to destroy idolatry and protect Israel from spiritual corruption;[138] Kaiser compares the destruction of the Canaanites to amputating a gangrenous limb or removing a cancer which would infect the whole of society;[139] Gard sees a prefiguring of eschatological judgment,[140] as does Longman,[141] who draws on Kline's theory of 'intrusion ethics':[142] according to which the ethical principles of the last Judgment intrude into the present time, so that ordinary moral standards are suspended and God deals with the inhabitants of Canaan as he will deal with all those who rebel against his sovereignty at the last judgment. In contrast, Swinburne argues that since God has

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description of events and what actually took place still does not resolve the issue. As James Barr pertinently observes, 'the problem is not whether the narratives are fact or fiction, the ritual destruction is *commended*': *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology: The Gifford Lectures for 1991* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 209.

[138] E. Merrill, 'The Case for Moderate Discontinuity,' in *Show Them No Mercy*, 61-94. Cf. P.C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 177-178; 276; *The Problem of War in the Old* Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 71-73. Cf. W. Lyons, 'Between History and Theology: The Problem of *Herem* in Modern Evangelical Biblical Scholarship,' (PhD Diss., Florida State University, 2003), 45-76; https://fsu.digital.flvc.org/islandora/object/fsu:169187/datastream/PDF/view, accessed 7th December, 2018.

[139] W. Kaiser, P.H. Davids, F.F. Bruce, M.T. Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Illinois: IVP, 1996), 206-207. Cf..Lyons, 'Problem', 22-44.

[140] D. Gard, 'The Case for Eschatological Continuity,' in *Show Them No Mercy,* 111-141.

[141] T. Longman III, 'The Case for Spiritual Continuity,' in *Show Them No Mercy,* 161-187; also D.G. Reid, T. Longman III, 'When God Declares War: The violence of God can only be understood in the shadow of the cross,' *Christianity Today* (October 28, 1996), 14-21 (17). Cf. Lyons, 'Problem', 77-104

[142] M. Kline, 'The Intrusion and the Decalogue,' *WTJ* 16 (1953), 1-22; cf. .Lyons, 'Problem', 98-99.

the right to give life and to take it back again, he had the right to command the Israelites to kill the Canaanites.[143]

All these proposed solutions to and debates about the problem of divinely sanctioned genocide reviewed above work on the common principle that, according to the Old Testament, God commanded the indiscriminate slaughter of the Canaanites and the Amalekites. However, this paper contends that a careful reading of the OT narrative shows that this is not necessarily the case.

Framing the narrative of genocide

Undoubtedly, the command to wipe out the Canaanites is found in the Book of Deuteronomy and the ban is ruthlessly and comprehensively prosecuted in the Joshua narrative: these two books frame the narrative of ḫerem in terms of Israel's obedience to the divine command.[144]. Yet Deuteronomy and Joshua are themselves framed by the narratives of Exodus and Judges, and it will be argued below that a careful reading of these texts suggests that the slaughter of the Canaanites was neither commanded by God, and nor was it completed.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses acts as God's mouthpiece and most of the book is a record of what Moses says to the people. According to Deuteronomy 1:3, Moses spoke to all the people in accordance with everything the Lord had commanded him. The text does not simply read, 'Moses spoke to the people everything that the Lord commanded him: that extra phrase, 'in accordance with', found in the ESV, reflects the Hebrew phrase כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ: Deuteronomy comprises Moses' account of what the Lord told him.

In 1:6-3:29 Moses recounts the nation's experience in the wilderness before exhorting the people to exclusive and wholehearted obedience

[143] R. Swinburne, 'What does the Old Testament Mean?' in *Divine Evil?* 209-225.

[144] Kuypers describes framing as 'the process whereby communicators act – consciously or not – to construct a particular point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be viewed in a particular manner, with some facts made more or less noticeable (even ignored) than others': J.A. Kuypers, 'Framing Analysis,' in *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action* edited by A Kuypers (Plymouth: Lexington, 2009), 181-204 (182).

to the Lord (4:1-40). In chapter 5 Moses summarises the giving of the Ten Commandments, and this leads into an exposition of 'the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you' that runs without a break from 6:1 through to 26:19. Ostensibly this is Moses' account of what the Lord said to him on Mount Horeb (Exodus 20:22-23:33; 34:10-26).[145] This exposition of the law is so long it is easy to lose sight of the fact that these laws are not spoken directly to the people by God, but rather are promulgated on God's behalf by Moses. However, if we compare what the Lord says to Moses with Moses' account of what God has said to him, we discover that the command to slaughter the Canaanites without mercy, leaving no survivors, is only found in Deuteronomy:[146] it is missing from Exodus. Now there is no denying that in Exodus God says the Canaanites are to be driven out (23:28-31), but it only in Moses' account in Deuteronomy that the command is expressly given to 'Kill them all!'[147]

If we want to ascertain the origins of the ban, the earliest reference to it in the narrative is found in Numbers 21:1-3, when Israel made a vow to the Lord, saying that if the Lord gave Arad into their hand, Israel would dedicate their cities to destruction. That prayer was answered, and the same policy was pursued when Israel fought Sihon, King of the Amorites and Og King of Bashan in Deuteronomy 2:26-3:7. By Deuteronomy 7, Moses is claiming a divine mandate for the elimination of the Canaanites, and to all intents and purposes it appears that he is speaking with divine authority as he expounds God's laws, but if we search for the origin of the command to slaughter the Canaanites, we can only trace it back to Moses, because Deuteronomy only tells us what Moses said, whereas in the narrative of Exodus 20:22-23:33; 34:10-26 we read what God said. Where is the explicit

[145] Thus it is natural to see a reference to Deuteronomy in Joshua 1:7, where Joshua is commanded to be 'carefuo to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you'; Butler draws attention to the extent to which the language of Deuteronomy resurfaces in Joshua: T.C. Butler, *Joshua* (Waco: Word, 1983), xx.

