

THE RECEPTIVE EAR

**COMMUNICATING BIBLICAL TRUTHS
IN THAI WORLD VIEWS**

by

Iso Williams

THE RECEPTIVE EAR
COMMUNICATING BIBLICAL TRUTHS
IN THAI WORLD VIEWS

by
Iso Williams

Unless otherwise noted
all biblical quotations are from
The New American Standard Bible

American Bible Society, New York

1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971,

1972, 1973, 1975, 1977.

Newest impression 1991.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Iso Williams has lived in Southeast Asia since the early eighties. Working together with a team of researchers who concentrate on Buddhist cultures in the region, Iso Williams focusses on the world view of the Thai people with the goal to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ in the traditional cognitive style which is common among the Thai and other related ethnic peoples groups in Southeast Asia.

PREFACE

God's word in Romans 10 verse 14 states:

"How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

With more than one thousand missionaries in the country, Thailand is well served in respect to foreign endeavor to bring the gospel to its people. As for national preachers, many churches have to do without a pastor as a considerable number of Bible school graduates do not go into full-time pastoral work.¹ But media evangelism with traditional drama, radio, cassette ministries, Christian literature and the Jesus film has been well developed.² So there are preachers — and yet, so few hear.

¹Patrick Johnstone, Operation World (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 531.

²Ibid., 533.

The earliest witness to the Thai started in 1816 in Burma. In the 160 years of Protestant mission work in Thailand following these beginnings only 0.43 percent of the population have received Christ and during the more than 400 years of Catholic missions a mere 0.6 percent were converted. This means that the national Christian witness in Thailand amounts to 1.03 percent of the population out of which 0.03 percent are evangelicals.³ The reasons for this poor growth are to be found in the complex web of culture, spirit appeasement, occult practices and Buddhism linked up with a social cohesiveness out of which few dare come.⁴ This poses the question whether the Thai can really hear when they are told the gospel.

In this thesis I will present in the first chapter an introduction to the theme as well as early findings. Chapter two is concerned with the Thai cultural context of communication. Its educational content in respect to the teaching of values and practical results in a rapidly changing society will be highlighted. In chapter three the Ramakien as a precedent of contextualization will be explained and its influence on Thai society observed. Then

³Alex G. Smith, Siamese Gold - The Church in Thailand (Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan, 1982), 12.

⁴Johnstone, 531.

the Buddhist world view will be contrasted with the biblical one in chapter four. Having said all this, a chapter on Scriptural principles of contextualization will follow (chapter five). It will also offer further suggestions for contextualization in a Thai setting. In chapter six a model of contextualization, namely contextualized stories on the biblical version of creation, will be introduced and the seventh chapter will conclude with an evaluation. Furthermore, appendix one will contain the exegesis for the stories concerned and appendix two will supply the Thai translation for the stories presented in chapter six.

It is my conviction that all the efforts described in this paper will be in vain if the spiritual battle to be fought is not seriously taken on in prayer. Everyone involved in spreading the gospel in the spiritually needy country of Thailand is called to prepare the ground prayerfully⁵ as Elizabeth Wagner suggests in her very insightful book "Tearing Down Strongholds" and to support new and maturing Christians by prayer.⁶ The laborers on the frontlines in Thailand are in dire need of the kind of

⁵Elizabeth Wagner, Tearing Down Strongholds - Prayer for Buddhists (Kowloon, Hong Kong: Living Books For All, 1989), 29-41.

⁶Ibid., 42-61.

prayerful support from Christians in other countries as is being already promoted by agencies in the West.⁷

I sincerely hope that this paper will be of help to all who seek to understand the Thai people and who have a burning desire to share the Good News with them or to enter into a covenant of prayer for their salvation.

⁷e.g. "Adopt a People," in Bulletin of the U.S. Center of World Mission 1-2 (January - February 1993), 6.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.	iv
Preface	v
List of Illustrations.	xiii
List of Tables.	xiv

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION.	1
II. THE THAI CULTURAL CONTEXT	7
A. Cultures in Context.	7
1. Cultures as Specific Lifeways	7
2. National Cultures.	8
B. Understanding Cross-Cultural Differences Specific to the Thai.	8
1. The Thai Cultural Background.	8
2. Four Cultural Dimensions of Present-Day Thai Culture.	10
C. Thai Culture and Communication	12
1. A Communicational Basis for Thailand	13
2. Communication and Value Education	14
3. Communicated Values Exemplified	19
D. Conclusion.	20
III. THE RAMAKIEN AS A PRECEDENT OF CONTEXTUALIZATION	23
A. About the Ramakien	23
1. History of the Ramakien	23
2. Short Version of the Ramakien	24
B. Specifics of the Ramakien	25
1. Presuppositions for the Ramakien to be Used Politically.	25
2. The Cult of Rama and the Thai Monarchy	26
3. Modern Methods of Training in Relation to the Ramakien.	27
4. Ramakien for Everyone.	28

C.	The Ramakien as a Precedent Model for Contextualization	31
1.	General Insights Concerning this Theme	31
2.	Relevance of the Ramakien for this Thesis	32
IV.	THE CHRISTIAN VERSUS THE BUDDHIST WORLD VIEW	34
A.	The Concept of God	35
1.	Biblical View	35
2.	Buddhist View.	36
B.	Origin and Existence of the World	37
1.	Biblical View	37
2.	Buddhist View.	38
C.	The World as Real and Unreal.	39
1.	Biblical View	39
2.	Buddhist View	39
D.	Assessment of the World as Good and Bad	40
1.	Biblical View	40
2.	Buddhist View	41
E.	Evil.	42
1.	Biblical View	42
2.	Buddhist View	42
F.	Sin	43
1.	Biblical View.	43
2.	Buddhist View.	43
G.	Assessment of the Human Being	45
1.	Biblical View.	45
2.	Buddhist View	46
H.	Man as a Unique Unchangeable Individual.	47
1.	Biblical View.	47
2.	Buddhist View.	48
I.	Responsibilities of Mankind	48
1.	Biblical View	48
2.	Buddhist View	49
J.	Law.	50
1.	Biblical View.	50
2.	Buddhist View.	51
K.	Truth	52
1.	Biblical View.	52
2.	Buddhist View.	52
L.	Enlightenment.	53
1.	Biblical View.	53
2.	Buddhist View.	53
M.	Hell.	54
1.	Biblical View	54
2.	Buddhist View.	54
N.	Salvation	55
1.	Biblical View	55

2. Buddhist View . . . . .	.56
0. Eschatological Goal of the World . . . . .	.56
1. Biblical View . . . . .	.56
2. Buddhist View . . . . .	.57
P. The Eschatological Goal of Man . . . . .	.57
1. Biblical View . . . . .	.57
2. Buddhist View . . . . .	.58
Q. Conclusion . . . . .	.58
V. PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURAL CONTEXTUALIZATION	61
A. Why Contextualization? . . . . .	.63
B. What is Scriptural Contextualization? . . . . .	.64
C. Scriptural Culture Traits in the Process of Contextualization . . . . .	.67
1. Old Testament Culture Versus A Biblical Culture Pattern as Found in the New Testament. . . . .	.70
2. Old Testament Culture Versus Animistic Cultures. . . . .	.74
3. Old Testament Culture Versus Hinduistic Cultures. . . . .	.76
4. Old Testament Culture Versus Asian Buddhist Cultures. . . . .	.79
5. Old Testament Culture Versus Western Secular Materialistic Cultures	81
6. As a Missionary from a Western Secular Materialistic Culture to an Asian Buddhist Culture . . . . .	.84
7. A Synopsis of Figures One to Six . . . . .	.85
D. Aspects of Scriptural Contextualization . . . . .	.86
1. Accommodation . . . . .	.87
2. Adaptation . . . . .	.88
3. Possessio and World View Transformation . . . . .	.88
E. Suggestions for Scriptural Contextualization in Thailand . . . . .	.91
1. The Accommodation Approach. . . . .	.92
2. The Adaptation Approach . . . . .	.93
3. The World View Transformation Approach . . . . .	.95
F. Conclusion . . . . .	.99
VI. A MODEL OF CONTEXTUALIZATION	101
A. Stories as a Vehicle of Communication	101
B. Stories from Biblical Texts	104
C. The Use of Stories in the Thai Context	104
1. Traditional Thai Literacy	105
2. Stories in Modern Thai Times	107
D. The Model	107

1.	Why This Model?	108
2.	What this Model is All About.	109
ii 3.	Techniques Applied to the Stories.	111
4.	Story One - "Pre-Creational Story".	112
5.	Story Two - "The Creation Story".	132
6.	Story Three - "The Creation Of Man".	139
7.	Story Four - "Man In The Garden".	145
E.	Conclusion..	150
VII.	EVALUATION.	152
i		
	APPENDIX	
I.	EXEGESIS.	156
A.	EXEGESIS OF GENESIS ONE AND TWO.	156
1.	Introduction	156
2.	Background to Genesis.	158
3.	Main Topics in the Reports of Genesis One and Two Concerning their Contextualization for Buddhists	161
4.	Conclusion	172
B.	EXEGESIS ON THE THEME OF ANGELS.	173
1.	Introduction	173
2.	Creation of Angels.	173
3.	Their Original Condition	174
4.	Personality of Angels.	176
5.	Nature of Angels.	177
6.	Numbers, Organization and Rank	178
7.	Ministries of Angels.	179
8.	Position of Angels in Relationship to Christ and Man	180
9.	Satan's Fall and Its Effects.	181
10.	The Subject of Demons..	184
ii 11.	Conclusion	186
II.	THAI TEXTS OF STORIES ONE TO FOUR.	189
A.	เรื่องที่เกิดขึ้นก่อนการสร้างโลก.	189
B.	เรื่องการสร้างโลก.	194
C.	การก่อกำเนิดของมนุษย์.	197
D.	มนุษย์ในสวน.	199
	SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.	202
1.	Books.	202
2.	Commentaries.	207
3.	Texts.	207
4.	Termpaper, Thesis.	207

5. Periodicals. . . . .	.208
6. Lecture . . . . .	.209

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1.	Old Testament Culture Versus Biblical Culture as Found in the New Testament	73
2.	Old Testament Culture Versus Animistic Cultures	76
3.	Old Testament Culture Versus Hinduistic Cultures	78
4.	Old Testament Culture Versus Thai Buddhist Culture	80
5.	Old Testament Culture Versus Western Secular Materialistic Cultures	82
6.	Old Testament Culture and Biblical Culture as Found in the New Testament Versus Western Secular Materialistic Cultures and Thai Buddhist Culture	85
7.	Old Testament Culture and Biblical Culture as Found in the New Testament Versus This-Worldly Oriented and Supranatural Oriented Cultures .	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Adaptation of Thai Cultural Elements.94
2. Suggestions for World View Transformation of
Thai Concepts.96

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a newcomer to Thailand, observing my Thai friends always left me with questions: how did they arrive at their conclusions? Their logic appeared different and so were their results. How could I ever understand their way of thinking? The key to their world seemed to lie in their understanding of themselves and of the world.

One day I came across the English translation of a short extract of the Ramakien, an Indian epic called Ramayana which had been adopted by the Thai people and named "Ramakien". In reading the booklet a whole new world opened up to me: it was a description of the unseen world of spirits which was presented as something as real as the visible world. On checking back with my Thai friends they let me know that this was indeed the way they perceived their world. This realization was a heavy shock to my Western mind and only by meditating on this fact and getting

1

additional information by observing my Thai surroundings and noting the communication ways in Thailand could I slowly, and I guess, only in part, adjust to this extremely foreign thought system. However, I realized that it was much easier now to follow their thought patterns and I could, in some instances, predict reactions or even envision how a whole situation would develop.

Apart from this amazing discovery I wondered which values were taught in the Ramakien? Which values were accepted by the Thai people? Who taught them and how? As for me, I had been introduced to my Western world view and value system by my parents and grandparents; through the use of stories told at bedtime or during holiday seasons; through deliberate training; through text books and literature; and through the church - to name only the main resources. So, how is it done in Thailand? Who or what influences the establishing of a world view and values in children and adults?

Soon after these discoveries, while in Germany, I crossed paths with Professor George W. Peters who encouraged me to write biblical stories for Thai people. Quite excited with the idea I set out to write on the creation of the world, only to come to the conclusion that my Thai friends would have no idea of whom and what I was speaking. Thus the "Pre-creational Story" was developed, introducing the

Thai for God's character, the Trinity and God's plan of salvation. Several other stories followed.

Upon returning to Thailand I paid special attention to the use of stories in teaching and found the following: before the age of mass media had hit Thailand in the early sixties, values were mainly taught via story-telling. It was the Buddhist priests who were entrusted with the immense task of teaching the people how to live, how to behave and how to fill one's role in society. Throughout, Buddhist teaching formed and still forms a significant part of the training process. Life and religious practices are deeply interrelated. The values taught cover every aspect of life necessary to produce the Buddhist ideal - a balanced life in harmony with nature.

The teaching of values and behavior to the Thai people have been established for a long time. In times not so long past it would go on as follows: the monks would call the population to the village temple at certain intervals for instruction on day-to-day matters or on special themes. Or the traveling monk would set up his bright saffron colored umbrella in the rice fields outside the village to teach the population. On learning of the monk's arrival the whole village would assemble with mats and umbrellas to where he had settled, and be prepared to spend many hours listening to his teachings. It was a fun activity as people gathered

together with friends, eager to hear something new and enjoy the discussions. Difficult questions - even those pertaining to law and order and which could not be agreed upon by the village elders but also some on world view or petty behaviour - could be asked and solutions with distinct values were offered in story form. Characteristically the teaching comprised parables, a climax and then was paraphrased. Typical instruction might have gone something like this: First, an extremely bad solution to a problem was offered; the answer to it had to be a deliberate "no". Then an unrealistic good suggestion was presented; however, the answer had again to be a strict "no". At last the solution came as the middle path of Thailand's Theravada Buddhism: not in the extremes lay the answer but a well balanced answer and the subsequent behaviour served society and nature best.⁸ On the people's return home the lessons learned would be recalled in their illustrative form and this way served as a treasury well guarded and adhered to by the listeners.

Since radio and, particularly, TV have come to Thailand in the early sixties, and since it seems that government schools and other educational institutions have taken over

⁸Klaus Hoppenworth, Der Buddhismus - Handbuch mit Quellentexten (Wannweil: Verlag Wort im Bild, 1977), 22-24.

the task of the teaching monks, the population has witnessed a sharp decline in the number of traveling monks. However, as Christianity has gained an observable momentum in recent years, the Ministry of Religious Affairs strongly encouraged the clergy to take responsibility once again and to set out in teaching the masses the Buddhist way. Following the Ministry's order an increase in traveling monks was observed. TV has also come into use as a medium of teaching

Buddhism and radio programs catering to this demand are on the increase. As people with only elementary education have not been taught to be abstract thinkers, the average teaching is weighted with illustrations in story form taken from every day life in Thailand. The main point is marked out clearly and made easy to grasp. Wan Petchsongkram, a former

Buddhist monk states that in Buddhism stories are written to embody the faith the people hold.⁹

As far as I am told it does not happen very often nowadays that parents or grandparents teach children by telling them stories. Everybody is far too busy in this fast developing country and those who are still knowledgeable in story telling die out one by one.

⁹Wan Petchsongkram, Talk in the Shade of the Bo Tree (Bangkok: Thai Gospel Press, 1979), 189.

It was a thrilling experience to observe my listeners when I started to tell them biblical stories I had re-written for them in the style of their thought patterns. Not only did they want to hear more of them but I noticed that they grasped the meaning of biblical truth and the inherent spiritual values. "This is the first time I understand who God really is," was the comment of several Christians who had been churchgoers for the last six to ten years. And those spiritually young in their faith or with no knowledge of God at all would ask for more and even more of these stories. The lady helping me with the translation of the material into the Thai language immediately acknowledged a deeper appreciation of God's Word and felt a very strong desire to read her Bible more deliberately.

These experiences made me not only want to write more biblically based stories for my Thai Christian and non-Christian friends but I also realized that I had to do more careful research of the Thai world view, to know their value system and culture so as to not hinder the work through my ignorance. Also, my purpose was to be only a forerunner for this approach to teaching biblical Christianity, hoping that ultimately the Thai Christians would be encouraged to express Christian theology and teach biblical values their indigenous way.

CHAPTER II

THE THAI CULTURAL CONTEXT

A. Cultures in Context

1. Cultures as Specific Lifeways

Looking at a foreign culture, the casual observer will be confronted with its strange language, different foods, its use of time, distinct behaviour patterns, the expression of feelings, its non-verbal communication and many other factors. These observable aspects do not, however, reveal all there is to culture. There are unseen underlying factors which shape and give meaning to observable peculiarities. "Cultures are but different answers to essentially the same human problems," notes Louis Luzbetak.¹⁰ Both, the seen and unseen features of culture are interrelated and constitute a total lifeway.

¹⁰Louis J. Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures (Techny, IL: Divine Word, 1963), 61.