[146] The command to destroy apostate towns in Israel, killing all the inhabitants, also forms part of Moses' monologue (Deuteronomy 13:15-16).

[147] I am grateful to my son, Sean, for this pithy summary of the distinction.

divine authorisation for the slaughter of the Canaanites? If we check our sources carefully, we find that it is missing.[148]

This observation places a question mark over the claim that Joshua was faithfully adhering to the command the Lord gave to Moses when he left nothing alive in the cities he conquered (Joshua 11:15). There is a discrepancy here, because the Lord gave no such command to Moses. Is it simply a matter of the narrative of Exodus being incomplete, inasmuch as it fails to record the Lord telling Moses to exterminate the Canaanites? Or does the absence of any such command in Exodus cast doubt on the veracity of the account of Joshua's conquest? Once the reader follows the narrative through and reaches the Book of Judges, confidence in the account of Joshua's comprehensive victories is undermined. Whereas it has been claimed that Joshua devoted to destruction all that breathed in the hill country, the Negeb, the lowland and the slopes (Joshua 10:40), we read in Judges 1:9 that after Joshua's death 'men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the Negeb, and in the lowland,' and conquered the towns of Hebron and Debir (Judges 1:10-12) although it was claimed that Joshua had already devoted these cities to destruction (Joshua 10:36-39).

The jingoism of Joshua's account is simply not corroborated by the subsequent account found in Judges, and this suggests that the narrative of Joshua is actually driven by the ideological aim of showing that Joshua completely fulfilled the Deuteronomic mandate to wipe out the Canaanites. Deuteronomy presents Moses as God's faithful mouthpiece, conveying to Israel the divine command to slaughter the Canaanites, while Joshua is portrayed as the obedient agent, who faithfully executes that command to the letter. However, the realisation that this command originated with Moses rather than the Lord leads to the chilling conclusion that the patriotic narratives of Deuteronomy and Joshua actually frame and legitimate acts of

[148] The same observation applies to 1 Samuel 15:3, where Samuel tells Saul to 'go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' The divine ban certainly applied to the animals, and Saul was disobedient in not devoting these to destruction. However, there is no mention of the Lord authorising Samuel's order for the indiscriminate slaughter of the Amalekite.

religiously motivated violence that were never directly sanctioned by God.

When the combined narrative of Deuteronomy-Joshua is read within the frame of its canonical context, the account is subverted, since according to the book of Exodus, God did not order Moses to wipe out the Canaanites, and according to Judges, the Canaanites were not wiped out. On this basis, the straightforward assertion or assumption that God instructed his people to commit genocide, and that the people massacred the Canaanites under his direction, becomes problematic.

The Fate of Ai

Joshua 8:1-2 poses a potential problem to this thesis, inasmuch as the Lord expressly appears to approve the policy of genocide as he says to Joshua, 'See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city and his land. And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves': רַק־שְׁלָלָהּ וּבְהֶמְתָּהּ תָּבְזּוּ לָכֶם. The narrative frame of Deuteronomy and Joshua makes it clear that the 'spoil' which could which could be kept as plunder, did not include the inhabitants, who had to be destroyed. This distinction between the spoil of a city and its inhabitants is clearly drawn in Moses' account of Israel's victory against Sihon: 'we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction every city, men, women and children. We left no survivors. Only the livestock we took as spoil for ourselves, with the plunder of the cities that we captured' (Deuteronomy 2:34-35). The same applied to their victory over Og (Deuteronomy 3:6-7), Israel kept the livestock and spoil from the cities as plunder for themselves, but killed all the inhabitants, men, women and children. This was the fate of the 12 000 inhabitants of Ai: 'Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction. Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as their plunder according to the word of the Lord that he had commanded Joshua' (Joshua 8:26-27). And as subsequent cities are conquered by Joshua, the pattern remains the same: the spoil and livestock are taken as plunder, but the inhabitants are massacred, not leaving any who breathed (Joshua 11:14). Thus the controlling narrative of Deuteronomy and Joshua direct reader to understand that

God permitted Israel to keep any material goods or livestock belonging to the cities they conquered, but all the inhabitants had to be put to death without mercy: the immediate context of the narrative of Deuteronomy-Joshua dictates the meaning of God's directive in Joshua 8:1-2.

However, beyond the framing narrative of Joshua, 'spoil' (שלל) can include people as well as material goods: when Israel fought Midian, the spoil and the plunder they brought back after their victory included both people and animals (Numbers 31:11). The mother of Sisera, missing her son, comforts herself with the thought that his men have found and divided the spoil, which includes both women and dyed materials (Judges 5:30). In Deuteronomy 20:14, in the course of giving instructions on how to treat distant cities after conquering them, Moses tells the people that they can take as plunder all the spoil of the city, including the women, the little ones and the livestock., though he makes it clear that this provision does not extend to include the Canaanite cities (20:16). Thus, outside the book of Joshua, it is clear that 'spoil' can include people who are taken as captives.

On this basis, it is worth looking more closely at what the Lord says to Joshua in 8:1-2. The Lord declares he has given four items into Joshua's hand: the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. Two of those items, the city and its king, Joshua is ordered to treat the same way as Jericho and its king. The fate of the city and the king is recorded in Joshua 8:28-29: the city was burned and turned into a heap of ruins, and the king was hanged on a tree until evening, when his body was taken down and buried under a heap of stones. Joshua is also told that there are two things the people are allowed to keep as plunder: the spoil of the city and its livestock: רַק־שְׁלָלָהּ וּבְהֶמְתָּהּ תָּבְזּוּ לָכֶם.

In Joshua 8:1-2, there is a clear correspondence between the land of Ai, which the Lord has given to Joshua, and the livestock, which the people are allowed to keep as plunder. The list of the cities of refuge that are given to the Levites found in Joshua 21 indicates that livestock would have been kept in the land surrounding the city: in each case the Levites are given the city to dwell in, together with the surrounding pasturelands for their livestock: יְהוָה צִוָּה בְיַד־מֹשֶׁה לָתֶת־לָנוּ עָרִים לָשָׁבֶת

וּמִגְרְשֵׁיהֶן לִבְהֶמְתָּם.[149] Correspondingly, in Joshua 8:1-2, the livestock that the people were allowed to keep as plunder, would have been found grazing in the land surrounding Ai.

Thus three of the items the Lord gives to Joshua correspond to three of the subsequent instructions as to what he is to do with them: the king and the city are to be treated the same way as Jericho and its king; the livestock in the land may be kept as plunder. This then raises the question as to whether we can draw a correspondence between the remaining item in each list, namely the people, which the Lord gives into Joshua's hand, and the spoil which the Israelites are allowed to keep. Although the narrative of Joshua does not allow the people to be spared as part of the city's spoil, and all 12 000 of them were massacred (Joshua 8:22-25), if Joshua 8:1-2 were read in isolation from its immediate context, the natural inference would be that these items should be correlated and that the people of the city should be regarded as spoil that could be kept.

Furthermore, we have also seen that there are instances where 'spoil' explicitly includes people who are taken as captives, (Numbers 31:11; Judges 5:30; Deuteronomy 20:14) so if God's instructions to Joshua were read outside the frame of the narrative of Joshua, it becomes apparent that these could be interpreted as allowing captives to be taken from the city as spoil: as with Jericho, the city of Ai was to be destroyed and its king killed, but the livestock and the spoil of the city, including its inhabitants, could be kept as plunder.

Employing a hermeneutic of suspicion, one may argue that a word from God to Joshua which allows the taking of captives as spoil has been placed within a narrative that expressly rules that option out, so that the meaning of God's word to Joshua is to brought into line with the ideology of genocide, for which the book claims divine authority. This is admittedly a contentious claim to make. But if one asks the question, 'Did God command the indiscriminate slaughter of the Canaanite tribes?' the answer, on the basis of what God actually says, cannot be an unambiguous 'Yes'. This is necessarily the case since, if God's words were relocated .into a different frame, they would not endorse the policy of genocide at all.

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[149] Joshua 21:2; cf. 21;3, 8, 11, 13-19, 21-39, 41-42; Numbers 35:2-3.

Hermeneutical Considerations

Of course, this in turn raises another question, namely why the scriptures, which portray Moses and Joshua as models of faithful obedience to God, should include an instance where God's word is twisted and distorted in this way to serve such a dangerous and destructive ideology. Does this not undermine any claim that the scriptures are inspired by God and useful for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)? Yet there is a valid and important lesson to be learned here. History is littered with examples of people committing unspeakable atrocities in the name of religion in the misguided belief that they have divine authorisation to do so.[150] By virtue of including and simultaneously subverting the ideological narrative of Deuteronomy-Joshua, the scriptures themselves underline how easy it is for powerful leaders, speaking in the name of God, to win people to a godless cause. The way in which people all too easily assume that God commanded genocide merely reinforces this point. Rather than being swept along by the account of Moses' and Joshua's faithful obedience, the dissonance caused by the way in which the narrative of Deuteronomy-Joshua is framed by Exodus and Judges should give us pause enough to weigh carefully who is speaking and how their words have been interpreted.

J.J. Collins makes the point that 'historically people have appealed to the Bible precisely because of its presumed divine authority, which gives an aura of certitude to any position it can be shown to support;'[151] All kinds of violent atrocities are committed in the name of religion, but that does not mean that God sanctions them or wants any part of them.[152] The narrative of Deuteronomy and Joshua expressly sets out a scenario where God appears to call for the massacre of the Canaanite nations, but this narrative is subverted and its ideological basis is exposed by the way in which it is framed in the wider narrative which runs from Exodus to Judges. The canonical

[150] Cf. S. Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels, *Word and World* 15 (1995), 402-411.
[151] J.J. Collins, 'The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence,' *JBL* 122 (2003), 3-21 (20).
[152] The language of Isaiah 34 is clearly metaphorical: one of the dangers of fundamentalist extremism is the tendency to interpret metaphorical language in a literal sense.

ordering of the Old Testament books allows us to see that God did not actually command the slaughter of the Canaanites at all.

Moses, Joshua and Samuel are all Old Testament models of faith and obedience, but like every human leader, they have feet of clay. The ḥerem narratives do not point us to a God who is the author of genocide; they do point us to the dangers of how easily extremist views develop and find credibility when powerful people take it upon themselves to claim divine authorisation for their own ideas and policies. When we look for divine authority, John 1:17 points us in the right direction: 'The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ' (1:17): there is only One who has sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice.[153] From the narratives of Deuteronomy and Joshua, we learn that without the grace and truth of Christ, it is all too easy for religion to bring violence and destruction in its train.

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[153] The Baptist Union Declaration of Principle.

Modern Slavery, Trauma and Holy Saturday: Theological and Pastoral Responses

Dan Pratt
Together Free

Introduction

This study firstly explores Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking within the context of the United Kingdom. It outlines the UK's recent Modern Slavery Act and highlights characteristics and extent of Modern Slavery within the UK. Two case studies of Modern Slavery and Trafficking will be offered. Secondly, theological responses to Modern Slavery will be explored through the lens of Trauma and Holy Saturday in the Passion narrative. Exploring Shelly Rambo's work, Holy Saturday, will be examined as a 'Middle Space' for survivors of Modern Slavery and trauma. Finally, pastoral responses through an application will emerge through three frameworks: Living the Middle-Space, Presence, and Witness.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern Slavery and Case Study 1

This study emerges from a Church pioneering context among rough sleepers, addicts and vulnerable people within Southend-on-Sea, Essex. It is rooted within Contextual theology, 'a Christian interpretation of life that is conscious of its circumstances.'[154] During the last six years a church community, 57 West,[155] emerged among rough sleepers, addicts, and the vulnerable. Within this context, individuals were encountered who had been exploited and abused.