2. National Cultures

Personally I am convinced that at the heart of any national culture is its world view which is the perception of the surrounding world in which this culture has its place. This world view constitutes a value system from which core values and resulting values are derived which in turn shape attitudes, expectations, beliefs and last but not least, the communication style specific to this culture.¹¹

B. Understanding Cross-Cultural Differences Specific to the Thai

1. The Thai Cultural Background

Thai society has traditionally existed in a delicate state of equilibrium maintained by two pillars. One of them was the loosely knit, hierarchical Thai social structure, which laid an enduring foundation for social order. The other was a set of intertwining values, ideologies and beliefs, based largely on Buddhism, which gave the people of traditional Thailand a sense of priorities and meaning of life. Both of these pillars were sustained by a predomi-

¹¹Suntaree Komin, "Psychology of the Thai People," Lecture, Bangkok, 23 February 1993.

nantly agricultural economy, adequate in an abundant natural environment.

With the economic development programs initiated in the late 1950s traditional Thai society has undergone a slow but progressive destruction of its former equilibrium. Traditional social structures which have been bolstered with former ways of living have been found to be lacking and are no longer rewarding. As a result, e.g. the traditional Thai concept of accommodation and group solidarity has been changed into a kind of individualism which is different from its Western form as many of the other traditional Thai values and beliefs are still prevalent.¹² At this time Thailand is caught in a deep-seated conflict between traditions and modernity and there is no sign that this struggle will be solved in the near future.¹³

¹²Suvanna Kriengkraipetch and Larry E. Smith, Value Conflicts in Thai Society (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Printing House, 1992), 217-19.

¹³Katherine Bowie, ed. and trans., Voices from the Thai Country Side: The Short Stories of Samruam Singh (Madison, WI: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1991), 33.

2. Four Cultural Dimensions of Present-Day Thai Culture

In the following section the most striking dimensions of present-day Thai culture will be described to the degree that a frame work of Thai culture can be perceived.

a) Individualism within a Collectivism Dimension

Thais are individualists; however, their individualism is not to be confused with what is known as individualism in the West. Thai individualism celebrates independence in thought and action, yet has as its special feature an apparent indifference towards others.

On the other hand, collectivism can be clearly observed: Thais like to do things in groups. Group members do not need to have close relationships with each other but they hate to be on their own if there is the opportunity of acting, individualistically, in a group.

b) The Power Dimension

Power in the Thai value system is a quality to be sought after. It is mainly power in the social realm - power over people but also power over unseen forces.¹⁴

¹⁴ Philip M. Steyne, Gods of Power (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1990), 52.

Power brings wealth; wealth and power on the other hand are believed to stem from good karma;¹⁵ and good karma is something to be honored and accepted by others. People without power have only one option: they have to seek power.

c) The Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension

A weak self-image, conditioned by fear, makes the Thai try to avoid uncertainty. In order to counteract uncertainty, forms are established within which there is security and certainty. Here we find the root for a high value on external performance.

d) The Femininity - Masculinity Dimension

While boys and men are to a certain extent encouraged to be feminine (sensitivity is a plus, stylish dress and haircut, make-up and homosexuality are acceptable), girls are trained to shoulder the main responsibilities at home and for the family. The latter has to do with the Thai's Buddhist based outlook that men are expected to be found in spheres where "hierarchy" plays a particularly prominent role, such as bureaucratic and political positions. Women

¹⁵Bowie, 33.

in turn are to a great extent involved in business, be it big or small.¹⁶

While the above descriptions highlight cultural corner posts we have to take into consideration that Thai culture is a highly interpersonal oriented structure. Here we find Thais giving highest priority to ego, pleasing relationships and a host of "social smoothing" practices which are essential in order to maintain good social relations.¹⁷ These factors motivate Thai culture and anybody living in Thailand will soon find himself in the midst of an intricate set-up which, for a Westerner, takes a lot of sorting out and getting used to.

C. Thai Culture and Communication

As I aim at contextualizing biblical texts for Thai culture, I will seek to investigate communication avenues and their content as they present themselves in Thailand. I will briefly overview communication and mass media and

¹⁶A. Thomas Kirsch, "Economy, Polity, and Religion in Thailand," in Change and Persistence in Thai Society, eds. G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), 179.

¹⁷Suntaree Komin, Psychology of the Thai People - Values and Behavioral Patterns (Bangkok: National Institute of Development Administration, 1991), 131.

values taught and implied. Practical results and a conclusion concerning the application of insights gained will be highlighted.

1. A Communicational Basis for Thailand

When King Rama VI (1910-25) formulated the three pillars of Thai unity, continuity, and identity as being "Nation, Religion and King" (Religion being for all practical purposes Buddhism)¹⁸, he confirmed a direction already followed by his dynasty and the people. At the same time this statement became a mandate for the country in the years to come. Still today these three pillars are strongly adhered to by the Thai and clearly sensed by any visitor to Thailand.

In their endeavor to keep "Nation, Religion and King" in focus, all forms of media complement each other and overlap in many aspects: daily there is a variety of news and information on the Nation, discourses on aspects of Religion and accounts on activities of the Royal Family. These reports are prominent in radio, TV and the newspapers. An example is the national anthem being played over village and town loudspeakers daily at 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., thus bringing

¹⁸Niels Mulder, Inside Thai Society (Bangkok: Editions Duankamol 1992), 113.

traffic and anybody in earshot to an immediate reverent standstill. This serves to remind the populace that they are part of the free people of Thailand ("thai" means "free"). The royal anthem can be heard at the beginning of any cultural event like theater, cinema shows and concerts and regularly at 12 p.m. over radio or TV. These fixed traditions undergird respect for King and country. School text books support the three pillars and national literature, drama and film are often also significantly influenced.

2. Communication and Value Education

Considering communication I want to first investigate mass media's and other sources' influence on the Thai people concerning values taught. It will not only be of interest which values are communicated but also how they are brought into focus. This will help us at a later point when we are directly concerned with contextualization and its implementation.

Radio, and increasingly TV, are available even in the remotest villages. Both of these media are directly controlled by the state with news programs censored by government representatives and broadcast at exactly the same time on all stations throughout the country. Private channels

are mainly owned by the military and air times are filled with a small variety of information, lots of advertisement and entertainment. On-the-spot reporting or interviews are quite rare and commentaries on news items are not provided.¹⁹ There are times of deliberate formal teaching mainly relating to Buddhism and also to cultural skills. Lately the formal teaching of cultural values via radio has been deemed necessary. Influential people, for a variety of reasons, have pursued this as a goal to be implemented. Such informal teaching of values can be aired at any time.

The programs may portray positive or negative influences (by Thai standards). The values taught establish or reconfirm what must be taken to heart: subjects such as good or bad behaviour, education, status, power, beauty, fun, how to have a happy home and harmonious families - to name only a few - are broadcast. All such teaching assumes knowledge of required rituals to be performed, worship of spirits and also veneration for the King of Thailand.

Video films are already an addiction for many. Sadly, there is almost no educational material available in common videoshops and each film seems to be another variation on violence, horror and magic. Videos serve as an outlet for

¹⁹Charles F. Keyes, Thailand - Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State (Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1989), 192-95.

pent-up emotions and an antidote against taboos. They are thus viewed as relaxation and entertainment. The values imparted are to a high degree negative.

The press and also the film-making industry are in the hands of private owners who have the freedom to cater to popular taste. Newspapers are widely available and it is estimated that the readership might be ten times as high as the actual circulation. However, in rural communities probably fewer than 10 percent of the adult population read a daily paper, as against at least 80 percent in Bangkok.²⁰ Apart from political news the newspapers mainly present local crime and accidents. But even then there is an informal communication of values in the cultural sections where articles on the family, concerns for nature and on cultural artifacts are found. Advertisements, more recently featuring pictures of beautiful mansions, all subtly communicate values and stimulate desires.

Only middle and upper-class people (and those who want to belong to this group) will spend money on magazines, each having its own emphasis and reflecting its respective values. In addition to educational and business periodicals, magazines with such topics as power, status, happiness, romance, attachment to things and people and its nega-

²⁰Ibid., 193.

tive consequences, relationship issues and the like (thus repeating the set of values already mentioned) are covered and make such literature very marketable.

Comics are the popular literature of a large part of the population. Their educational value is almost zero except for a few exceptions where authors have seized the opportunity to teach what is closest to their hearts.

Other literature revolves around topics which range from the old theme of love and war, current social critiques, the teaching of Buddhism in different forms and information on various aspects of foreign countries.

While old drama is full of values concerning "Nation, Religion and King," contributions of modern writers are concerned with cultural change and socio-critical concerns. In drama as well as film, both overlapping with TV and video, an openness towards foreign influence is obvious. Displayed is what the audience desires (power, status, wealth, outer appearance and fun) merged with some socio-critical content.

Besides the above mentioned varieties of mass media, some of which start their influence on a person's life very^e early, text books from which pupils are taught in school are sources of value education. Here it is very obvious that straight-forward teaching of genuine Thai values take place Up to grade six (minimum school education) and even beyond,

stories are the featured form of presentation. Whether it is respect for elders and teachers, respect and love for the mother, respect for wisdom and its source (at home or abroad, people, animals, spirits or nature), helpfulness (going hand-in-hand with accruing merit), good behaviour, fear of the powerful, striving for power as something positive, or following traditions and rituals, every value is emphasized in its own way and is part of a rudimentary teaching plan of performance and the corresponding relationships. Another goal in teaching is the demonstration of the supremacy of Buddhism over against any other religion.

Compared to a Western pattern, the Thai learning style is noteworthy: learning is mainly done by rote. Accumulation of knowledge for knowledge's sake is essential and it is not necessarily to be developed and used as a training for further insight and acquisition of wisdom.²¹ Informal learning at any stage is done at home, in school and in society, where the pressure to conform is used to uphold values. Constantly, other people are pointed out and serve as examples. With this high emphasis on performance a person is challenged to copy good and to avoid bad behaviour. Power and fear are the tools used to manipulate others.

²¹Niels Mulder, Everyday Life in Thailand: An Interpretation (Bangkok: Editions Duankamol 1979), 135.

3. Communicated Values Exemplified

As described above values are taught by example, whether by parents and relatives at home, or by stories in text books or by people and reflected norms in society. Buddhist values, indoctrination on ritual practice and merit acquisition always take first place. But social values are emphasized just as strongly. It is nearly impossible to imagine and understand what is going on in a three year old kindergarten child's mind when learning the national anthem by heart. This might be the first poem he is actually interested in as he is repeatedly encouraged by his parents and relatives to memorize it. The child's ability to recite the national anthem means much to the family, especially if he can do it really well. A foundation of trust and pride in their nation, their religion and their king is early instilled as the children sing the anthem at school every morning. Together with this, nationalism is encouraged as the children are also taught to pay obeisance to the flag, a Buddha image and a picture of their king. Each member of society has to submit to this routine throughout his educational years. At the same time the young people will be trained and coaxed into flawless behaviour and praised as being superior to others if things are done the right way.

It is supposed that such children will surely develop into responsible adults who will teach their children likewise.

From the above descriptions one can observe that right performance, and not necessarily conviction, is seen as the main means to safeguard the culture. This attitude towards correct action is displayed in behaviour, personal interaction and ritual. There is no leeway for individual interpretation and anybody whose behaviour fails to conform is quickly identified and suspected to be a potential danger to society. The imperative of uniformity of actions exerts such an implicit pressure on people to maintain values that extensive verbal teaching is not necessary.

Everybody who performs in the expected way earns a right to correct others. This is done by manipulating those whose performance and outer appearance show traces of weakness. Thus a person is highly motivated to act correctly because performance turns into power and power is the key to status and influence in society. This serves as a cycle of cause and effect within the Thai world view.

D. Conclusion

In Thailand, as in any Buddhist state, we find the culture and values very much intertwined with the Buddhist religion. This fact has its roots, not only in the monastic

educational system which has existed for as long as records have been preserved,²² or with state schools started in the 1930s,²³ but also in the heavy emphasis on ritual performance and traditions found throughout Thailand. While it can be said that Bangkok undergoes an ever increasing loss of values because of Western influence, the situation in the countryside is not changing as fast.

In this chapter I tried to look at the values taught and the ways in which this is being done. From my contacts with people all over the country it is very clear that, apart from informal teaching, story-telling is the way to open ears and reach receptive hearts. The media uses this means in its variety of plays, films and drama. Buddhism continues to employ this approach up to this day. Christianity has followed suit but rather hesitantly. It is my conviction that in spreading the Good News the medium of story-telling can be utilized to a much broader and greater degree and deeper extent than has been applied thus far. Stories are not only for children. Adults like them as well! When Gautama Buddha taught in India he didn't preach. He told stories which he sometimes allowed to lead to

²²B.J. Terwiel, A Window on Thai History (Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1989), 99.

i. ²³Ibid., 108.

discussions. But it was his collection of stories which accentuated and clearly communicated the main point he was aiming at.

In chapter three a famous foreign work - the Ramakien - will be analyzed. It is an outstanding example of contextualization. This has obviously been so well done that the influence it has on Thailand, its culture and society, is known and experienced everywhere in the country. It will be analyzed with a view to using it as a model for contextualization.

In my opinion it should be possible for us as Westerners to learn from our Buddhist Thai friends how to communicate effectively. We might not reach the point of perfection in this art. But with God's help I trust that we can convey to their hearts the message which has freed our hearts to reach out to them.

CHAPTER III

THE RAMAKIEN AS A PRECEDENT OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

A. About the Ramakien

1. History of the Ramakien

The great Indian epic, the Ramayana, was written up by Valmiki sometime between 500 B.C. and 300 B.C. but seems to have existed as a collection of stories even before that time.²⁴ From Mongolia to Turkey, from China and Japan to Indonesia there is no other work which has inspired poets, writers, sculptors, painters, musicians, dancers, puppeteers and ballad singers in the same way as has this epic. The Jataka stories²⁵ come close but the Ramayana is used most often. Countless versions of the Ramayana are known worldwide and have been translated into many languages.

²⁴Mattani Rutnin, ed., The Siamese Theatre (Bangkok: Editions Duankamol, 1975), vi.

²⁵Jakata stories are accounts of the former lives of Gautama Buddha in story form.

In Thailand the Ramayana became the Ramakien. King Rama I (1782 - 1809), the founder of the present royal dynasty, wrote the most complete version which is also at the very core of Thai culture.²⁶

2. Short Version of the Ramakien

Prince Rama, an incarnation of the god Narai (Indian: Vishnu), wins a contest and receives Sita, a princess, as his wife. Due to the influence of the demon god Totsagan he is banished to a dark and dangerous forest for fourteen years. Sita and his younger brother Lak accompany him. One day, while the two princes follow a demon turned into a golden deer, Totsagan himself abducts Sita and brings her to his island, Lanka. Rama and Lak can ensure the help of a host of monkeys and they fight a fierce battle against the enemy at Totsagan's castle. At last there is the battle between Rama and Totsagan and after a long and violent fight Rama kills the demon king and delivers Sita. He momentarily doubts her chastity and Sita proves her purity in a trial by fire. Rama, Sita and his troops return to his country where he is proclaimed king. They live happily ever after. The

²⁶J. C. Shaw, The Ramayana Through Western Eyes (Thailand: Craftsman Press, 1988), 3.

epic depicts the supernatural realm and the miraculous or magic is commonplace throughout.

B. Specifics of the Ramakien

1. Presuppositions for the Ramakien to be Used Politically

The hero of the epic, Rama, is presented as Narai incarnate. The reason for his incarnation is that he would overcome Totsagan, king of demons. Yoshihiro Matsunami argues that an initiation process of the person Rama forms the core of the narrative while the contender, Totsagan, serves to establish Rama as a new person by lifting him from the realm of every day events (reigning in his kingdom) to a higher level where death is banished (to the forest). From there he is returned to function as a normal human being, yet a new person. This mythological description corresponds directly to ancient India's coronation rites where the prospective king would be transported to a symbolic state of death for about a year. The new king would then be 'born' out of this state of 'death' by another ceremony to be installed as the 'reborn' king.²⁷

²⁷Yoshihiro Matsunami, "Significance and Appeal of the Ramayana," Asian Culture 37 (Summer/Autumn 1984), 14-15.

2. The Cult of Rama and the Thai Monarchy

The Ramayana as Ramakien, and through it the cult of Rama, has been associated with Thai life, culture, tradition, religious beliefs and social and political institutions since the beginning of Thai history. From the 14th century onward many Thai kings have affixed the name "Rama" to their proper names. Kings of the present Chakri dynasty are all called "Rama" and are numbered from Rama I (1782 - 1809) to the present Rama IX (1946 -). The name "Chakri" itself is closely related to that of Vishnu (Narai) of the Rama cult. It means the "Holder of the Chakra (discus) and Tri (trident)", lethal weapons of Vishnu. They came to form the royal emblem of the present dynasty. This way the dynasty is mythologized and the position of the king becomes that of a god-king. Also, Rama is understood as at one stage incarnating a previous life of Buddha. Thus Thai kings also personify a divine being. When King Rama I commissioned the court poets to compose, compile and edit the missing episodes of the Ramakien to make a complete collection of the drama and to establish it as the national epic, it was to serve a two-fold purpose: culturally it was a combined effort of poets, who had been scattered all over the country but now came together under the new Chakri dynasty, and politically it was a means for the king to expound

his policies of a centralized government under an absolute monarchy. The epic according to King Rama I directly and strongly promotes the loyalty and the dedication of all military and civil officials to the god-king. Thus the

Ramakien and cult of Rama as Vishnu incarnate were associated with the Chakri kings more than with any other monarchs in the history of Siam,²⁸ lasting up to today.²⁹

3. Modern Methods of Training in Relation to the Ramakien

Mask dance ("khon") and drama ("lakhon") are highly developed arts in Thailand which to a large extent take their scenes and legends from the Ramakien.