[154] Sigurd Bergmann, *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 4.
[155] 57 West is a member church of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. www.57west.org.uk.

> Richard,[156] became homeless in his early twenties while suffering with poor mental health. He was housed by a well known homeless charity in the North West of England. One day he was called to the charity's reception and offered a job by a traveller family. In return for labour, Richard would receive money, accommodation and travel. Richard accepted the job and travelled with the family to Germany.
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> Richard's work involved paving and tarmacking people's driveways within Germany, France, and the UK. Richard frequently worked fourteen to eighteen hours each day. Days off were rare. He was barely paid. Accommodation was in a caravan, shared with the large dog of the family. Sometimes he was fed only a sandwich a day. His health suffered. Although Richard tried to escape, he and his family were threatened. He was told 'we know where your family live'. He stayed.
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> The family used Richard's identification documents many times without his knowledge or permission. Companies were set up in his name in Germany, France, Austria, Belgium. These companies would take out financial loans not to be repaid. Expensive equipment and cars were rented and not always returned. The police arrested Richard in France. He was sent to prison for the crimes his captors commit. Having served two years in prison, he was released and it was the first time he was able to get away from his captors in twenty years. Richard returned to Southend and was homeless once more. He started attending 57 West's Community meal. Eventually he became houses with a homeless charity. He is trying to re-build his life.

Unfortunately, Richard's case is not an exception. Stories from other rough sleepers share similarities of Richard's story: treated as slaves, exploited for labour and forced to commit criminal acts for the financial gain of their exploiters. Sometimes these men were sexually and physically assaulted as a means of control and domination by the captors. Exploitation occurred for years and decades at a time.

[156] Shared with permission and name changed.

Encountering these survivors, it became essential to reflect theologically and pastorally on these contexts of exploitation and trauma as well as the extent of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking within the UK.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in the UK

Within the UK, the National Crime Agency estimates there are tens of thousands of victims of Modern Slavery. Previous estimates of 10,000-13,000 victims in the UK were found to be the "tip of the iceberg."[157] The UK's The Modern Slavery Act came into effect in 2015. It identifies Modern Slavery as 'holding a person in slavery or servitude or requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour.'[158] This includes 'securing services by force, threats or deception.'[159] The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking. The Equality and Human Rights Commission defines these offences.[160] Slavery is defined as 'when someone actually owns you like a piece of property'. Servitude is defined as being 'similar to slavery - you might live on the person's premises, work for them and be unable to leave, but they don't own you.' Forced Labour 'means you are forced to do work that you have not agreed to, under the threat of punishment.'

The Modern Slavery Act defines trafficking as when a 'person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person ("V") with a view to V being exploited.'[161] The United Nations expands the definition of trafficking in persons as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of

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157 BBC News, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40885353 [accessed 07 April 2018].
158 Modern Slavery Act, 2015 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/pdfs/ukpga_20150030_en.pdf [accessed 23 May 2019], 1.
159 Ibid, 3.
160 Equality and Human Rights Commission, www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-4-freedom-slavery-and-forced-labour [accessed 23 March 2018].
161 Modern Slavery Act, 2015. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/pdfs/ukpga_20150030_en.pdf [accessed 23 May 2019], 3.

power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.[162]

Those who are kept in Modern Slavery are often forced to use their bodies for labour, sex, forced criminality or organ donation against their will. They may not be able to trust health professionals or the police or those who would like to help them. They may be deceived or frightened into handing over money, identification documents or their mobile phones. Some will be UK nationals, while others are economic migrants or illegal migrants.

The UK's National Crime Agency[163] highlights that there are several broad categories of exploitation linked to human trafficking, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, organ harvesting and forced marriage. Child related crimes are also included such as child sexual exploitation, forced begging, illegal drug cultivation, organised theft, and related benefit fraud.

Modern slavery is a low risk and high reward crime. Individuals can be exploited many times over resulting in great financial gain for their captor. Due to the hidden nature of the crimes it is often difficult to find victims and catch perpetrators. Some victims don't identify themselves as victims due to being manipulated and developing attachment to their captor. Others live in fear of their captors. Without a victim coming forward to give evidence, it is difficult to catch and prosecute perpetrators. People who come from contexts of poverty, with limited opportunities or other vulnerabilities are often prayed upon by exploiters. Modern Slavery is therefore attractive to criminals due to the low risk of prosecution.

In 2009, the UK government set up the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to which potential cases are referred and through which victims can access relevant support. Statistics from National Referral

[162] United Nations, 2000, Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, Article 3, https://www.osce.org/odihr/19223?download=true, [accessed 23 May 2019].
[163]National Crime Agency, www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/crime-threats/human-trafficking [accessed 23rd March 2018].