When, in 1973, former prime minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj revived the traditional role of mask-dance and drama training for future leaders of society and government at Thammasat University, Bangkok, he invited students in their later teens and early twenties who had no previous training in these arts. His intent was to preserve this cultural heritage in the personal experience of these future leaders

²⁸Mattani Moj dara Rutnin, "Ramakien - A Living Cult and Tradition in Present-Day Thailand," Asian Culture 37 (Summer/Autumn 1984), 30-32.

²⁹"The Royal Ceremony of Worshipping the former Kings of Ayutthaya at the Three-Balconied Pavillion in Ayutthaya," in The Siam Society Newsletter 2 (June 1988), 2.

of the Thai nation, and to train them in the traditional arts so that, through rigorous training, they would absorb naturally the essence of Thai social and political philosophy, their structures and the subsequent "Thai Identity". The ethical and social values defined by the idealized characters in the Ramakien, and their relationships to work, war and domestic affairs, have long been regarded as models in moral conduct and social behaviour for the elite.³⁰

4. Ramakien for Everyone

The Ramakien has indeed been a dominant theme as far back as Thai culture can be traced. It is still so today. This is not surprising when we take into consideration that the Thai child gets acquainted with the various legends of the epic while still at home and learns more about them in school and university. He will be confronted with the Ramakien in comic books, film strips and condensed stories in magazines; but also in painting, sculpture and drama. The Ramakien is depicted in some of the most well-known temples of the country but also on everyday household articles. Being in Thailand the theme of this great epic is just inescapable.

³⁰Rutnin, Asian Culture, 35.

[The question a Westerner might be wondering about is how a story which is more than two thousand years old, can still today have a grip on the Thais. It may be much to his surprise that the answer is quite simple: the Ramakien depicts the world in which they live. The features in the epic might be exaggerated but in essence they are real. To the Thai the sky, the flowers and the animals in the Ramakien are as real as what they see and experience in their own surroundings. The hero is an incarnation of the god Narai - so too is their present ruler. The world of the Ramakien is full of demons and spirits which must be fought or appeased, a practice which continues in the twentieth century Thai world. Also, the Ramakien involves hermits and soothsayers who predict and control the situation: in modern-day Thailand cabinet ministers consult astrologers, the fluctuations of the market are foretold by Buddhist monks and miracles occur daily.³¹

Without a doubt it can be said that the world of the Thai, is a place of fiercely fighting powers which compares to the mysteriously dangerous forest of the Ramakien with its unpredictable gods. And in spite of the fact that many people of the middle class have been educated abroad and

³¹John M. Cadet, The Ramakien - The Stone Rubbings of the Thai Epic (Bangkok, Kodansha International LTD., 1982), 24.

might even have much contact with foreigners during their work day, the world described in the Ramakien epic is still their world. Even though there have been important changes in Thailand due to industrialization, the introduction and acceptance of new ideas and products from other countries, the Thai mentality has not changed. Strangely enough the Thai manages to live in two vastly different worlds: a traditional one and a Western style one. The latter, however, consists only of surface features and does not touch deeper levels like values, convictions, thought patterns etc. As much as he appreciates the benefits brought in from the West he also fears the consequences should he leave his traditional culture. As John Cadet, writer on the Ramakien, states: "Between the two contradicting worlds the Thai leads an uneasy double life, commuting daily (so to speak) between his forest home with its spirit shrine and his air-conditioned office in town."³²

³²Ibid., 25.

C. The Ramakien as a Precedent Model
for Contextualization

1. General Insights Concerning this Theme

As we can see from the descriptions above the Ramakien serves very well as a precedent model for contextualization. The Ramakien itself has been contextualized for Thailand from the Indian Ramayana and has had an influence on the Thai culture since its beginning. It is widely accepted, due to its relevance, even today. The question is how the cultural history of Thailand would have turned out without such influential works as the Ramakien. Buddhism appears to be an even more pervasive influence in the religious realm but in fact it takes second place to the Ramakien where the arts are concerned.³³

We have also observed that the Ramakien received the right publicity as kings were its dominant advocates. Realizing the great potential of the epic to serve their purposes they utilized it to strongly undergird, if not to build, their kingdoms on the underlying principles of kingship laid down in the Ramakien. Tactfully they inserted instructions on appropriate behaviour for the various ranks in court and concerning proper conduct for the population.

³³Ibid., 23.

By creatively making use of the various arts like drama, painting and sculpturing, the subjects came to like the instructions and the kings were honored for their wisdom in ways which they had prescribed earlier. Thus the Ramakien served to form and support a whole culture. Due to wise application its distinct influence is still clearly felt today.

2. Relevance of the Ramakien for this Thesis

For a Westerner with the goal to contextualize the Good News for the Thai people, the Ramakien holds many treasures. If the great epic is still relevant for the modern people of Thailand and if they feel that it depicts life as they perceive it, then anybody interested will do well to study the Ramakien with regards to the world which is portrayed there. The magic and supernatural realm might be somewhat overwhelming at first but the reader will discover that it reflects the daily circumstances of the Thai people. After getting acquainted the thought patterns of the Thai seem to be more comprehensible. It is no problem for Thais to "see" and understand an unseen world. If that is so, they should be able to grasp spiritual truth much easier than their Western counterparts. Here we have a bouquet of living

real separation between man, nature and the unseen world in the Thai perception as has already been described in chapter three.

For the messenger of the gospel working among a people different from his own it is paramount to understand their world view as this is a prerequisite for effective communication.³⁶ In order to delineate what we are up against in trying to penetrate the Buddhist stronghold with the gospel, I attempt in the following to show some differences of the core world views involved, namely the Christian and the Buddhist world views.³⁷

A. The Concept of God

1. Biblical View

The Bible is God's word and as such is a record of His self-revelation which pre-supposes His existence. Throughout the biblical accounts God is depicted as a being without beginning and without end, Creator and Lord of the universe

³⁶John A. Gration, "Conversion in Cultural Context," in International Bulletin of Missionary Research 4 (October 1983), 160-61.

³⁷Rudolf Wagner, "Die Sicht der Welt und des Menschen in der Bibel und im Buddhismus" (Termpaper, Freie Hochschule für Mission der AEM, Korntal, 1991), 10-37.

and everything existing in it.³⁸ The personhood of God is described in His dealings with mankind where His character traits like goodness, gentleness, patience, care, long-suffering, justice and forgiveness clearly show.³⁹ The God of the Bible exists as a triune God: He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit in three different personalities and at the same time He is one and the same God.⁴⁰

2. Buddhist View

The Buddhists do not have a concept of a god who would be the reason for anything existing or who would even be interested in them as persons.

The doctrine of the non-existence of a Creator is so universally held by intelligent Buddhists that there is no necessity of quoting passages from the Pitaka to show that it is an integral part of the religion of Buddha.⁴¹

For them a god (devata) is a former human being who, due to his good karma, has, after his death, been reborn

³⁸Ps 90:2.

³⁹Isa 63:9.

⁴⁰1 John 5:1-9.

⁴¹D. J. Gogerly, The Kristiyani Prajnapti or The Evidences and Doctrines of the Christian Religion in Three Parts. Part I: On Buddhism. (Colombo: Christian Vernacular Education Society, 1885), 74.

into a world of bliss. Once this god's karma has been used up, he will have to be reborn on earth and maybe in his next life he will be transported to an even higher realm and so forth until he can reach Nirvana.⁴²

B. Origin and Existence of the World

1. Biblical View

The Bible states in Genesis 1:1 that the world has a definite beginning. This fact conditions the interest in chronological and historical events which are described throughout the Bible.⁴³ Following the biblical records it becomes clear that God did not just create the world but that, He governs and sustains it as well.⁴⁴ Without God's power this world would fall apart and man could not exist in it. God demonstrated Himself as the trustworthy God Who keeps His covenant with man. This enables those who trust in Him to realize that the events happening in their world are under the ultimate control of their Covenant Creator.

⁴²Three Worlds According to King Ruang, trans. Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds (California: Asian Humanities Press, 1982), 217f.

⁴³Hans Walter Wolf, Anthropologie des Alten Testaments (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1977), 127-138.

⁴⁴Ps 104:27-30.

The Bible expresses again and again that God is the world's Creator and as such also the God of the universe.⁴⁵

2. Buddhist View

Buddhism does not see the need for an explanation concerning the beginning of the world. Instead, a cyclical understanding can be observed. Buddhists think that over immense stretches of time thousands of ten thousands of universes are continually born anew. While old ones disappear new ones come into existence.⁴⁶

Concerning the development of new universes the Buddhist explains that this is due to karma: **the** bad karma of the former world results in the birth of a new world. This is, on a lesser scale, what happens to an individual, when the bad karma of his former existence gives birth to a new existence.⁴⁷ Bad karma, on the other hand, finds its explanation in ignorance concerning the facts which cause suffering and death.⁴⁸ For Buddhadasa, the most renowned Buddhist monk in Thailand (he died in 1993), God is a combination of ignorance and karma. Of ignorance, because what is regarded

⁴⁵Ps 33:6.

⁴⁶Three Worlds, 301-27.

⁴⁷Ibid., 271-74.

⁴⁸Hoppenworth, 50.

as creation appears to be in a chaotic state, and of karma, because of his position as provider and judge. However, this statement is not meant to imply that this god is a person but only the personification of a state. Yet if it were, that creator must have been stupidity and carelessness itself as it did not know the consequences of its own action. This conclusion, of course, is speculation based on observation of our world. Buddhism teaches that such a god should be conquered and destroyed.⁴⁹

C. The World as Real and Unreal

1. Biblical View

The Bible maintains that the world exists in reality. God's character would be contradicted by Him creating an unreal world. God's laws prove to us that what is happening is real. They keep the world functioning and also direct man's life.⁵⁰

2. Buddhist View

In Buddhism, as in its Hinduistic roots, the world as well as man are said to be unreal and are only thought of as

⁴⁹Petchsongkram, 70-71.

⁵⁰Ps 104:27-30.

real by somebody whom the devil Mara – the deity who embodies the power of desire and evil⁵¹ – has blinded concerning the actual facts. Wisdom and enlightenment cannot only open man's eyes to the basic principles of unreality and emptiness of the world but provide the power to destroy this dismal place.⁵²

D. Assessment of the World as Good and Bad

1. Biblical View

In Genesis 1, the Bible repeats a certain sentence at the end of each day of creation: "... And God saw that it was good." Genesis 1:31 states collectively: "And everything was very good." The Psalms and other parts of the Bible express how good and well-organized God's creation is: "How awesome are Thy works!"⁵³ In the New Testament the Apostle Paul concludes that due to creation man can observe the existence of a well-meaning, good and purposeful Creator.⁵⁴

⁵¹Three Worlds, 32.

⁵²Buddhadasa Bikkhu, Handbook for Mankind, trans. Santikaro Bhikku (Thailand: Buddhasadasa Foundation, 1988), 29.

⁵³Ps 66:3.

⁵⁴Rom 1:19-20.

2. Buddhist View

Buddhism perceives the world as thoroughly negative. There is no indication of an originally good creation. From its very beginning the world is seen as a consequence of ignorance.⁵⁵

The problem of Buddhism's negative perception of this world has its roots in suffering which is seen as the essence of all of life.⁵⁶ Suffering does not provide any positive prospect and is understood as a consequence of bad karma and ignorance. Both karma and ignorance bring about desire, which has at its root selfishness and is valued very negatively. To be alive is seen as a punishment for having given in to desires and bad deeds. Every existence in this or any other world is punishment and suffering. Anything positive is dismissed as unreal or dangerous. Thus heartfelt amazement about the beauty of the world is unthinkable for a Buddhist. Instead he feels trapped by the inescapable vicious cycle of ignorance which keeps the world in existence.

⁵⁵Petchsongkram, 70.

⁵⁶Buddhahasa Bhikkhu, 15-16.

E. Evil1. Biblical View

The Bible does not ignore the chaos and strife which exists side by side with harmony and peace. It acknowledges the fact that the power of evil exists, not as a second force equal to God but under Him and in rebellion against Him.⁵⁷ This power is personified in the devil, who is also called Satan. He has a host of angels helping him to deceive the whole world.⁵⁸

2. Buddhist View

Reform Buddhism tries to demythologize the world. But popular Buddhism sees the world as being dominated by uncontrollable dominions of spirits who influence all of daily life.⁵⁹ Mara is their king; he embodies the power of desire, evil and death.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Isa 14:4-21; Ezek 28:12-19.

⁵⁸Rev 12:9.

⁵⁹Mulder, Inside Thai Society, 15-25.

⁶⁰Three Worlds, 32; 240.

F. Sin**1. Biblical View**

The disobedience of Adam and Eve caused all of creation to suffer from God's curse. Suffering and death became evident in every sphere of life.⁶¹ However, God still loves and cares for His creation. He works for the implementation of His plan of redemption for mankind and all of creation.⁶²

2. Buddhist View

Buddhists acknowledge that one can sin in action, in speech and in the heart. But sin is only punishable once it becomes an overt act.⁶³ The five Buddhist precepts,⁶⁴ which is the Buddhist law, determine whether one is sinning or not.⁶⁵ Adhering to these precepts a person keeps free from sin.⁶⁶ On the other hand, listening to Buddhist teaching

⁶¹Gen 3 :14-19; Rom 8:20.

⁶²Isa 30:18.

⁶³Petchsongkram, 141.

⁶⁴The five Buddhist precepts are: no lying, no stealing, no adultery, no narcotics, no killing.

⁶⁵Petchsongkram, 142.

⁶⁶Ibid., 144.

gives wisdom which purifies from sin.⁶⁷ Gautama Buddha teaches:

"Evil is done by self alone, by self alone is one stained; by self alone is evil undone, by self alone is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on one's own self. No man can purify another."⁶⁸

A person is thought of as being born without sin and only starts sinning later.⁶⁹ Buddhists also believe that there is no sin in those who do not sin. This shows clearly that they have no concept of man as a sinner but only of individual sins. It is finally held that sin which is already committed cannot be altered as the Law of Karma says that man reaps what he sows.⁷⁰ Sin is the agent which causes rebirth and it also determines the present status.

There are sins which cause a person to forego Nirvana—whether in this life or in the lives to come. These sins are: murdering one's own father or one's own mother, murdering a Buddhist monk who has insight (an arahant), blaspheming the Lord Buddha and causing divisions in the priesthood

⁶⁷Ibid., 149.

⁶⁸The Tripitaka, Dhammapada, 165.

⁶⁹Petchsongkram, 143.

⁷⁰Ibid., 149.

so that they are unable to join the same rites and observances.⁷¹

G. Assessment of the Human Being

1. Biblical View

a) Man as the Image of God

Genesis 1:27 states that man is created in God's image. As God's representative he is to reign in accountability to God over everything living on earth.⁷² This places him far above the animals and does not leave room for any mythological powers between him and God.

b) Man as an Integrated Whole

Like God, man also is a person. This is an essential part of his being created in the image of God.⁷³ Man's body is not only a part of him but is man himself. Thus man's body is never looked down upon in the Bible. Human sexuality was a created reality in marriage and valued as "very good" long before the first couple sinned.

⁷¹Ibid., 150.

⁷²Gen 1:26-28.

⁷³Gen 1:26.

2. Buddhist View

Personhood is radically denounced in Buddhism. Man as such is non-existent. Individuality is just a heap of three groups of ten life-enabling factors;⁷⁴ it is a "non-self", not in the empirical but in the ultimate sense of the word. The individual is seen as being in flux of continuity, bound together by a karmic force and conditioned by karma.⁷⁵ One of the major steps on the way to salvation in Buddhism is the gaining of the knowledge that one actually does not exist as a person.⁷⁶ This insight is valued as the only possibility to overcome suffering. The overcoming and destruction of one's own personality is a part of Buddhist salvation.⁷⁷

And yet there is a contradiction to the foregoing, namely, that this ultimately non-existent man has the ability to rise up above all gods in order to make himself complete and to redeem himself.

⁷⁴Three Worlds, 117.

⁷⁵Tissa Weerasingha, The Cross and the Bo Tree (Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1989), 27.

⁷⁶Gerhard Rosenkranz, Der Weg des Buddha (Stuttgart: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1960), 84.

⁷⁷Buddha, "Sakkaya-Sutta," as quoted by Paul Dahlke, Buddha, die Lehre des Erhabenen (Goldmann, 1986), 404-06.

As in the Bible, man is first in hierarchy before animals and plants. But in Buddhism, man does not accept anybody above himself. The difference between man and animal is caused by karma because bad karma causes man to be born as an animal. Thus the two are actually only different forms of one kind of being. That is why the killing of animals is prohibited in the same sense as the killing of man.

Sexuality is a severe obstacle on one's way to salvation. Only people in total celibacy have a chance to reach "enlightenment" and thus a state where they cease to exist (Nirvana) after their death. Buddha is always depicted as being sexually neutral and his adherents strive for non-sexuality as well.

H. Man as a Unique Unchangeable Individual

1. Biblical View

Man has been created in God's image⁷⁸ and cannot be regarded as equal in status with other created beings, whether in the heavens or on earth. Also, man cannot change into a different kind of being, such as an animal or a spirit, either before or after death. The Bible states

⁷⁸Gen 1:26.

clearly that once man dies he will return to the earth from which he was taken.⁷⁹

2. Buddhist View

Buddhism advocates the non-selfhood of every being.⁸⁰ In its ultimate sense this is supposed to be an explicit Buddhist teaching. However, it is a contradictory concept, since the influence of bad karma from the former existence presupposes the change of form and continuity of being of an individual from one existence to the next.

I. Responsibilities of Mankind

1. Biblical View

The Bible describes man as being created to worship God,⁸¹ to rule the earth - which includes bearing children and laboring for one's own food.⁸² He also is to love and

⁷⁹Gen 3:19.

⁸⁰Buddhadasa Bikkhu, 29.

⁸¹Ps 145:6-7,10-13; Eph 1:6,12,14.

⁸²Gen 1:28-29.

care for his fellow man⁸³ and to seek and help establish the Kingdom of God here on earth.⁸⁴

2. Buddhist View

Buddhism does not know a Creator God to whom man is accountable and whom he should serve. Instead the Buddhist feels an urgent need to be freed from his miserable lot of suffering in this world. Thus he concentrates on getting on with his own salvation.⁸⁵ Ethical standards are practiced because they help him to live within his society. Love in Buddhism is valued negatively as it is seen as stemming from desire. Therefore all love-borne relationships are to be severed and avoided. Sacrificial involvement in human affairs is not desired except for the reason to accrue merit.

⁸³Lev 19:18.

⁸⁴Matt 24:14.

⁸⁵Buddhadasa Bikkhu, 29-44.

1. Biblical View

When God created the Garden of Eden, He also planted the Tree of Good and Evil there and forbid man to eat from it. By not obeying this order the first man and woman fell from total harmony with God under the law of God which is marked by the commands "You shall . . ." and "You shall not . . .".⁸⁶

Apart from the fact that later on God gave the Ten Commandments through Moses to the people of Israel, He from the beginning has written His law in the heart of every human being.⁸⁷ This way everyone can know what is right and what is wrong.

Demonstrating God's love to mankind, Jesus Christ came as the fulfillment of God's law.⁸⁸ Since that time man is instructed to love one another, thus fulfilling God's law.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Gen 1:28; 2:17.

⁸⁷Rom 2:14-15.

⁸⁸Matt 5:17.

⁸⁹Rom 13:10.

2. Buddhist View

The five Buddhist precepts organize the framework of the Buddhist society: no lying, no stealing, no adultery, no narcotics, no killing. These commandments reflect the law God put into man's heart.⁹⁰

As a special feature of Buddhism we find the Law of Karma, which is the law of cause and effect, namely: do good and you will receive good, do evil and you will receive evil. Karma is seen as the reason for anything happening, be it in a person's life, in state affairs, be it concerned with weather or economics. Everything is due to karma. There is the chance of betterment of one's own karma by making merit, doing merciful deeds, or being a good person. However, the understanding is that ignorance (e.g. not being insightful) creates karma.⁹¹ Only that person who has detached himself from himself does not create good or bad karma for himself any longer because he has left the process of karma altogether.⁹²

⁹⁰Rom 2:14-15.

⁹¹Appichato Bikkhu, Vipassana - the Art of Non-Attachment (Bangkok: Dhamma Spread Publication, 1986), 44.

⁹²Ibid., 42.

K. Truth**1. Biblical View**

Jesus Christ says in John 8:31-32 "If you abide in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free," and also in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth and the life." In the same way as Jesus Christ is personified truth, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are truth and so is God's word, the Bible.⁹³

2. Buddhist View

Buddhism claims that truth is not the property of any particular person or religion. Truth is to be experienced after constant introspection into one's own mental condition to the point that the mind is set free from all selfishness (also called "desire" or "craving"), thus reaching the natural condition of one's mind⁹⁴ and seeing the ultimate reality which is called enlightenment. Gautama Buddha claimed to have reached enlightenment. Nowadays Buddhist monks are

⁹³Ps 89:34; Ps 119:142,160.

⁹⁴V.S. "Publisher's Note" in Bikkhu Buddhadasa Indapanno, Christianity and Buddhism (Thompson Memorial Lecture, 1967), n. p.

2. Buddhist View

Buddhism does not provide any hope for this world. It is in fact unthinkable that the wisdom and insight of many karmic beings - spirits, man, animals, themselves subject to karma - would one day result in eliminating all bad karma and thus stop the world from being reborn. As there seems to be no way for this to happen, the world will go on to be a dreadful place of suffering.¹¹⁰

P. The Eschatological Goal of Man

1. Biblical View

The biblical purpose for man is eternal life with God.¹¹¹ In God's mercy this end goal will be given to everybody who believes in Jesus Christ.¹¹² According to the New Testament the new age of God's new world has already started with Christ's coming to this world. While still living in this world, the Christian is already a citizen of God's new world.¹¹³

¹¹⁰Threeworlds, 326.

¹¹¹1 Tim 2:4.

¹¹²John 1:12.

¹¹³Luke 16:16.

2. Buddhist View

As life for the Buddhist entails only suffering, to him eternal life equals unimaginable punishment. Out of this understanding, his deep-seated longing to cease to exist is born. Thus the eschatological goal of Buddhism is not life but non-existence.¹¹⁴

Q. Conclusion

Though in Buddhism there are outwardly similar precepts and forms of rituals like prayer, meditation, preaching and teaching, discipleship and ethical standards, the underlying beliefs – the principles and goals – are diametrically opposed to those of Christianity. The basic outlook of the two world views are very different: while the Bible reveals a Creator God who cares for man, the Buddhist teaching has at its base human suffering. This latter perspective can, biblically and historically spoken, be placed after sin was introduced into creation (Genesis 3). Buddhism claims to have found a way to be free from suffering. Yet according to the Bible man's salvation must come from outside of himself, as man is depraved in heart and mind. The only acceptable person to bring salvation is Jesus Christ, the

¹¹⁴Buddhadasa Bikkhu, 138.

holy and blameless Son of God. The Buddhist, on the other hand, believes that he cannot entrust his salvation to anybody other than himself. However, by attempting to free himself from his selfishness he contradicts this very effort as he is only working for his own ends.

Also, Buddhism teaches non-selfhood, the presupposition being that man is only a combination of various elements, which, if separated into their smallest parts, dissolve into nothing. Somebody who understands this fully and sees everything from this perspective of unreality is one who is considered to have special insight. Yet at the same time persons adhering to Buddhism are to depend on themselves. Wan Petchsongkram, a former Buddhist monk, says that there is a good deal of thinking concerning these contradictions going on nowadays, when they were formerly accepted without question.¹¹⁵

Clearly Buddhism affirms Christian faith in the matter of karma: namely, that one reaps what one sows. The Bible maintains that if one sows a seed to please his own wrong desire, one will be planting a seed of evil and will surely reap a harvest of spiritual decay and death. However, if

¹¹⁵Petchsongkram, 23.

one plants the good things God has revealed and commanded, one will reap the promise of everlasting life.¹¹⁶

All of the above demonstrates that there are some possible points of contact in Buddhism which may be used by messengers of the gospel. However, it is essential to first know the world view of a people if there is to be effective communication. Of course there must be a thorough understanding of biblical faith - biblical and systematic theology. Once these fundamental necessities are known, the Christian worker can go about contextualizing the message he has to share. It might turn out that this message then has a totally different form from the one he once saw and heard and learned and which helped him to understand its contents. Nevertheless, it will be a form which makes sense to his audience, giving them the opportunity to seriously consider another world view.

Having dealt in this chapter with some of the main points to consider of the two world views in question, we will now go on to look at some principles at large and some practical suggestions in particular for scriptural contextualization in Thailand.

¹¹⁶Gal 6:7-8.

PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURAL
CONTEXTUALIZATION

When God handed the Ten Commandments, hewn in stone, over to Moses on Mount Sinai, contextualization took place. Man was introduced to God's heavenly thoughts with the intent that these thoughts were to be put into practice in human surroundings. The training of trust, which God had started several hundred years earlier with Abraham, had come to a consolidation stage. God thought His people as a whole ready to now learn about the finer aspects of being directly related to the God of the Universe. In turn, a drastic change in world view and cosmology had to take place, and a new approach to everyday situations had to be learned. Most of all, the presence of a Holy God in their midst, who wanted them to be holy in the same way as He is holy, had to become real in their lives. While it is most revealing to observe how God went about contextualizing His presence to His people, the Bible does not try to cover up the difficul--

ties and struggles which had to be met. Until today God continues to show His love, concern, patience, holiness, power, and at times, His wrath, to His chosen people and thus urges them relentlessly towards His Kingdom on earth.

In all of this we can see that the Bible serves, among countless other themes, as a blueprint for contextualization. It is here that the weary messenger of the cross finds himself taken seriously, where he perceives that he is not the first one to come up against barriers too high and thorny to overcome and where he again and again experiences relief in realizing that "...God is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think."¹¹⁷

Contextualization is a fact which every Christian is to be concerned with. Even so simple a task as giving one's testimony requires sensitivity from the person relating it. Of the many details of the story, the teller has to choose what is helpful for the listener to hear. - And at the same time contextualization is the big theme for mission strategists who want to see the gospel understood in the last corners of the earth.

¹¹⁷Eph 3:20.

A. Why Contextualization?

"Every living theology is contextual theology . . . and this is the only way theology can be meaningful," says David J. Bosch in his article "A New Paradigm - Mission as Contextualization." He goes on to explain that the Christian church was born in a cross-cultural milieu, and in the early centuries, inculturated itself in a variety of societies. Yet after Constantine the church itself became the bearer of culture and put its peculiar Western stamp on the gospel.¹¹⁸ Today the churches are waking up to the challenge of theology being culturally conditioned and in order to be applicable theology has to be contextualized.

Rene Padilla in his article on "Contextualization of the Gospel," explains that contextualization is necessary because

the interpreter's understanding of the Word is conditioned by his culture. He does not live in a vacuum but in a concrete historical situation, in a culture from which he derives not only his language but also his patterns of thought and conduct, his methods of learning, his emotional reactions, his values, interests, and

¹¹⁸David J. Bosch, "A New Paradigm -- Mission as Contextualization," in International Bulletin of Missionary Research 4 (October 1990), 149-50.

goals. God's Word reaches him in terms of his own culture, or it does not reach him at all.¹¹⁹

This statement has been strongly confirmed by anybody who has ever started thinking about this theme, especially missionaries the world over.

B. What is Scriptural Contextualization?

As a definition for the word "context" we find that it has its roots in the Latin "contexere", which means "weaving together".

Another way of looking at its etymology is by dividing the word "con", which can be associated with the Latin "cum" ("with") and "text", which is rooted in the Latin verb "texere" ("to weave"). From "texere" we derive the concept of a literary structure. "Context" stands, then, for everything that accompanies or surrounds a text.

This is congruent with the two definitions that Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary¹²⁰ gives to the term. A context, it says, can be either "the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning" or the "interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs: environment."¹²¹

¹¹⁹C. Rene Padilla, "The Contextualization of the Gospel," Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 24 (September 1978), 15.

¹²⁰"Context," Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, ed. Henry Bosby Wolf (Springfield, Mass.: G.&G. Merriam Co., 1973), 245.

¹²¹Orlando Costas, Christ Outside the Gate (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 4.

Considering that it must have been a formidable task which only God could accomplish when He contextualized His word from the heavenlies to the earth, it is quite a challenge for a missionary to bring the Good News from one culture to another. Himself a prisoner to his own culture¹²² he has studied the Bible in his specific environment to which it was already contextualized - that is if he lived in the West. If he happened to live somewhere else in the world, his theological books would have been mainly translations of those used by his counterparts in the West, and thus were contextualized to the Western situation, and little or no literature would have been available to help him contextualize the gospel to his own surroundings. Now, in different circumstances again, he has to take a new look at the actual meaning of God's word, strip off anything that would contaminate it and present it in such a manner that its deep truth can be grasped by the members of the other culture. This is called contextualization: the environment of a culture is consciously and critically incorporated into one's efforts to interpret and communicate the gospel.

Hesselgrave and Rommen observe that "contextualization" is more than a neologism. It is a necessity, as the supra-

¹²²The Willowbank Report -- Gospel and Culture, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 2 (Wheaton, Ill.: LCWE, 1978), 16.

cultural message of the gospel has to be presented in culturally relevant terms.¹²³

I have stated earlier that scriptural contextualization is as old as God's word being proclaimed to mankind. Nicholls warns of an existential gospel which first takes into consideration the cultural circumstances into which the gospel has to be planted and from there decides how and which parts of the Bible fit the situation best.¹²⁴ Hesselgrave and Rommen call this liberal contextualization.¹²⁵ This approach leads to syncretism and religious universalism. It is also diametrically opposed to the dogmatic or scriptural gospel which confronts the circumstances in the light of the gospel and allows God's word be the ultimate judge of how to deal with the culture at hand.¹²⁶

Davis observes that all theologies are by nature culturally conditioned.¹²⁷ As scriptural contextualization

¹²³David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, Contextualization - Meanings, Methods and Models (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1989), 1.

¹²⁴Bruce Nicholls, "Towards a Theology of Gospel and Culture" in Gospel and Culture, eds. John Stott, Robert T. Coote (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1979), 71.

¹²⁵Hesselgrave and Rommen, 31.

¹²⁶Nicholls, 74.

¹²⁷John R. Davis, Poles Apart? - Contextualizing the Gospel (Bangkok, Thailand: Kanok Bannasan Publishers, 1993), 13.

always reforms a culture, the messenger of this approach has to be aware of the fact that he is in the position of stimulating cultural transformation which takes place in four different ways:

1. de-culturalization of the accretions to biblical faith;
2. judgment and condemnation of those elements that are icontrary to God's word;
3. re-creation and transformation of cultural elements consistent with God's revelation;
4. introduction of new elements of the gospel.¹²⁸

Looking at it from this point of view scriptural contextualization is in fact a very challenging task Christians are confronted with.

C. Scriptural Culture Traits in the Process of Contextualization

In the following, I would like to demonstrate with the help of figures the way in which various cultures and their world views are different from the Old Testament culture and the biblical culture pattern as found in the New Testament respectively. The Apostle Paul explains to the Ephesians

"(you) have been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner

¹²⁸Nicholls, 82.

stone."¹²⁹ Here "the foundation of the apostles" indicates what is made known to us in the New Testament, while "the foundation of the prophets" points us back to the Old Testament.

If I take the Old Testament culture from its very beginning as the one culture God implanted on earth for the good of man during the time of the Old Testament, it forms the basis for any other culture which developed later. As a point of reference this Old Testament culture and its inherent world view appears as the basis of every figure. From this basis the biblical culture pattern with its world view as found in the New Testament can be seen as the logical and faithful development of God's revelations which began many hundred years later.

Starting with God's creation through and for the Son of God¹³⁰ the development of these foundations culminates in Jesus Christ acting as the corner stone who holds the whole structure together.¹³¹ I propose that this structure can be modeled using a culture and its world view. In order to explain the main idea in the figures I have chosen only five aspects of a culture, namely (1) man's need for a center

¹²⁹Eph 2:20.

¹³⁰Col 1:15-17.

¹³¹1 Pet 2:7.

(central aspect); (2) man's need for salvation (religious aspect); (3) man's need for communication and self-expression (communicational aspect); (4) man's need for structured living (social aspect); and (5) man's need for guidance and leadership (moral aspect). The educational, political and other aspects of a culture are not considered here in order to keep the graphs as easy to understand as possible.

Each of the strands (2-5) leans towards its center which provides the structural strength of that part of the figure. As the strands touch the platform they form a tent-like image which is supposed to depict the world view of the culture described. The distance of each center (1) in the various figures from that of the cultural pattern as found in the New Testament marks the distance of world views and thus hints on the complications to be anticipated in reaching the respective culture with the gospel of Christ.

The platform the strands touch down to spans the this-worldly - supranatural scale. In this thesis, this-worldly orientation versus supranatural orientation are handled as a pair, depicting the opposite ends of one and the same scale. Concerning the expression "supranatural" it has to be explained that I coined it for the figures at hand. It is supposed to describe a world view where the view of the natural is covered over with a view of the beyond-natural: the supranatural. Theravada Buddhists are not concerned

with this world, but with gaining a better after-life. They also do not like it if anything in their religion is called supernatural as they want to draw a definite line between themselves and popular Buddhism where the supernatural and superstition is commonplace.

While figures 1-5 depict two cultures each, figure 6 shows 3 and figure 7 shows 6 cultures and their respective world views. Each figure is to be read from the bottom up, which means that the starting point is God's creation of the world and the Old Testament culture. The biblical culture pattern is shown in a direct, identically-centered development from the Old Testament one. It has to be noted that what will be described as a biblical culture pattern is the innermost core of a scriptural set of values, i.e. the renewed mind of obedient Christians, which develops within each unique environment of any people group. In figures 2-7 the strands of the other cultures which evolved from God's beginnings as shown in the Old Testament culture, are placed above this platform and form a different structure from the biblical culture pattern.