Mechanism for 2018 highlight that 6993 people were identified as potential victims of slavery and referred into the NRM in 2018.[164] These potential victims of trafficking were from 130 different nationalities. The report highlights that 'UK, Albanian and Vietnamese nationals remain the most commonly reported potential victims, with victims from the United Kingdom increasing by nearly 100% to 1,625 referrals over the 2017 total of 820 referrals.'[165]

Children due to their vulnerability and need for care and protection are at great risk from traffickers, especially when support and care is lacking. Children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by individual opportunists, traffickers, organised crime groups or people who should protect them. Of the 6993 people identified as potential victims of slavery in 2018, 3137 were minors.[166]

The Global Slavery Index estimates there are 136,000 people kept in Modern Slavery in the UK today.[167] For every 1000 people an estimated 2.1 people are living in Modern Slavery. According to these statistics, if the national average is applied to a town of 30,000 people there would be an estimated 66 people exploited in Modern Slavery. Applied to a city of 1 million, there would be an estimated 2,200 people exploited in Modern Slavery. There is consequently a need for the Church to be able to identify potential victims of Modern Slavery as well as help and support survivors who are re-building their lives.

Modern Slavery: Case Study 2

Joanna's story came to light through Ella's Home.[168] Ella's Home was set up by a Church in East London and provide long-term accommodation for survivors of sexual exploitation.

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[164] National Referral Mechanism - End of Year Statistics 2018 https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/282-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-end-of-year-summary-2018/file [accessed 22 May 2019], 1.
[165] Ibid, 1.
[166] Ibid, 1.
[167] Global Slavery Index, www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/country-studies/united-kingdom/ [accessed 22 May 2019].
[168] Ellas Home, www.ellas-home.co.uk.

> Joanna grew up in an abusive and unkind family in Brazil. Yet, she had a dream to make something of her life and move far away from them. She worked hard so that she could study accounting and have a professional career. Part way through her studies she became very unwell and had to undergo major treatment. All her savings went to pay her medical bills and when she was recovered she was unable to carry on with her studies having no resources to do so. She met someone who said they could help her get work to pay the bills quickly. Joanna knew it wasn't what she wanted to do but it was a means to an end. Little did she know that at that point she would loose her freedom.
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> For the next decade Joanna was at the mercy of pimps who moved her to Italy and then between countries in Europe, finally reaching the UK. She was sold for sex and kept her under the control her pimps. During those years there were two times Joanna attempted to escape. Each time she was captured and severely punished for her boldness. One day, however, a new opportunity of freedom presented itself and she made a run for it. She ran until she couldn't run anymore.
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> Eventually she was picked up by the authorities. She was terrified, but came to realise she was safe. Joanne was referred to the Medaille Trust who provide safe-houses for survivors of trafficking. This was the first time in a decade that Joanna felt truly safe. Joanna was moved into longer supportive accommodation at Ella's Home where she has continued her journey of freedom. Through Joanna's brave testimony, she helped to imprison some of those who had exploited her.[169]

Ella's Home provides support and care for women and their families, who like Joanna, who have experienced exploitation. Joanna's and others experiences of being trafficked for the purposes of sexual

[169] Chalke, E, 2018, https://www.togetherfree.org.uk/sexual-exploitation [accessed 23 May 2019]

exploitation raise questions regarding how we as Churches and Communities can respond.

The National Crime Agency state that 'ordinary members of the public are coming into contact with victims of Modern Slavery in their everyday lives'. As the Church works with vulnerable people through food-banks, crèches, homeless shelters, she is in a prime position to be able to encounter and help survivors of Modern Slavery. Within the Baptist Union of Great Britain, 47 churches were surveyed regarding their contact with those who had been exploited through Modern Slavery.[170] 19% of those churches had knowingly encountered survivors of Modern Slavery. The statistics would rapidly increase relating to the churches who are unknowingly come into contact with survivors. Our churches are increasingly encountering people who have been victims of abuse and exploitation. Within pastoral work, it is becoming increasingly common to journey alongside those who have experienced great suffering and trauma. In order to minister and serve more effectively, our understanding of the experiences of victims and survivors of Modern Slavery increase. There is therefore a need to develop our theological and pastoral responses to suffering and trauma. To this we now turn our attention.

Trauma and Holy Saturday

Shelly Rambo, in *Spirit and Trauma*, states that traditional redemption narratives of the cross and the resurrection are insufficient, often overly focusing on the victory of the cross.[171] Indeed, Rambo notes that, 'the redemptive narrative of cross and resurrection is often read in a linear fashion in which life (resurrection) is victorious over death.'[172] Christian triumphalism rushes to the proclamation of Easter and to its claims of new life and resurrection. Life conquers death. Victory and good news is sought, while not adequately addressing suffering. Well-meaning theologies promote redemption as a kind of fantasy, turning us away from, rather than towards the complexity of human life, especially extreme suffering and exploitation. While this

[170] Survey completed by the author among Baptist Churches within the Eastern Baptist Association, UK.
[171] Shelley Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 6.
[172] Ibid, 4.

outlook can provide a sense of promise and hope, the linear reading of death ending and new life being ushered in, can run into difficulty.

For those who have experienced and are experiencing trauma, these theologies can be particularly unhelpful. When responding to suffering around us, we are increasingly aware that phrases such as 'it'll be alright in the end' can have little meaning and comfort for those experiencing trauma. But this raises questions about our theology of salvation and redemption, particularly relating to death and resurrection.

The Collins dictionary defines trauma as a 'severe shock or very upsetting experience, which may cause psychological damage.'[173] Judith Herman in her foundational book *Trauma and Recovery* writes, 'Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death.'[174] Focusing on the impact of trauma on an individual, Herman writes 'Traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in physiological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory. The traumatized person may experience intense emotion but without clear memory of the event, or may remember everything in detail but without emotion. She may find herself in a constant state of vigilance and irritability without knowing why.'[175]

Although a traumatic event can take place once, trauma results in the person re-living the trauma in the present. Victims and survivors of Modern Slavery are often held captive for weeks, months and years, subject repeatedly to degrading abuse. When a survivor has escaped their captivity, those experienced events remain and persist with the person. Death and new life are experienced as a pendulum swinging between the two, mixing both realities. Binaries disappear as death and life oscillate and merge. Rambo writes, 'trauma is an open wound. For those who survive trauma, the experience of trauma can be likened to

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[173] Collins Dictionary, https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/trauma [accessed 23 May 2019].
[174] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic, 1992) 33.
[175] Ibid, 34.

a death. But the reality is that death has not ended; instead, it persists'.[176] This raises questions about theological narratives of death and resurrection.