1. Old Testament Culture Versus A Biblical Culture Pattern as Found in the New Testament (see Figure 1)

In Ephesians 2:19-20 the Apostle Paul reveals to his fellow believers that they are "fellow citizens with the saints" due to the fact that they, too, had "been built upon

the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself being the corner stone."

In the preceding verses, starting from chapter one of Ephesians, Paul describes God's precious intentions for man, His plan of salvation, the destiny of the redeemed, His power demonstrated in the seen and in the unseen world and His grace in action. In the verses which follow, the above passage reveals more of this mystery, hidden in God for ages.¹³² This mystery has been made known and a moral and spiritual standard is being uncovered. God's world view for His people is opened up before man and even more, a whole culture introduced by God is being described. Clearly "the foundation of the apostles and prophets" as revealed in the Old Testament (in the figure shown below the platform) becomes visible as God's revelation of Himself as the center (1), God's blueprint for salvation (2), God's communication with man (3), God's ways with His chosen people (4) and God's commandments (5). From this foundation God's intended world view for his people results, perfectly balanced in respect to its this-worldly versus its supranatural orientation.

The biblical culture pattern grows out of the Old Testament culture. God's revelation of Himself goes on

! ¹³²Eph 3:9.

being the center (1),¹³³ while God's blueprint for salvation unfolds as the completed task of salvation through Jesus Christ (2).¹³⁴ God's communication with man, through Jesus Christ, has led to spiritual responses in man (3),¹³⁵ ever-adjusting to the situations and needs of Christians across all ages. God's ways with His chosen people lead to the body of believers having Christ as the head,¹³⁶ organized in denominations, para-church and other Christian organizations, scriptural movements and the like (4). Finally, God's commandments, designed to convict mankind of its sinfulness, are transformed into God's leading of His people through the Holy Spirit, who was sent after Christ's ascension into heaven (5).¹³⁷ Clearly, Jesus Christ is the decisive factor in each of the developments which advances the Old Testament culture into the biblical pattern. As such He is the cornerstone which holds the whole structure together and in place.

¹³³Heb 1:1-2.

¹³⁴Acts 4:12.

¹³⁵John 4:23-24.

¹³⁶Eph 1:22-23.

¹³⁷Rom 8:11.

Old Testament Culture Versus Biblical Culture as Found in the New Testament

Old Testament Culture		Biblical Culture as Found in the New Testament	
1. God's	..... Himself	1. God's	.....
2. God's	.....	2. ....	.....
3. God's	..... with	3. ....	.....
4. ....	.....	4. ....	.....
5. God's	.....	5. ....	.....

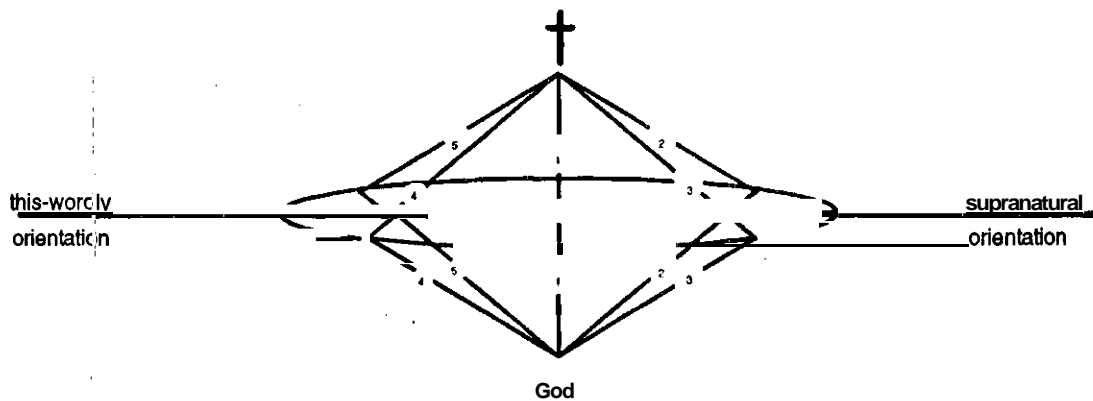


Figure 1

Despite the fact that the biblical culture and world view pattern exists in any born-again Christian, it will always be colored by the distinct cultural background a person comes from. While God's authority, the Lordship of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are features present in any believer, the personal expression of the individual's faith will differ within this framework, bringing glory to God in a multitude of worshipful variations.

2. Old Testament Culture Versus Animistic Cultures (see Figure 2)

Personally I am convinced that "the mystery, hidden in God for ages,"¹³⁸ which is God's good plan for everybody who acknowledges Him as Lord, has existed since the creation of the world (see figure 2 below platform). I take this from God's dealings with His people since the creation of Adam and Eve and God's fellowship with them in Eden (Genesis 1).

Once man had gained his independence, from God he had to invent his own culture (Genesis 4 and onward). However, due to man's being conditioned¹³⁹ by his Creator, his new culture was built on what he had known thus far (see figure 2 above platform). In the Animistic cultures, having lost security in God, man's world view was changed by fear and became 100 percent supernaturally oriented with supernatural powers at the animistic cultures' center and only a vague knowledge of a creator god (1). This causes the Animistic cultures' center to register "positive" on the supranatural side of the this-worldly - supranatural scale, while in the Old Testament and biblical culture patterns the central aspect of these cultures is balanced between the this-worldly and

¹³⁸Eph 3:9.

¹³⁹Blaise Pascal, The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 138.

supranatural orientations. Because of this deviation from the center, all the other parts of these newly assembled Animistic cultures had to be actively remodeled: God's blueprint for salvation was turned into a folk religion with animistic beliefs in spirits and gods (2). God's very communication with man was corrupted into man's specific expressions of art and rituals in the respective languages (3). Social structures with witch doctors, mediums and elders emerged and replaced God's ways with His chosen people (4). Moral codes, taboos and ritual laws emerged instead of His good commandments (5). There was no longer a proper place in their culture for the righteousness and truth which God had taught His people, nor for the agape-love which is so much a part of God's character.

Animistic cultures do not have a balanced world view as^s they seek God in nature and bow down to creation instead of their Creator. That is why God has allowed them to go astray according to their own desires, their center no longer being the revelation of Himself but governed by supernatural powers.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰Rom 1:25-28.

Old Testament Culture Versus Animistic Cultures

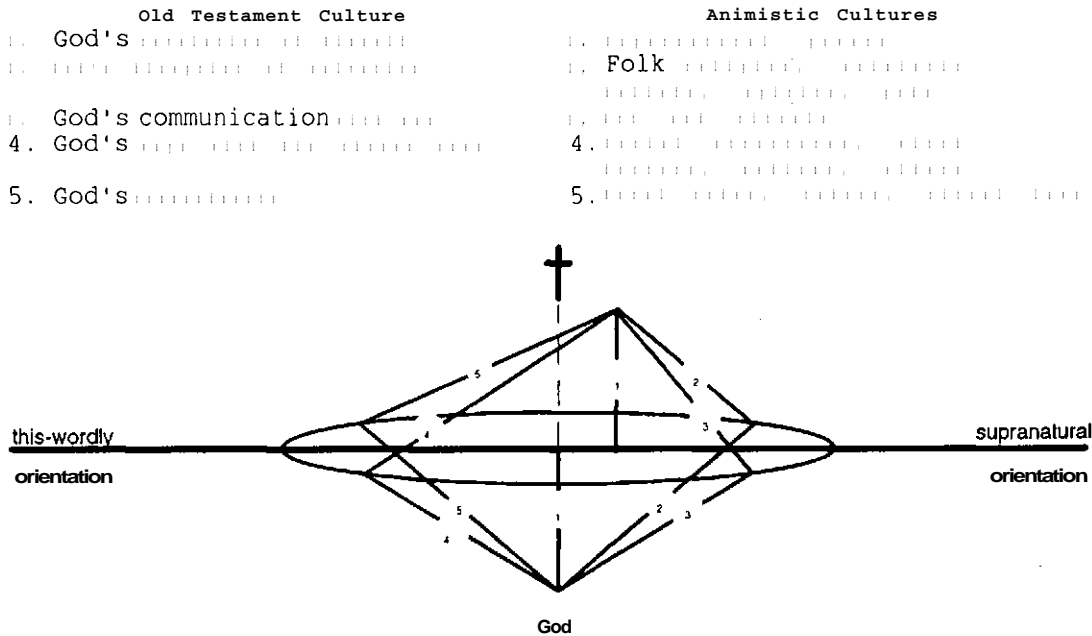


Figure 2

3. Old Testament Culture Versus Hinduistic Cultures (see Figure 3)

We find the roots of Thai culture firmly grounded in Animism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The three religions have been practiced (at first sequentially and later alongside each other) since the third century B.C. in the region which is nowadays known as Thailand.¹⁴¹ This was long before the Thai ever arrived from Southern China during the first

¹⁴¹Terwiel, 67.

millennium A.D.¹⁴² As Hinduism is older than Buddhism and the latter is to a certain extent a development out of the former, Hinduism has to be considered a part of the underlying culture we find nowadays in Thailand. This explains many kinds of Hinduistic forms found in rituals and traditions mainly concerning the royal court and government.

At the center of Hinduistic cultures we find a hierarchy of gods and the Law of Karma, both supposedly working together in determining the shape of man's existence. On the supranatural scale (see figure 3, above platform) the center's position is located even further away from the biblical culture pattern and the Animistic culture. This is due to the fact that Hinduistic cultures transferred the supernatural power concept to a multitude of gods and the impersonal Law of Karma. In Hinduistic understanding, knowledge of a creator god is not feasible (1). Extending and diverging from God's blueprint for salvation, the Hindu religion developed a god for every circumstance and question which could arise in the human life (2). Where before there had been God's ways of communication with man, arts with specified Hinduistic meaning were introduced and rituals formed to endow the many gods with gifts and to endear them to the people in the various languages (3). God's ways with

¹⁴²Ibid., 1.

Old Testament Culture Versus Hinduistic Cultures

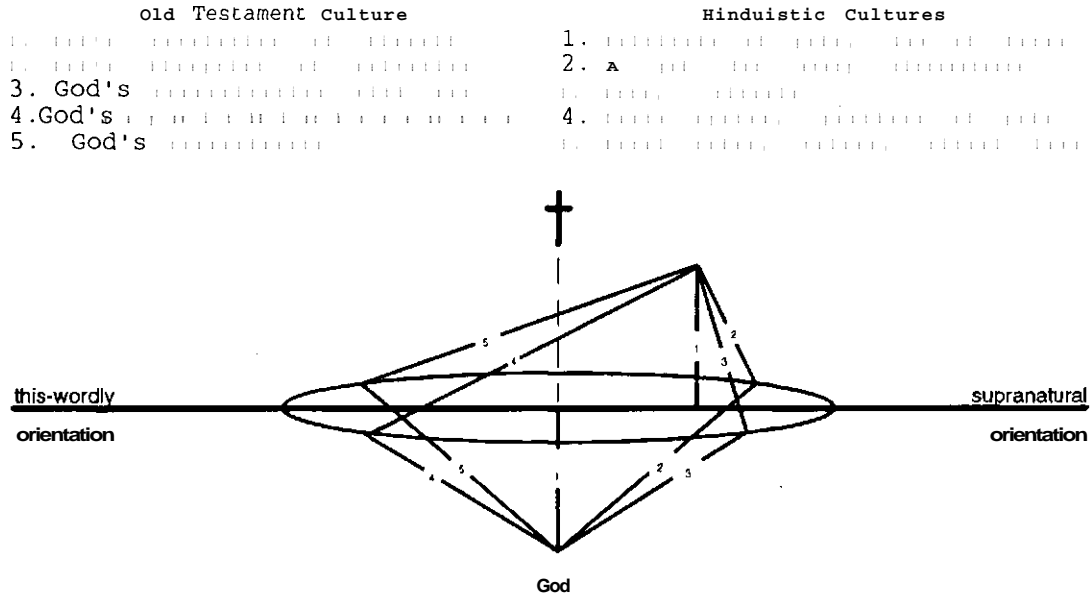


Figure 3

His chosen people were replaced by an intricate and complicated caste system with more than three thousand castes, each with its own social structures and all still functioning,¹⁴³ and a pantheon of gods and semi-gods (4). Last but not least, Hinduism replaced God's commandments with a set of conflicting moral codes, distinctly opposing values and a vast variety of definite ritual laws, all of

¹⁴³Die großen Religionen der Welt [The World's Great Religions] trans. and eds. Hans-Joachim Schoeps and Fritz Bolle (München: Droemersch Verlagsgesellschaft Th. Knaur Nachf., 1968), 26.

them tightly interwoven with and decidedly linked to the Hindus' religious understanding (5).

4. Old Testament Culture Versus Asian Buddhist Cultures (see Figure 4)

The center of the Thai Buddhist culture is the Law of Karma, which represents the sustaining and dominating power in the whole of the Buddhist world view. Compared to Animistic and Hinduistic cultures, it is still further removed from the biblical culture on the scale of supranatural orientation since it has no gods and no knowledge of a creator god, and this despite the fact that Theravada Buddhists would like to see Buddhism placed at the far end of the this-worldly scale. But there is this definite mystical-philosophical approach to understanding existence. This approach is a result of the supernatural spiritual achievements of Gautama Buddha and other Buddhist monks, which places Buddhism on the far supranatural end (see figure 4, above platform) of the scale (1). The strand depicting God's blueprint for salvation in the Old Testament culture has been turned into Buddhist philosophy with its goal of salvation achieved by man (2). In place of God's communication with man the Thai oral and written forms of religious language are found. They feature Buddhist doctrine and law, art and rituals. All of these are means

Old Testament Culture Versus Thai Buddhist Culture

Old Testament Culture	Thai Buddhist Culture
1. God's	1. ...
2. ...	2. ...
3. God's	3. ...
4. ...	4. ...
5. God's	5. ...

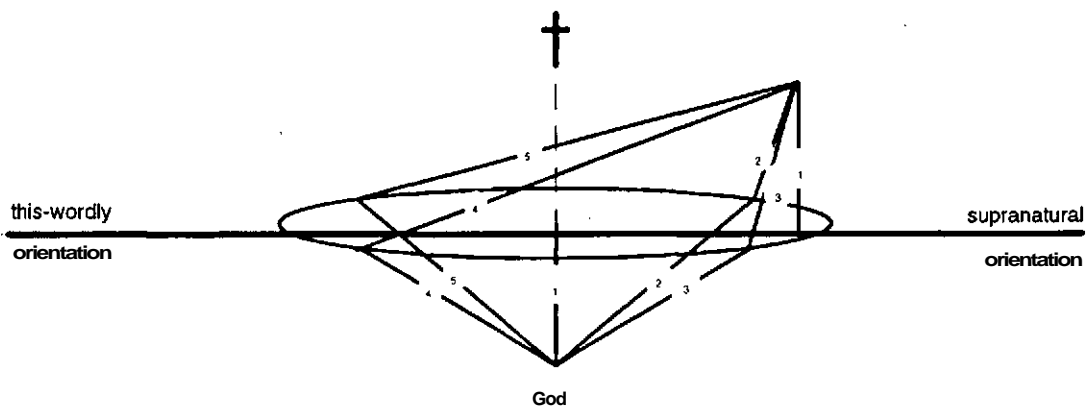


Figure 4

to express oneself to one another and to address spirits and powers in the unseen world (3).¹⁴⁴ God's ways with His chosen people were thoroughly remodeled and replaced by distinct social structures, patriotism, a strong monastic hierarchy and the almost unreachable goal of enlightenment (4). Instead of God's commandments a whole set of various moral codes and values were instituted. Inherent to all of them is the dominant control of the Law of Karma and the

¹⁴⁴ Steyne, 52.

influence of supernatural demonic powers which can be traced to Hinduism and Animism respectively (5).

5. Old Testament Culture Versus Western Secular Materialistic Cultures (see Figure 5)

Because of the fact that up until a decade ago the main bulk of the missionary force came from Western materialistic cultures, this type of cultural pattern is being included in the graphs. Recently these cultures have turned secular in search of a new orientation. As can be easily observed, the center of such a culture is man himself, or stated more correctly, man's revelation of himself to himself and to others. In Western secular materialistic cultures the supernatural world is excluded to the extent that man is his own master who asks for himself all the freedom there is, not respecting anything or anybody else besides himself. Everybody has become his own law. So here the center is located far out on the scale on the side of this-worldly orientation (1). These cultures have undergone definite changes which are hardly comparable to the changes the previously described cultures went through. Here God's blueprint for salvation became, instead, man's personal philosophy which he may fit and adjust again and again to his own liking. His goal is not as much salvation as it is self-assertiveness and self-actualization (2). God's

Old Testament Culture Versus Western Secular Materialistic Cultures

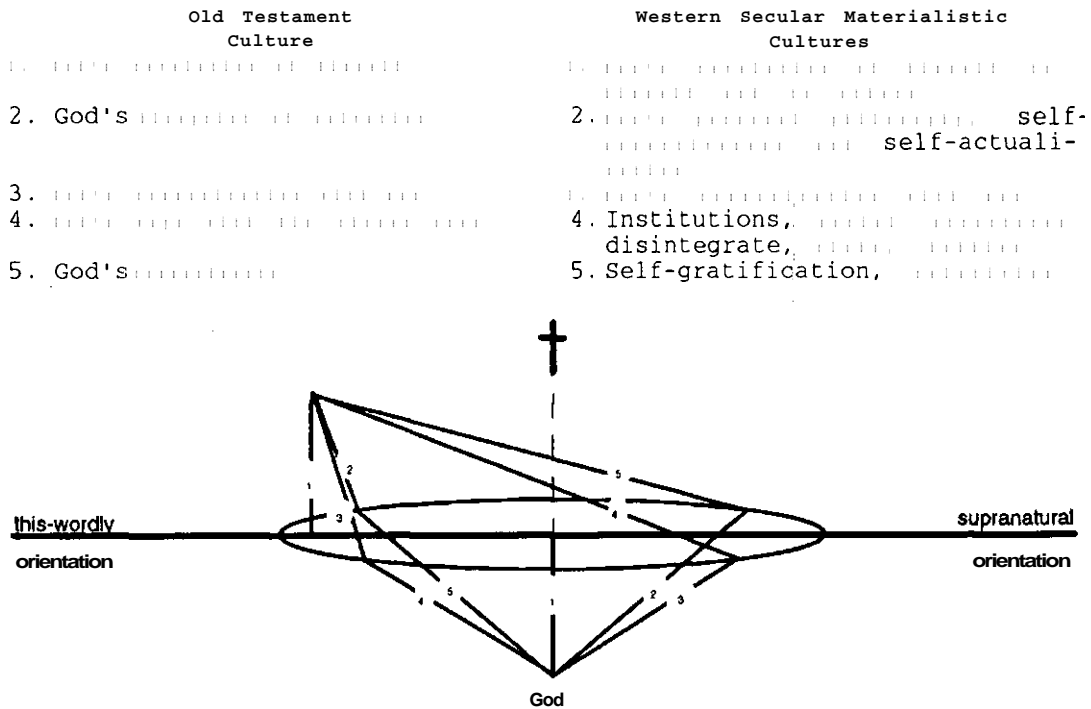


Figure 5

communication with man has become man's communication with man in forms which tend to exclude scriptural principles and values. Also an individualistic, hectic life style characterized by self-centered loneliness has emerged. Creative art has lost its center (3).¹⁴⁵ In place of God's ways with His chosen people there came godless institutions,

¹⁴⁵Francis Schaeffer, Wie können wir denn leben [How Should We Then Live?] (Stuttgart: Hänssler Verlag, 1977), 204.

and social structures like family and clan, nowadays tend to disintegrate; interest in clubs and hobbies show that people still like to be together for selfish purposes but not necessarily for the purpose of communicating on deeper levels (4). God's commandments are giving way to self and self-gratification as the only real factor in space and time, and thus to relativism (5) .

However, as Arild Romarheim states in his article "The Aquarian Christ," secularization is not a permanent situation of any society as it simply points to the process of shifting from one value system to another. Thus secularization is a state of transition, a cultural crisis which cannot last.¹⁴⁶ As religion cannot be exterminated but only replaced by religion, we find that members of cultures involved in secularization tend to look for that new religion which for them can fill the void of the former outdated one. So, many in Western secularized societies turn to new religious movements and find themselves a novel center in esoteric views. Such a center is then to be found on the supranatural side of the scale.

¹⁴⁶Arild Romarheim, "The Aquarian Christ," Areopagus 3 (Pentecost 1992), 20.

6. As a Missionary from a Western Secular Materialistic Culture to an Asian Buddhist Culture (see Figure 6)

It has been demonstrated that the missionary from a Western secular materialistic culture finds the center of the world view he was brought up with to be very far on the this-worldly orientation side of the this-worldly - supranatural scale of the proposed model. The Asian Buddhist culture, in contrast, is situated far on the supranatural orientation side. On that scale the biblical culture pattern is located between the two. The missionary to an Asian Buddhist culture has had the opportunity to adjust to a new world view when he became a Christian and learned to follow Jesus Christ. This means that he will to a certain degree be aware of the factors involved in a world view change. However, he comes from a totally this-worldly oriented culture to which scriptural culture traits have been adjusted. He now has to tune in to an extremely supranaturally oriented culture for which he has a hard time finding clues from the biblical culture patterns as he knows them. The changes for him will be enormous. In the figure this is shown by the distance the center of his home culture has from the host's. But this is not all: his task is to not only introduce the gospel to Asian Buddhists but to help

them in the process of changing their world view¹⁴⁷ from a Buddhist one into a Christian-Asian one (and definitely not a, Christian-Western one) , which then shall result in a scriptural culture with Asian flavor.

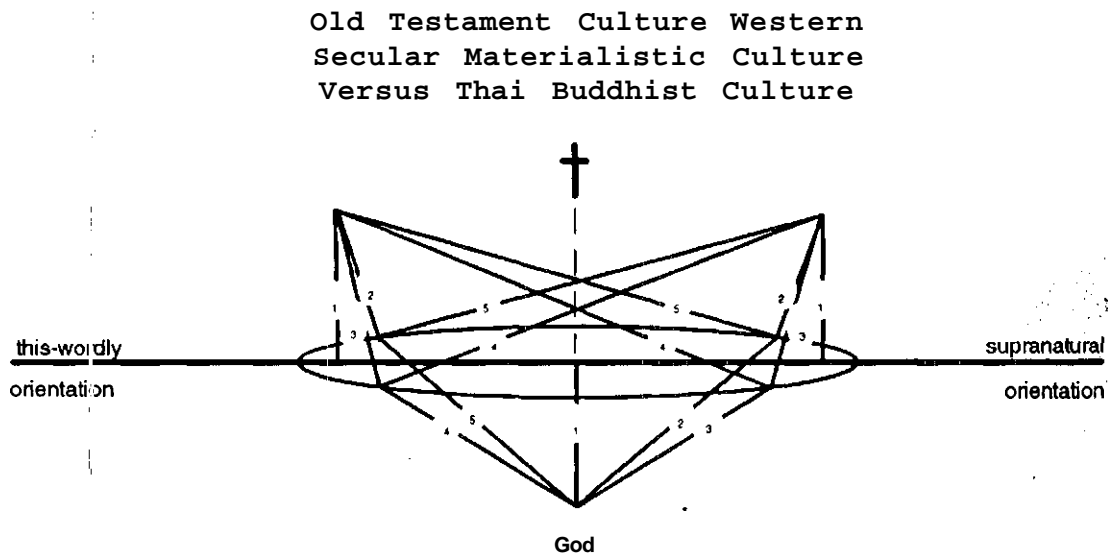


Figure 6

7. A; Synopsis of Figures One to Six (see Figure 7)

By putting figures 1-5 in a single figure it becomes clear that, compared to somebody with only the experience of the Western secularized materialistic/biblical culture pattern, it should be easier for a person with an Animist or

¹⁴⁷Robert Priest, "Missionary Elenctics: Conscience and Culture," in Missiology: An International Review 3 (July 1994), 308-15.

Hindu background or experience to work as a missionary among Buddhists, as his world view is already supranaturally oriented. In this category we also find Christian workers with a Western secularized background who have, when still at home, been in contact with or even personally involved in supranatural world views like new age, yoga and the like. Here common features enhance the initial understanding immensely and hold the chance for the messenger of God's word to become effective much earlier than one who has a predominately this-worldly orientation as a background.

Old Testament Culture and Biblical Culture as Found
in the New Testament versus This-worldly Oriented
and Supranatural Oriented Cultures

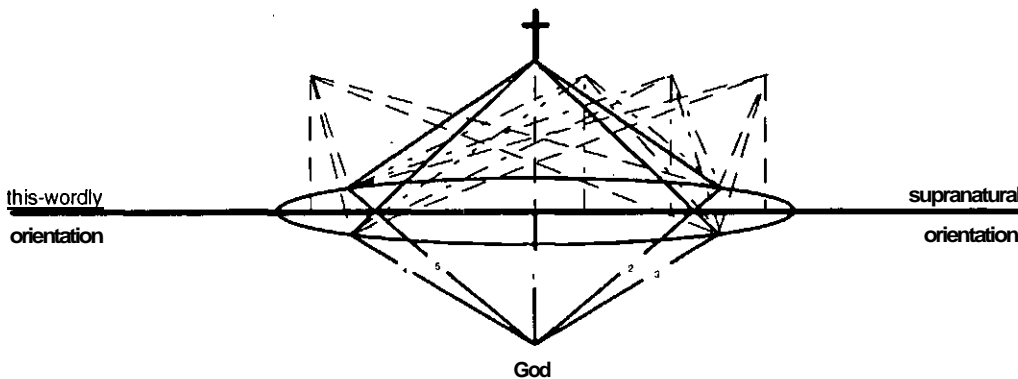


Figure 7

D. Aspects of Scriptural Contextualization

There are two imperatives for contextualization, namely relevancy to cultural context and fidelity to biblical

Truth. According to Gration there is a creative tension between the two, challenging anybody concerned to neither let relevancy to context go beyond fidelity to Truth, as this would result in syncretism; nor to put fidelity to Truth above relevancy to context as it would lead to irrelevancy of the approach.¹⁴⁸ The contextualizer has to be fully aware of this tension, trying to do justice to both aspects. Throughout history men have leaned more to one or the other side of these imperatives as I will briefly describe.

1. Accommodation

Accommodation involves a strategy of adjustment in the process of contextualization. Accommodation examines the whole culture and adjusts the gospel to the highest possible degree. It embraces certain elements of the culture (assimilation). The danger clearly is syncretism, resulting from an overemphasis on relevancy to context versus fidelity to scriptural Truth. An example from history is Roberto De Nobili (1577 - 1656) and his accommodation of the gospel to the Brahman caste system.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸John A. Gration, Contextualization of Theology (Wheaton, Ill.: John A. Gration, 1991), unit 3, 2.

¹⁴⁹Alan Neely, Roberto De Nobili: An Example of Missionary Identification (Wake Forest, NC: Case Study Institute, 1982).

2. Adaptation

In the adaptation approach the gospel moves towards culture and expresses itself through certain aspects of it. Cultural elements such as language or culture-specific practices are adapted to the gospel. The goal is to provide a genuine translation of Christianity into indigenous terms so that its relevancy in a concrete situation becomes evident. There is the obvious danger of syncretism which can be avoided with the help of careful research on each subject matter. A positive example from the Bible is John when he used the word "logos" for Christ. John adapted this indigenous term and by coming up with the necessary explanations (John 1:1-4) poured new meaning into it. The term "logos" was foundational to the gospel and as "logos" was a common word and the enlarged meaning was clear, John enabled the Greeks to understand who he was talking about.

3. Possessio¹⁵⁰ and World View Transformation

Both terms of possessio and transformation mean that an individual, a people or a whole nation is totally possessed by God and both of them refer to the church as well as to culture and world view. While possessio explains the divine

¹⁵⁰Latin: to take over, to take into possession.

change as soon as a person begins to be changed by the gospel. And by transforming the lives of individuals, God works in and through a culture at the world view level of the whole nation.

Transformation is *possessio* made practical as it takes place in the life of the believer who shows increasing conformity to Christ. By following Him, the believer submits to the work of the Holy Spirit and thus becomes a tool in God's hand to help transform his society, his culture and eventually the world view of his people.

E. Suggestions for Scriptural Contextualization in Thailand

Thailand, as a Buddhist kingdom and a modern nation-state, presents the Western missionary with many riddles, the biggest of which might be the unresponsiveness of the Thai to the gospel and the minimal impact the lives of believers seem to have had on the culture thus far. The reasons for this are many and varied on the Thai as well as on the missionaries' side.¹⁵⁸

In this part of the chapter, I want to concentrate on practical suggestions for scriptural contextualization in

¹⁵⁸Smith, 1982, 271-78.

Thailand according to some of the theoretical points already mentioned above.

1. The Accommodation Approach

It has been said already that accommodation in contextualization has to be handled with the utmost care due to the high risk of syncretism. However, there may be some features - mainly forms - in any culture which should be seriously considered for accommodation and adjustment.

For example, the preaching style in Thailand is almost the same as in any Christian church anywhere in the world, i.e. Western style. Why can a pastor in Thailand not sit cross-legged on the floor or on a small elevated platform while preaching, the congregation sitting comfortably before him in the same manner? This is the way monks deliver their speeches to Buddhist adherents. And why could the preaching not be handled more or less in a dialogue form where the pastor includes issues brought up by the people, answering them in the framework of his chosen text? This is how Buddhist monks traditionally and still today handle most of their teaching and preaching. Still another question remains concerning the music and songs used in worship. While in the secular world there are new Thai tunes and songs almost every week, there is only a rare attempt in the

Christian community to change from Western-style Christian music to modern Thai tunes which can be sung and enjoyed on the heart level by whole congregations.

These are just a few suggestions concerned with contextual accommodation in Thailand, indicating that this issue should definitely not be neglected.

2. The Adaptation Approach

Members of any culture will be excited to discover that there are some factors they have in common with the culture which is being introduced to their situation. However, we know that what looks "the same" in the beginning may or will turn out to be viewed as radically different once a world view transformation has taken place.

In the adaptation approach, parts of the gospel are expressed through familiar cultural forms and ideas. Table 1 shows cultural elements which have been gleaned from the Thai culture and paralleled with corresponding biblical standards (see table 1).

Table 1.--Adaptation of Thai Cultural Elements

Thai Cultural Element	Bible
(1) <u>central aspect:</u> Karma: "You will reap what you sow"	"Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap," Gal 6:7.
(2) <u>religious aspect:</u> Your bad deeds will send you into hell.	"The wicked will return to Sheol (hell), even all the nations who forget God," Ps 9:18
(3) <u>communicational aspect:</u> The first action in the morning is prayer to helpful spirits.	"In the morning, Lord, Thou wilt hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch," Ps 5:3.
(4) <u>social aspect:</u> respect for elders hospitality do good, avoid evil and keep your heart pure	"Honor your father and mother," Exod 20:12. "Practice hospitality," Rom 12:13 "Trust in the Lord and do good; . . . cultivate faithfulness," Ps 37:3.
(5) <u>moral aspects:</u> (five Buddhist precepts) no lying no stealing no adultery no narcotics no killing	"you shall not bear false witness," Exod 20:16. "you shall not steal," Exod 20:15. "you shall not commit adultery," Exod 20:14. "do not be mastered by anything," 1 Cor 6:12. "you shall not murder," Exod 20:13.

It will be very heartwarming to any Thai to discover that the word of God has several highly esteemed rules in common with his own culture. But the underlying values are quite different: the Thai adhere to their rules because they have proven to be extremely helpful in the personal attainment of merit and serve at the same time as good guidelines for society. The scriptural standards, however, have their roots in the love and fear of God and respect for each fellow-man as ordained by the Creator. These inherent Christian values have to be taught and exemplified by the messengers of the cross so that every Thai Christian is brought to the point that he can bear witness of his love for Christ, thus glorifying God.

3. The World View Transformation Approach

In the Christian realm, transformation's goal is for a whole culture to be permeated and thus transformed by the word of God until its very form and content eventually demonstrates God's character.

In the following table,¹⁵⁹ some Thai culture-specific entities are related to universal commonalities and from there their concept fulfillment in view of the Bible is demonstrated (see table 2).

¹⁵⁹adapted from Gratton, unit 13, 4.

Table 2.--Suggestions for World View Transformation of Thai Concepts

Thai Concept	Related Universal Idea	Christian Cultural Equivalent
1. enlightened one	ultimate status	Jesus Christ
2. self-salvation	man as authority	rebellion against God
3. king/monks	supreme authority	Christ's lordship and priesthood
4. spirits	power	Christian triumph
5. fortune telling	revelation	God's Word/Spirit
6. rites of passage	progress	Christian rituals
7. amulets, tattoos, tham khwan	protection	faith in God's promises
8. taboos	restraint	discipline
9. to be Thai means to be a Buddhist	communal solidarity	unity of the Church
10. moral laws	social safeguards	biblical guidelines
11. detachment, self reliance	association	attachment, trust
12. shame orientation	conscience	shame, guilt
13. illusion	assessment of world	reality of kingdom of God
14. spirit-possession	supernatural control	Holy Spirit control
15. merit making	substitution	atonement
16. ritual cleansing	acceptance	justification
17. appeasement	relationship with higher powers	obedience to God/rejection of spirits
18. harmony	solution of conflicts	peace with God and man
19. nirvana	highest state	peace with God
20. deliverance	ultimate goal	freedom in Christ

In evaluating this table some exciting perspectives on the transformation of the Thai world view can be gained. The first eight concepts uncover an underlying search for

the release from the iron grip of karma. This becomes clear from the explanations under the title: "Related Universal Idea" namely, the urge to attain ultimate status, to have and adhere to authority and power, to gain revelations and to secure progress and protection. Each of these points oppose the static Law of Karma which enslaves the Buddhist people. In a Satanic twist man has been thrown back on himself to care for his own salvation - an impossibility which presents itself as such to most Buddhist adherents. Concepts 9 to 13 are clearly concerned with social relations, 14 to 17 with the correlation to the supernatural realm and 18 to 20 with personal emotional welfare. For the concepts 18 and 19 it is very noteworthy that they both seem to indicate a deeply felt need for peace with God.