Within some contextual theologies and theologies of liberation, the experience of pain and suffering becomes the hermeneutical lens to explore theology and themes of redemption and healing.[177] The lens of suffering and trauma casts the relationship between death and life in the Christian narrative in a much more complex light.[178] Trauma studies challenges us to think about recovery differently and in turn help us to revisit redemption. 'Trauma teaches us there is no clean break from the past, of death behind and life ahead. Trauma tells us that death returns, haunting the life that follows.'[179]

Rambo proposes that redemption should be found in the 'Middle Space' or 'the figurative site in which death and life are no longer bounded'[180]. This 'Middle Space' enables theological reflection to be done in the space between death and life in the pendulum moving between the two. For Rambo, 'The good news of Christianity for those who experience trauma rests in the capacity to theologize this middle'.[181] This Middle Space is found not on Good Friday, or Easter Sunday, but on Holy Saturday.

The Passion narrative is a description of immense suffering. For those who witnessed the brutal torture of Jesus, trauma would be experienced in what they experienced and in what they remembered of the event. For Christ, the suffering was immense, culminating in separation from God. Jesus breathes his last breath and as the Apostle's Creed indicates 'he descended into hell.' Much speculation surrounds the mystery of Holy Saturday and Christ's experience. The

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176 Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 4.
177 For example refer to: Leonardo Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor* (San Francisco: Harper and Row 1970); Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (New York: Orbis, 1997); James H. Cone, *God of the oppressed* (Rev. Ed., New York: Orbis, 1997); Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1973).
178 Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 11.
179 Ibid, 156.
180 Ibid, 7
181 Ibid, 8.

Biblical narrative reveals it was a time of extreme abandonment, forsakenness and extreme loneliness and trauma. Trauma experienced by the Crucified Christ and trauma experienced by those grieving the events of the previous day.

Rambo writes, 'Holy Saturday, reveals a distinct landscape of suffering that cannot be understood exclusively in terms of the passion; neither can it be interpreted in relationship to resurrection.'[182] For Rambo, Holy Saturday is a pivotal part of this divine love story. It narrates divine love at its least discernable point – between death and resurrection, in the recesses of hell.'[183] Holy Saturday is a testimony to the persistence of love in utter forsakenness and abandonment.'[184]

Perhaps it is this point in the Gospel narrative that is most pertinent to the estimated 136,000 people in the UK who are currently being kept in slavery. In their situations of hell; of extreme abandonment, and forsakenness, Holy Saturday's possibility of love at its least discernable point, in the recesses of hell, gives an alternate redemption narrative. Is God with the 136,000? Do they have an awareness of God's presence and love in their very real contexts of hell?

In exploring theological and pastoral responses to Modern Slavery it is essential to question 'what persists between death and resurrection?' This leads us to the following questions: when trauma occurs, where is God? And where is salvation and redemption in the midst and aftermath of abuse and exploitation? To respond we will turn our attention to several theologians.

Jürgen Moltmann's bold interpretation of the crucifixion states that God does not stand outside of the events of the cross but rather experiences the suffering. 'The Son suffers in his love being forsaken by the Father as he dies. The Father suffers in love the grief of the death of the Son.'[185] Not only Christ experiences suffering and trauma through the crucifixion and Holy Saturday, but also the Trinity. Moltmann expands his view of God suffering through the cross, highlighting that the suffering and death of humankind is experienced

[182] Ibid, 46.
[183] Ibid, 55.
[184] Ibid, 53.
[185] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God,* (London: SCM, 1974), 56.

by God. 'There is no suffering which in this history of God is not God's suffering, no death which has not been God's death in the history of Golgotha.'[186]

This is further explored by Paul Fiddes who writes that 'Christ God participated to the utmost in the human predicament, and has never journeyed farther into the depths of his creation.'[187] In journeying into the depths and suffering of his creation, the relationship within the Trinity suffers. This relational suffering is expressed by Fiddes: 'When Jesus is recognized as the Son of God, the cross must mean that the alienation and brokenness of the world enters right into the relationships that form the being of God.'[188]

The trauma and suffering of the world is consequently experienced by God. God is present with those experiencing trauma. Not detached, but present and suffering with. This has implications for victims and survivors of Modern Slavery such as Richard and Joanna. The brokenness and evil of their captivity and the consequent trauma is experienced by God. God is not detached, but present in the survivor's trauma. God is present in the trauma of what Rambo describes as that which 'shatters all current knowledge of the world and alters the way of operating within it.'[189]

Fiddes states, 'Any doctrine of the atonement which is in continuity with the ministry of Jesus will therefore make the involvement of God in human life the central factor. Through Jesus, God participates in the situation of those oppressed by every kind of sin and evil.'[190] God embraces the brokenness and alienation of humankind within himself, within the nature of the Trinity. The God-head is therefore united within suffering, experiencing trauma and atonement. In this way God identifies and participates in the suffering of creation. The Crucifixion and Holy Saturday narrative therefore finds God in the midst of the

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[186] Ibid, 255.
[187] Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989), 56.
[188] Ibid, 57.
[189] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 4.
[190] Fiddes, *Past Event*, 56.

human context, thereby being present with those experiencing past and present suffering. This is evident in the example of the witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion.

Rambo writes, 'Attributing theological significance to the middle involves resisting the forward pull of the Christian narrative, from death to life. The middle suspends this forward movement and, in so doing, provides a necessary witness to the struggles of living in a persisting storm of the aftermath.'[191] The storm and trauma of Holy Saturday would be real for Mary's mother, for Mary Magdalene and for the disciples. They were witnesses of the torture and brutal death of their beloved Jesus. The immediate witnessing of these events would cause trauma. Perhaps like soldiers returning from war, who witness atrocities, triggers through sights and smells bring memories flooding back to the present. For those witnesses, where was God when Jesus breathes his last and during Holy Saturday?

Mark's Gospel tells us 'With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last' (Mk 15:37). Rambo proposes that this breath is 'carried on the breath and in the bodies of those who move in the aftermath of death.'[192] The word describing Spirit in the Christian Scriptures in the translation from Hebrew to Greek is *Pneuma,* meaning breath. Is it possible that as Christ breathes his last breath on the cross, this breath, the Spirit, *Pneuma* is 'carried on the breath and in the bodies of those who move in the aftermath of death'? For Rambo Christ's breath or *Pneuma* is shared with the witnesses of those at the cross. That when Christ dies, they are not left without a God presence. The Spirit is with them.

The Spirit is the force of life pulsing through all things. 'In Him we live, move and have our being.' Holy Saturday attests to the painful position between life and death. A day of hell, where for the witnesses, death is experienced in the midst of life. The Christ-breath, the Spirit was present silently between death and resurrection.

Application: Living the Middle-Space, Presence and Witness

To conclude, three applications will be highlighted exploring Holy Saturday through a lens of trauma, specifically relating to Modern

[191] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 138.
[192] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 120.

Slavery. These will include 1) enable survivors to *Live the middle-space*; 2) the importance of the Church being *Present* with Survivors of Modern Slavery; and 3) the importance of the Church to bearing *Witness* of exploitation within communities.

Firstly, the importance of Holy Saturday highlights the need for a 'Middle Space' to be lived out by survivors of trauma, and those who accompany them. For Christians who journey with survivors of Modern Slavery, whether they be counsellors, ministers or befrienders, there is a need to be aware of how we live informed by sacred and redemptive stories. How are these stories told? What remains untold? Glossing over uncomfortable stories within our societies or church traditions glosses over oppression, violence and injustice. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-Apartheid South Africa gave witness to this. It gave opportunity for memories of past suffering and oppression to be told.

Herman writes, 'In order to escape accountability for his crimes, the perpetrator does everything in his power to promote forgetting. Secrecy and science are the perpetrator's first line of defence'.[193] For Rambo, redemption narratives that smooth over the trauma of Holy Saturday are 'tied to a larger smoothing over of oppression, violence and the injustices of history.'[194] When we don't allow space for remembering and for stories of injustice to be told, we are acting contrary to the healing process. For those experiencing death through trauma in life, there must be space for these memories and stories. Freedom and space must be granted to live between life and death.

Just as the triune God experienced suffering and death in the death of Christ, so God experience's the suffering of those held in captivity. For the victims and survivors of Modern Slavery, only they can give witness to God's presence with them in the midst of extreme suffering and trauma. It is their witness that will testify if they experienced love's persistence in extreme abandonment, severe shock and sometimes psychological damage. As the survivor slowly comes to term with their trauma, this witness may take years to surface, or sometimes not at all.

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[193] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery,* 8.
[194] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 129.

It is only, the survivor's lived experience that gives testimony to whether they sensed the Spirit, the *Pneuma,* breathing within them and being present in the midst of abuse. Only the survivor can testify to 'what persists between death and resurrection?' Richard, who was held captive for twenty years, was asked if he ever sensed God with him in the midst of captivity. Richard reflected on the times that he was put in the most danger and replied, "the two times when I nearly died, someone was there looking after me". In both those times, Richard describes God altering his circumstances and enabling him to get out of those life-threatening situations. Upon finding freedom Richard states, "God works in mysterious ways. You can never see him. But I sense that God is with me saying 'Richard's had enough. I'll help him out'."

It is from places of abandonment and trauma that those who have lived their lives during Holy Saturday testify to previously unheard experiences of God's presence and love and perhaps silence. These have the potential to gives rise to new stories of redemption. As Christ suffered in humiliation at the hands of a godless world, Christ gives dignity and hope to those who experience pain and death as we wait for the full outworking of Christ's victory over death, sin and injustice. It is a nuanced redemption. This redemption is not the triumphant, 'life has conquered death redemption', but is rather the Spirit's loving presence when life and death co-exist within a pendulum between life and death.

Secondly, just as those at the foot of the cross on Good Friday chose to be present in the midst of extreme suffering, so too, the Church can choose to be *present* in communities that experience exploitation and suffering. Sam Wells highlights the importance of 'being with' in the Christian tradition. He notes that being with is a genuine encounter with two people. Rather than problem solving or working for, it starts with the person rather than a problem. It focuses on stillness, disposition and the individuals are equally involved together.[195] Wells notes that being with 'is the most faithful form of Christian witness

[195] Samuel Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto: Being with God* (Chichester: Wiley, 2015), 23.

and mission, because being with is both incarnationally faithful to the manifestation of God in Christ and eschatologically anticipatory of the destiny of all things in God.'[196] Indeed, being present in the midst of suffering requires making a choice to be present in the midst of suffering and darkness. The Church has a choice rather than looking away, to be present in the darkness for the sake of the least, the lost and the most vulnerable. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (Jn 1:4-5).

This may carry a cost for Christ-followers, as we encounter extreme suffering and find that we are also transformed by the stories of those we journey with. Jesus calls his followers through the Parable of the Good Samaritan to love and care for those who suffer, even when costly. Indeed, to follow the two greatest commands of loving God and our neighbour,[197] includes loving those who are exploited, abused and often hidden. Just as those present at Christ's death would carry the trauma of Good Friday into Holy Saturday and beyond, are we also willing to be impacted by the darkness and suffering around us?