Looking at the section "Christian Cultural Equivalent" a biblical outline for the Thai seems to present itself to the Christian worker. Each of the themes is a valuable aspect of teaching believers the life which leads to the imitation of Christ in their society. Once a Thai has made Jesus Christ the Lord of his heart and life, a change of values will take place and finally a new pattern of social relationships will result. He will find his ultimate status in Jesus Christ, his rebellion against God will turn into dedicated service to the Most High, following the example of his Lord and High Priest, Jesus Christ. He will rejoice in

Christian triumph over the powers subdued by the Lord of Hosts. His curiousness for revelations will be satisfied once the Holy Spirit starts opening up God's Word to him. Christian rituals like baptism, the Lord's supper, prayer and worship will secure his progress towards maturity in the same way as trust in God's promises will impart to him the faithfulness of his Redeemer concerning his protection. A good measure of discipline will help him again and again to exercise his will and to reconfirm the decision to follow his Lord. The social sphere has a prominent place in Christianity and biblical guidelines, a new identity and a new mind through Christ¹⁶⁰ as well as control given by the Holy Spirit help so that relationships among Christians give glory to God and are exemplary to a non-Christian society. Being created in the image of God and having lost that close relationship to his Creator, man has the urge to seek acceptance. He finds this in the form of atonement and justification in Jesus Christ. In balanced relationships and the attaining of the highest possible state, man's deepest desires are reflected. Here man comes to his ultimate fulfillment once he experiences peace with God and peace with man.

¹⁶⁰ Samuel Wunderli, "The Significance of Shame and Guilt-Oriented Consciences for Cross-Cultural Ministry," (M.A. thesis, Columbia Bible Seminary and Graduate School of Missions, 1990), 176-78.

F. Conclusion

While the first section of this chapter explains scriptural contextualization, the part on the process of contextualization introduces the reader to some options one has in the task of contextualizing a message. A few suggestions for actual contextualization in Thailand were added to stimulate further thinking on the theme. These preparations challenge the cross-cultural worker to see for himself what he thinks can and has to be done in his specific situation. More research on his particular circumstances might be necessary. A get-together with others working in his field and a common strategy will be helpful. Ways of understanding the situation and means for the implementation of new ideas have to be sought. Most needed will be much prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit. How good to know that the Lord of the Harvest prepares the messengers' hearts - and those of the listeners.¹⁶¹

In the light of all of the above, the next question will be, which methods can be used in order to help the Thai listen to and understand the word of God? The messenger of the cross has to first of all prayerfully and faithfully distribute God's word and trust that the Holy Spirit will

¹⁶¹Acts 10.

reach the hearts of the listeners, but the method he chooses will be the vehicle on which the Good News is being transported. If the vehicle is strange and "loud" in communication terms, the interest of the listener will be absorbed and side-tracked by its outward form instead of its content. But if the vehicle is well-adjusted and well-liked, it will carry the message far and the doors of the hearts will much more likely open to receive it. Still the Holy Spirit has to do His miraculous work; but what Christian communicator would willingly put obstacles in His way? In the following chapter I would like to introduce a model of contextualization with the vehicle of communication being an old, much cherished but nowadays little used, one.

CHAPTER VI

A MODEL OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

A. Stories as a Vehicle of Communication

With the biblical account as a basis, a messenger of the Good News is presented with the task of translating heavenly thoughts for and into human surroundings. As mentioned earlier, this process is part of what is called contextualization. In the previous chapter it was demonstrated what contextualization is and how it can be achieved. I now want to describe a specific model of contextualization as a vehicle of communication for the situation in Thailand, namely, the story. It is a concrete relational medium of communication providing access to learning for young and old, villagers and city dwellers, literate and illiterate.¹⁶² The word "story" in this context will exclusively mean a narrative.

¹⁶²Tom Steffen, "Missiologial Education for the 21st Century, " in Evangelical Missions Quaterly 2 (April 1993), 182.

Stories as a means of teaching, exhortation, fun, relaxation and encouragement have been employed by countless nations. Bailey says that the primary literary art forms of Eastern literature are stories and poems.¹⁶³ Since the age of mass media set in many countries have been slowly losing this art. In chapter two it was related that, apart from informal teaching, stories are a way to convey values in Thai society.

In this context it is sad to see that missionaries nowadays are more often than not found to be sermonizers, theologizers or lecturers but not story tellers.¹⁶⁴

Why Stories? - In an age where TV and video serve as nannies for millions of children and the same media are counted to be the number one means of relaxation for the work force in many societies, it seems that nowadays the benefit of stories is being totally underestimated. However, given the opportunity, everybody likes to listen to stories. Stories have the potential to stimulate basic human functions such as emotion and sentiment, and intuition

¹⁶³Kenneth E. Bailey, Poet and Peasant: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 25.

¹⁶⁴Donald N. Larson, "The Viable Missionary: Learner, Trader, Storyteller," in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement - A Reader, Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 450.

and comprehension, which go together with the ability for meditative thinking and realization. While listening to a story, profound truths may be realized and contemplation can take place.¹⁶⁵ This has its secret in the two basic factors Jensen describes: distance and participation. Distance means safety for the listener. This frees him for participation.¹⁶⁶ Very often a listener finds traits of his own ego in a story. This enables him to "live" in it (participation) and to privately draw his own practical applications.¹⁶⁷ "If a story is the vehicle of reality rather than either thought or sensation, then recognition, not cognition, is the way we grasp reality or are grasped by it," observes Robert Roth.¹⁶⁸

While one of the goals of a story is to convey knowledge, a more primary objective is acknowledgment. A story told in the safety of distance can bring about acknowledgment in an unobtrusive manner, thus providing the listener with the freedom to act on his insights.

¹⁶⁵Walter Wanner, Erzählen kann jeder (Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 1982), 30.

¹⁶⁶Richard A. Jensen, Telling the Story (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 138.

¹⁶⁷Ruth Frey, Arbeit unter Kindern (Moers: Brendow Verlag, 1975), 22.

¹⁶⁸Robert Roth, Story and Reality (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 52.

B. Stories from Biblical Texts

"The challenge of contextualization is to move beyond the initial communication of the gospel," says Wilbert R. Shenk.¹⁶⁹ Telling a biblical text in story form does just that; it has God's word come to the hearer indirectly rather than directly. God's word is being overheard. Presenting a biblical text in story form is also a faith venture as the story-teller dares to believe that the Holy Spirit may move even where the story teller has given up control by not going into each and every detail.¹⁷⁰

C. The Use of Stories in the Thai Context

Over the years many missionaries to Thailand have lamented the fact that the gospel does not seem to be understood by the Thai people. Joseph E. Cookie writes in his helpful paper "Gospel for Thai Ears":

For some time now I have had an ever-increasing concern for finding more effective ways of communicating the gospel to the Thai - of restating the gospel for Thai ears in such a way that they can hear its message,

¹⁶⁹Wilbert R. Shenk, "Missionary Encounter with Culture," in International Bulletin of Missionary Research 3 (July 1991), 108.

¹⁷⁰Jensen, 148.

understand it and apply it meaningfully to their hearts and lives.¹⁷¹

In cultures saturated with Buddhism a big part of the problem is that too often evangelism revolves around the question of meaning. What makes sense in one culture cannot be presented in the same manner in another culture because the message will be perceived as totally different with the meaning distorted. However, in order to straighten out meaning, biblical concepts have to be communicated accurately.¹⁷² To do this, stories which lean closely to the biblical text can be a helpful instrument.

1. Traditional Thai Literacy

In former times the temple of a village or town in Thailand was the only place where reading and writing was learned. Also, the temple was the only place literature was produced and reproduced. It has been found that the various texts in a temple library do not only contain chants and Buddhist teachings but also stories of a purely regional origin. Such stories are recited by monks as sermons and

¹⁷¹Joseph E. Cooke, "Gospel for Thai Ears" July 1978 [photocopy], 1.

¹⁷²Alex G. Smith, "Insights for Frontier Missions to Therjavada Buddhists," International Journal of Frontier Missions 10 (July 1993), 126.

this is the reason why they are included in the religious category.¹⁷³

One grouping of sermons are called "ted nitarn" (sermons which relate to stories), and these sermons have implications not only for the villagers' understanding of the morality and ethics of Buddhism but also represent the focus of genuine audience participation and a channel of cultural transmission beyond the narrowly religious.¹⁷⁴

The "ted nitarn" are often concerned with the life of Buddha. But there is also a sermon type which features primarily local and regional myths and folktales. They consist of reading and explaining stories and are given on the occasion of temple festivals or are reread by monks to lay-men during the Lent season. These stories are particularly appreciated by the listeners. On merit-making occasions, it is the villagers who choose the sermon they would like to hear. Invariably, a story of the category myth/folktale is chosen.¹⁷⁵ The linguistic form of these stories is local dialectical. Villagers may themselves

¹⁷³S. J. Tambiah, "Literacy in a Buddhist Village in North-East Thailand," ed. Jack Goody, Literacy in Traditional Societies (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 1968), 91.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 102.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 103.

possess copies of "nitarn" and read them at funeral wakes to entertain mourners and guests.¹⁷⁶

2. Stories in Modern Thai Times

Apart from the use of stories in and around the temple, I could not find much proof that story telling is common any more in Thailand. Materialism makes people busy in their jobs and most of the young families tend to move to the bigger towns. While mothers and fathers are both working, children, from a very early age onward, are put into kindergarten for eight or more hours a day. There children learn to read and write (starting at the age of two) and for a break have some exercises, their meals or a nap. Grandparents often live far away and uncles and aunts are as busy as the children's parents. Only in the close-knit society of a village setting is there enough time for stories at any age level. But, as mentioned above, story telling will go on mainly in and around the temple, the social center of such a place.

As noted in chapter two we find the use of stories in schojol textbooks. There, stories are employed for the teaching of values held dear by Thai society. Lately, many new children's stories have been published on the national

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 104.

book market, adorned with beautiful pictures, the settings partly typical Thai, partly Western. However, because of the quality of the books, they are expensive. Only parents who are aware of the positive influence those books can have on their children and who have the necessary money will purchase them.

Stories for adults have not changed very much during the last decades. The themes still center around love, war, social critique, and comics. Usually, easy reading is preferred, as tired people are looking for something to relax with. Still, the felt need among the busy working people might not be so much for more readable stories but rather for more money.

D. The Model

In the following paragraphs a model of contextualization, helpful for teaching biblical themes in Thailand, will be introduced. The model is a set of stories on the biblical account of creation written for Christians and non-Christians from a Buddhist background.

1. Why This Model?

Felt need always has an underlying real need. Materialism like other "-isms", cause a void in peoples' lives due

to a focus on aid from other sources rather than their Creator. Most of the time, people are trapped by these "-isms", and there is very little help for them other than to continue following the way they already have started on. But God is interested in the people He has made. He wants everybody to know His good will and perfect plan for mankind. At the same time, He has provided all the means necessary for us to follow Him and make His glory known.

I am convinced that every person in this world has the right to know what God has written in His word and thus should be given the chance to know God. Each person then can exercise his free will and decide for himself whether he wants to follow this King of kings or whether he wants to go on with his own life in his own way. But a person has to be given the chance to consciously agree or disagree with what he learns about God from the Bible.¹⁷⁷

2. What this Model is All About

In this model the first four stories of a series on God's plan of salvation will be presented. The series as a whole depicts the progressive revelation of God and His plan of salvation. Each story shoulders a part of this development. The first four stories are concerned with creation

¹⁷⁷John 6:45.

and apart from following the biblical account they establish a picture of God's personality and character in the mind of the reader/listener.

I have cast a certain type of story with the goal to help the Thai get to know and understand who God is (His character), how He acts in history (His works since the beginning) and what he has resolved to do for mankind. This is meant to help Christians in Thailand who oftentimes have only a fragmentary grasp of what is presented to them in the Bible. With the help of these first four stories they are invited to initially get to know the God of the Bible and learn to appreciate Him and His intentions for mankind.

At the same time these stories have also been written with Thai non-Christians in mind. For the Thai, Christianity is a Western religion and the approaches which were used and have been perpetuated up till today by missionaries and nationals alike are not helping Thais to think differently. The idea for the use of these stories with non-Christians is to let them have fun in reading the various accounts and at the same time prepare their hearts for the time when they will meet with a witness to the Christian faith. The stories are meant to create a longing for real, dependable truth in life as well as to help them discover that there is a gaping void in their hearts and to stimulate a yearning for the One who can fill it.

The first set of stories were written in the German vernacular. From there they were translated into Thai. The stories recorded here are translations from the Thai texts which are to be found in appendix 2.

The texts at hand have been tested with Christians in various stages of growth in the Christian life. It has been found that new babes in Christ enjoyed them tremendously stating that they got to know the God of the Universe and that they were greatly encouraged and eager to trust Him. Tired Christians, weary from their work in the vineyard of the Lord, have found these stories to give them reassurance and reported a renewed and deeper commitment to God as well as a fresh pride in the privilege of belonging to the Almighty who has a good plan for their lives and that of mankind. The stories have yet to be tested with non-Christians.

3. Techniques Applied to the Stories

One major attempt in writing the stories was to not use any Christian or "churchy" vocabulary. The reason for this is that I want to enable the reader/listener to take a neutral approach to the stories. He should not from the start categorize it as "Christian" or "Western," but just read or listen to it for the story's sake. So the names for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have

been changed to names which describe one of the bearer's main personality traits. For God the Father, several names have been used as is done in the Bible. Biblical terms have been paraphrased and explained to the reader.

Each one of the stories is cast in Thai thought patterns as we know them from the Ramakien: the seen and the unseen go hand in hand and are, in a literary form, made visible. Oftentimes, I have embellished [facts by descriptions which fit either the situation and explained some underlying thoughts or unobtrusively raised and answered questions which the Thai might have. At every stage of the presentation I have attempted, as far as possible, to see the text at hand not only in its immediate context but in its wider application in light of the whole Bible.

Except for the first story, which has been brought together from various parts of the Bible, the biblical accounts have been followed verse by verse. An exegesis of Genesis 1 and 2 are to be found in appendix 1.

4. Story One - "The Pre-Creational Story"

a. Introduction

In the following section the first story from the series on God's plan of salvation will be presented. The

ideas for this piece are taken from many different parts of the Bible. I found it necessary to put this story together for my Buddhist friends, as they have no idea or perception of God as we know Him from the Bible. It was my intention to introduce God's personality and some of His characteristics. As a basis for further stories I saw fit to explain the purpose for the creation of angels and of mankind. At the same time I wanted to state clearly that God has planned everything before the beginning of the world and that He cannot be surprised by anything that happens. These facts are in stark contrast to what Buddhists think about the God of the Christians, because according to their understanding, God has created this world in ignorance of the consequences and takes no responsibility for it.

The idea of the Trinity as explained here does not seem to pose a problem to the Thai thinking, as Thais readily accept the fact that in the Ramakien King Rama, living on earth, is an incarnation of the god Indra, who is living in the heavenlies.

As mentioned before, I made use of the opportunity to explain some facts about angels as they will later act as part of the communication and power system in the unseen world. Also, some of the fallen angels are the "spirits" which plague the Thai people today. However, this idea will

only be introduced in story five, which is not presented in this paper.

The purpose of the creation of mankind, their foreseen defilement, the necessity of their redemption and the substitutional sacrifice of Jesus Christ covers a big part of story one. But the development of the theme is presented in vague terms in the same way that nothing is clearly explained in the Old Testament about the plan which is about to unfold.

Altogether, this story is supposed to introduce the God of the universe with His loving and caring thoughts and, if possible, to describe some of His holiness and surrounding glory.

b. The Pre-Creational Story

In unfathomable dimensions surrounded by a magnificent sphere of light lives one whose name is "the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace." No one can penetrate the luminescence surrounding him and his face cannot be seen. Glistening inaccessibility encloses his throne.¹⁷⁸

A long time before the world systems were created there was the one who is called the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace. He was before anything else came into

¹⁷⁸Job 37:22; 1 Tim 6:16.

existence.¹⁷⁹ His beginning is not known. He himself is the beginning of all things and he has the power to create whatever he desires.¹⁸⁰ Everything comes from him and without his help nothing can exist.¹⁸¹

The "Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace" is in truth a single being. Yet at the same time he is three personalities with different characteristics. Each one is perfect in himself. However, as the Great Three in One they are an flawless unity.¹⁸² One of them is called "the Father of Life" for he has given life to every being.¹⁸³ The other two, "The Mighty Word"¹⁸⁴ and "The Great Revealer"¹⁸⁵ are always seen in direct relation to the Father of Life but also to each other. Never does anyone of them undertake anything on his own accord and they act in total agreement with each other.¹⁸⁶ Despite the fact that they are three different personalities they are in a real sense only one

¹⁷⁹Ps 90:2

¹⁸⁰Ps 115:3.

¹⁸¹Ps 104:27-30.

¹⁸²John 16:13-15.

¹⁸³Gen 2:7.

¹⁸⁴John 1:1.

¹⁸⁵John 15:26.