By being present in the midst of suffering, the Church opens itself up as places of safety and refuge to vulnerable people in crisis. Churches have a unique presence among the poor and vulnerable within our communities. We run many social justice projects including food-banks, homeless projects or among poor families are uniquely positioned to develop relationships of trust. For those who have been exploited within Modern Slavery, Churches may be the first place they turn to when they have an opportunity.

Survivors may not want to go to the Police or Social Services. They want to find freedom on their own terms, without being subject to gruelling questioning and potentially being forced to re-live the trauma before they are ready. The Church and other voluntary organisations are often the first place that survivors of Modern Slavery turn to for help. Churches have the capacity to develop relationships of trust with those perhaps who are only looking for a free meal. Through that love and trust shown, exploited people may find safety and freedom to share their stories. Sensitive and open-ended questions have helped

[196] Well, Nazareth Manifesto, 23.
[197] Mark 12:30-31.

people to be able to share stories of exploitation. Without being present, neither these stories nor possibilities for helping would not have emerged.

Thirdly, through *witnessing* what happens among the vulnerable in our communities, we are able to testify of exploitation and oppression. Just as the disciples of Christ bore witness to the trauma of Good Friday, the church bears witness to the trauma experienced within out communities. Just as the disciples of Christ testified to the atrocities of the cross, so the church can testify to the traumatic realities of those they journey with, who are experiencing their own cross.

Indeed, our faith communities are well placed in the community at grassroots level. We are present in the midst of poverty, suffering and trauma. There are opportunities to spot the signs of Modern Slavery around us. The Police express their need for the wider community to share intelligence about exploitation being witnessed. Community based intelligence is essential in stopping Modern Slavery and human trafficking.

Through Churches and charities working in partnership with the Police, we can help overcome the disconnection that lets Modern Slavery and trafficking thrive. Of course, this requires sensitivity and wisdom. When relationships of trust have developed and survivors begin to share their stories. The first option must always be for the victim/survivor to have the power to tell their story. In cases where survivors refuse to go to law enforcement, it may be possible for them to share crimes committed against them anonymously. For Churches, there is a safeguarding responsibility to report activities where the person's life or the lives of others are in danger. With crimes relating to Modern Slavery, this can often be the case. We do not however want to break the confidence of those who are entrusting us with personal information. Consent from the victim/survivor must always be sought first and if consent is denied sharing information with the Police about that person anonymously may be a way to help protect the identify of the survivor.

We have thousands of people belonging to our Churches who are actively engaged in community life and witness what occurs. To name a few, we have health care professionals (often going into people's houses), we have teachers (observing if kids are being recruited for

drug running), there are rubbish collectors (who can observe who is residing in houses and any suspicious rubbish they throw out). We can observe the houses and flats on our street. Have they been taken over for use as a brothel or for cannabis cultivation? Church goers and grassroots organisations have a unique view on our communities. There are thousands of people ready to be sensitised to the signs of Modern Slavery around them, and to know how to respond and share community intelligence with the Police or Modern Slavery Helpline if they encounter something amiss.

For example, following a 'Spotting the Signs' of Modern Slavery workshop, a retired church member saw something in his neighbourhood that made him feel uncomfortable. He observed that a privately rented house across the road from his house was suspicious. He saw two women being taken into the house. Following this, different men were frequenting the house. The women did not come out of the house. If we had observed this what would we do in that situation? The retired church member reported his suspicions to the local Police. The Police investigated. The women were found and safeguarded. The house was being used as a 'Pop-up Brothel', where residential houses or apartments are rented for short periods of time for the purposes of supplying women, men or children to paying customers for sex. The retired church member in this scenario witnessed a scenario that made him feel uncomfortable. Rather than denying that witness and potential trauma that the two women were experiencing, he testified to what he had seen. This resulted in the safeguarding of the two women and the perpetrators prosecuted. Witness is essential in curbing exploitation within our communities.

Conclusion

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking is impacting most communities within the UK. For survivors of Modern Slavery, such as Richard and Joanna, there is the challenge of experiencing freedom, while also experiencing ongoing captivity lived through their trauma. Rambo's 'Middle Space' of Holy Saturday offers the Church and survivors of Modern Slavery a theological resource to live life while experiencing death. It suggests that the Spirit of God is the present Spirit, bearing witness to the trauma and darkness. Pastoral responses emerge through living in that Middle-Space between life and death.

Perhaps in this precarious place of Holy Saturday, as the pendulum swings between life and death, is a new expression and experience of love and God's breath. It is in this Middle-Space, that just as the Spirit of God is present and bears witness, so too can the church can be present and bear witness to the exploitation surrounding her. In this darkness, it is possible that the Church will know that God is already present, inviting us to join in Jesus' mission of 'setting the oppressed free.'

Notes on Contributor:

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Journal of Baptist Theology in Context

Aims

- To encourage the sharing of good theological, biblical and historical research by Baptists
- To support pastor–theologians in academic publishing
- To offer the wider Baptist family thoughtful work which will aid their life and mission

Submitting to Journal of Baptist Theology

We welcome submissions from Baptists pastor–theologians.
All submissions to be emailed to Andy Goodliff (andy@goodliff.com) as word documents with footnotes. Submissions to be no more than 7,000 words.

Cover Image

The image is based on a painting that was for many years displayed in Helwys Hall, Regent's Park College, Oxford and was designed by Henry Wheeler Robinson (College Principal, 1920-44), representing the five principles of Baptist life: faith, baptism, evangelism, fellowship and freedom. See H. Wheeler Robinson, 'The Five Points of a Baptist's Faith' *Baptist Quarterly* 11.2-2 (January-April 1942), 4–14.