¹⁸⁶John 14:31.

because they think and feel the same way and intend to do the same thing.¹⁸⁷ They complement each other and even depend on each other to reach their common goals.¹⁸⁸ They know each other to the core and as a unity they are so complete that they have no need for anything or anybody else.¹⁸⁹

The presence of the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace transcends every space inside and outside our world systems.¹⁹⁰ He is the absolutely pure one¹⁹¹ in a threefold personality. His purity is demonstrated by his wisdom by which he founded the earth¹⁹² and by the righteousness and mercy by which he rules everything. He does not change. The Great Three in One is neither subject to the variation of times nor does he have to succumb to impermanence. He is without beginning and without end.¹⁹³ The truth is that the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace is the mystery of a being who surpasses mankind by far.¹⁹⁴ He incomparably exceeds man's ability to think and

¹⁸⁷John 5:19,30; 6:38; 7:16.

¹⁸⁸John 14:26.

¹⁸⁹Acts 17:24-25.

¹⁹⁰Col 1:17.

¹⁹¹1 Sam 2:2.

¹⁹²Prov 3:19.

¹⁹³Rev 4:9.

¹⁹⁴Isa 40:25.

to understand¹⁹⁵ and, whether we accept him or not, he is also very real.¹⁹⁶

Due to the fact that the Great Three in One creates everything, he is also the one to say what should exist and what should cease existing.¹⁹⁷ This is why he is also called "Father of Life" because he has given life to everything that is.

This story tells about the decision of the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace to express himself in creation. At that time only the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace existed. He had not yet revealed himself in making the universe. In just a short while he would call many different world systems into being as well as a host of heavenly servants to be around him. Some of them would later on receive responsibility for the various world systems.¹⁹⁸ There would be a real hierarchy among the heavenly host with kingdoms, dominions, authorities and powers¹⁹⁹ and each servant leader would have other servants to assist him.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵Isa 55:9.

¹⁹⁶Rev 2:8.

¹⁹⁷Deut 32:39.

¹⁹⁸Luke 4:6.

¹⁹⁹Eph 1:21.

²⁰⁰Matt 25:41.

It was concerning those heavenly servants as a whole that the Great Three in One in the form of the Father of Life now spoke to The Mighty Word and The Great Revealer, who are both within him, "We will create them resembling us in having a personality and being endowed with holiness. Personality they need in order to fellowship with us and among themselves; and holiness will empower them to enjoy this fellowship.²⁰¹ They will have an intellect, emotions and a will. The will they should have in order to exercise a power of choice concerning their continued subjection to us, the Great Three in One."

"O yes, dear Father of Life, let us create a vast host of heavenly servants who will worship you for evermore and serve you in the administration of your will,"²⁰² The Great Revealer was excited. "They shall rejoice in the beauty of holiness and in their relationship with us."²⁰³ At your bidding they shall congregate before you²⁰⁴ and they shall execute your commandments with swift obedience and delight.²⁰⁵ In wonder let them behold our creative works²⁰⁶

²⁰¹C. Fred Dickason, Angels, Elect and Evil (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1975), 32.

²⁰²Heb 1:7.

²⁰³Ps 29:2.

²⁰⁴Job 1:6; 2:1.

²⁰⁵Heb 1:7.

and reflect your immeasurable wisdom and power, O Father of Life."²⁰⁷

And The Mighty Word added: "Let us create them to be primarily spirit in nature, yet they shall move from place to place²⁰⁸ and not be omnipresent like us. Their power shall be greater than man's,²⁰⁹ who is to be created at a later time. Our heavenly servants will even control some elements of nature.²¹⁰ But their authority shall be limited²¹¹ and they will be in need of assistance.²¹² Also, they will understand our purposes and our program concerning the ages, to the extent to which we will give them insight. How beautiful our celestial host will be in their holiness! In loving dedication they shall ascribe all glory, honor and power to the Father of Life,²¹³ from whom they have received their life and to whom they shall be responsible in every

²⁰⁶Job 38:7.

²⁰⁷Ezech 28:12-15.

²⁰⁸Dan 9:21-23.

²⁰⁹2 Pet 2:11.

²¹⁰Rev 7:1; 16:8.

²¹¹Job 1:12; 2:6.

²¹²Dan 10:13.

²¹³Rev 4:8-9.

respect.²¹⁴ Praise be to you, O Father of Life, for you have awesome thoughts and plans for creation!"

Together The Mighty Word and The Great Revealer joined in a magnificent praise glorifying the Father of Life and as one they rejoiced together. They revelled in their indwelling power and might to create and they looked forward expectantly to the time when the heavenly host would come into being. For them these celestial servants were already reality because they knew that everything, they resolved as the Great Three in One, in due time it would come to pass.

"There will be some of my heavenly servants who will decide to cancel their submission to us." It was the Father of Life in the Great Three in One who spoke again. "This will be a grave incident because they are created for loyalty. They will miss their calling if they do not submit to the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace. However, due to my justice by which I have entrusted their responsibilities to them it will require legal enactment to evict them from their positions. This will be done at a time which I will foresee in my righteousness."

"What about that planet, called Earth, to which those unfaithful heavenly servants will be banished?" The Mighty Word and the Great Revealer wanted the Father of Life to

²¹⁴Ezech 28:12-19; Matt 25:41; John 16:11.

recount their plans again. "Isn't it true that after their expulsion from the heavenly realms there will be horrible chaos on the Earth, reflecting the defilement of the unfaithful servants?"

"That's right," the Father of Life conceded. "But together we will remodel that planet with our inherent drive to create. Around it we will establish a sphere which will enable life of many kinds to exist upon it. Mankind will live there and we will entrust and enable them to lawfully win back planet Earth from the unfaithful heavenly servants. This means," the Father of Life explained, "that the human beings shall conquer that planet, the Earth, step by step and shall rule it as kings."²¹⁵

Even though the Mighty Word and the Great Revealer, being one with the Father of Life and knew all about the details of the Father's plans they followed the recounting with fascination. "A counter-empire²¹⁶ to that²¹⁷ of the unfaithful heavenly hosts!," Great Revealer was excited.

Then the Mighty Word said thoughtfully: "If mankind is acting together with us in overcoming the unfaithful heavenly host and in the repossessing of planet Earth, then

²¹⁵1 Pet 2:9.

²¹⁶Col 2:15.

²¹⁷Matt 4:8-9; Eph 2:2.

they better understand our thoughts and plans. Also their hearts and will must yield to us in perfect trust."

"So shall it be," said the Father of Life. "Created by us, the Great Three in One, they shall be our representatives on Earth. They will resemble us in that they will be intelligent beings with a will and emotions.²¹⁸ In order to enjoy fellowship with us they will also be holy. They will understand our thoughts and our plans. Concerning their hearts and their will, they shall be free to submit to us in complete trust. You might almost want to compare them to our heavenly host which is still to be created. Yet mankind will in a very special way be equipped for the thrilling task before them: they shall be kings and rule the Earth; as dedicated priests of the Most High, they shall serve us faithfully; and in their role as prophets they are to proclaim the greatness and majesty of the Great Three in One as a testimony to the unfaithful heavenly host."²¹⁹

Then the Father of Life continued: "Yes, I will give a free will to mankind.²²⁰ Mentally and also spiritually they will be able to decide each for themselves whether they want to be kings and priests and prophets for the one who has

²¹⁸Gen 1:26.

²¹⁹1 Pet 2:9.

²²⁰1 Cor 6:12.

given them life and breath or whether they would rather follow their own ways. However, if they should decide against our plans they will have missed the goal of their life. As a result there will be a deep yearning in their hearts and they will never reach true gladness or satisfaction, should they not reconsider their decision and be willing to submit to us. Out of all the creatures which we are about to call into existence only those who live in an unbroken relationship with us will be truly happy. This requires that they let themselves be used in the task for which we have created them."²²¹

The Mighty Word and the Great Revealer intoned a mighty song of praise in honor of the Father of Life. Together they celebrated their exalted plans as the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace and they were at one with each other concerning every detail of creation. The Great Three in One knew that all which was already now a reality in his very thoughts would come true at the time appointed by him. As the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace, the Father of Life, the Mighty Word and the Great Revealer would be present when the various details of creation emanated into existence, yes, as the Great Three in One's threefold

²²¹Ps 1:1-3; Eph 2:10.

personality they would help each other to bring it to perfect completion!²²²

The voice of the Father of Life as a part of the Great Three in One sounded heavy and sad when he spoke again to the Mighty Word and the Great Revealer. "As you know, humanity will turn against us and follow the fallen heavenly host in conscious disobedience."

The Mighty Word and the Great Revealer knew the thoughts of the Father of Life. "They will turn away from us, removing themselves from their high calling for a time. When this happens they will be like sheep without a shepherd."²²³

A deep, pained groan was heard from the Father of Life. What would eventually happen in still faraway times was already reality to him. "O my people! How you have plunged yourselves in a tragedy which you are unable to turn for the better! My heart is grieved with intense pain when I think of you going astray. I consider your infirmity in body and soul, your confusion in spirit, your inability to turn around and come back to me. You choose death and nobody can save you.²²⁴ Like blind men you grope in the dark.²²⁵ I am

²²²Prov 8:27-30; Isa 40:25-26; Col 1:16.

²²³Isa 53:6.

²²⁴Rom 5:12.

²²⁵Isa 59:10.

calling on you all day long and stretch out my arms to save you.²²⁶ But you stagger past me and follow the wicked, fallen heavenly servant who drags you away to throw you into the abyss.²²⁷ I want to help you but you tear away and follow your own craving.²²⁸ - Enough! Yes, it is true that the Earth will be the place where the disobedient heavenly host will be held until the day of their final damnation. But even there their rule shall be taken from them in the way of justice inherent to the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace.²²⁹ We shall not regret our decision to have created mankind. Their destination is to rule as kings on Earth while serving the Most High as a holy nation.²³⁰ They can realize this call at any time as there will be a way for them to be purified from their unfaithfulness so that they can approach us in our holiness.²³¹ The faithfulness of the Great Three in One will take care of all their defilements so that not a single one of their trespasses will be remembered.²³² ~~This~~ will come to pass because humankind is a

²²⁶Isa 65:2.

²²⁷Prov 27:20.

²²⁸Jas 4:3.

²²⁹Rev 11:15.

²³⁰Exod 19:6.

²³¹Ezek 37 :23 .

²³²Isa 43:25.

different sort of creation from the heavenly servants whose unfaithfulness cannot be forgiven. Yes, I, the Father of Life, who is one with the Mighty Word and the Great Revealer in the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace, will cleanse away the mire of rebellion against me²³³ and those whose hearts want to yield to me I will clothe in the garment of my perfect righteousness.²³⁴ Thus they will be enabled to once again take up their office as kings of the Most High, serving him and proclaiming his holiness. My Mighty Word will bring their redemption to pass at the appointed time and my Great Revealer will guarantee the establishment of my victory. I, the Father of Life, promise this in the authority of the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace. So shall it be."

Again the most magnificent sounds of worship throughout the light-permeated world of the Great Three in One was to be heard. The Father of Life himself joined the Mighty Word and the Great Revealer and together they celebrated the victory which was to come.

It was the Mighty Word who now spoke: "Your justice will remain forever, O Father of Life. By your power the world systems will stay balanced, not only in themselves but

²³³1 Cor 6:11.

²³⁴Rev 3:5.

also in relationship to one another, because you keep them that way.²³⁵ Safely anchored in your unshakable truth are the invisible pillars of the world systems which you have established in immense dimensions.²³⁶ You never swerve from anything you have decided upon in your justice and thus are always faithful to yourself.²³⁷ It is your decision to legally entrust one of the heavenly servants and his host with the authority over planet Earth.²³⁸ We know that this servant will choose to become unfaithful and many others of the heavenly host together with him. But in your justice, by which you have authorized them to be responsible for that planet, you will have them remain in their offices. The mandate for mankind will be to act according to the law of the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace in taking planet Earth from the unfaithful servants. Any creature or being undertaking this task has to be holy and blameless.²³⁹ That: is how the Great Three in One has laid it down in his statutes.²⁴⁰ Man could be that being. We know already now

²³⁵Jer 33:25.

²³⁶Ps 104:5.

²³⁷2 Tim 2:13.

²³⁸Luke 4:6.

²³⁹Eph 5:26-27; 1 Pet 1:18-19.

²⁴⁰1 Pet 3:18.

that the unfaithful heavenly host will do; everything to thwart humanity and make them divert from the task set before them. The unfaithful servants will finally succeed in their evil plans and render mankind unable to be dedicated to their duty which the Great Three in One had ordained for them. The human beings will suffer greatly from their decision to follow the ruler of the Earth rather than their creator. Due to their disobedience their minds will be shut against the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace and they will not be able to understand his ways.²⁴¹ Their rebellion will make them unfit for the task set before them. The ones who should fight to conquer now need to be saved themselves. But you, O Father of Life, have devised a wonderful way out which is to come into force through your righteousness. O Father of Life, here I am, one with you in the Great Three in One, ready to serve you in dedicated obedience."

It took a while before the Father of Life answered. Then he spoke with tender-loving emotion: "How precious and dear you are to me, my beloved Mighty Word and Great Revealer! Being the Great Three in One we are inseparable in Spirit. We always want the same things and strive for the same goal. The Great Three in One is a person and at

²⁴¹Eph 4:18.

the same time we are three. Because we are just and there is no evil in us²⁴² we will rescue mankind in the manner we have already decided upon. Yes, the Father of Life who has instituted justice and is justice himself, will redeem disobedient humanity from the power of evil for the price set up by the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace beforehand.²⁴³ This price is exceedingly costly and the Great Three in One will suffer from his own justice. - Please, don't look at me so pleadingly, O Mighty Word and Great Revealers. I will grant your request. But oh, the pain it causes to tear you from my heart! Your separation from me as a pure sacrifice is the price to redeem the whole of determinedly disobedient mankind. Oh, my Mighty Word! Oh, my Great Revealers! - Surely, it shall come to pass in the same way as we, the Great Three in One, have decided already. In this action of my mercy and love I yield to you, filling your places in our plan."

Then the voice of the Father of Life broke into a triumphant description of the vision before him: "See, my Mighty Word shall be victorious. He shall be highly exalted. But before this can come to pass he will have to suffer immensely from those whom he has created. Despised

²⁴²John 7:18.

²⁴³Rev 5:9.

and in great pain he will be the object of repulsive mocking and extreme rejection by the people. Sorjrow and bitter grief over the hardened hearts of mankind will weaken him. Yet he will bear the transgressions of his transgressors to the point that he will intercede for them and lay down his pure life which has never done any wrong, in place of those who caused his pain. He will give his life as an offering for the iniquities of mankind. His death will cause him to have innumerable descendants because many will realize that in him their creator has subjected himself to them. After his soul has labored hard he will return to our sphere of magnificent light and the plan of the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace will have been accomplished through him. But due to what he has experienced he, the faithful one, will cause many to be counted righteous because he bears their rebelliousness. Because he has given his life even to death and was counted as a criminal among them all, he will overcome those who fight against the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace. The Father of Life himself will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great. This will be his prize and triumph after he has poured himself out to death and borne the rudeness and indifference of many towards the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴Isa 52:13; 53:3-12.

Great jubilation resounded in the vast sphere of light and the Mighty Word and the Great Revealer sang: "Your will, O Father of Life, may it be done at all times. May you receive honor and glory from everything which is and which is to come. You have planned a great and public display of your majesty and splendor, of your incomparable magnificent greatness and perfectness.²⁴⁵ Your plans are good, pleasing and perfect.²⁴⁶ Triumphant in patience and mercy, in righteousness and incorruptibility you have prepared for yourself a people of royal representatives who will serve you reverently for all times.²⁴⁷ This is what you, O Father of Life, have planned and what we, the Great Threjp in One, have agreed upon. Your faithfulness and loving-kindness will start their triumphant victory and no one can prevent it from happening. May you be praised and honored, you who have all wisdom, O Father of Life. Yours is the glory for all times!"

This exultation and jubilant praise went on for times uncountable and is still to be heard in the sphere of magnificent light up to this day.

²⁴⁵Col 2:15.

²⁴⁶Rom 12:2.

²⁴⁷Rev 1:6.

5. Story Two - "The Creation Story"

a. Introduction

The second story is concerned with the account of creation as related in Genesis one. In this story I have kept as close to the text as possible and inserted only a few dots of embellishment in order to give the reader/listener a breather from the report once in a while. However, I choose to follow the theory of the re-organization/regeneration of planet Earth as this provides a good flow for the connecting stories. It will also be observed that I introduced Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as actively taking part in the process of creation as is more overtly stated in other parts of the Bible.²⁴⁸

At the end of the account I make reference to the Bible thus encouraging Christians to look the story up there and alerting non-Christians to the fact that it is not all fiction that is being talked about here but that there is a connection to reality.

²⁴⁸Prov 8:27-30; John 1:1-11; Col 1:15-16.

b. The Creation Story²⁴⁹

Outside the world systems which are known to us, before the ages began, the Father of Life once called his heavenly host to congregate around him. These celestial beings held their service to the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace with high exaltation of him. At all times a myriad of them surrounded him with worship and praise. The wisdom of the Great Three in One filled them with deep wonder and his justice and holiness generated reverence of such a kind that they only dared to come to him stooping down with awed hearts.

It was a magnificent glory which surrounded the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace. This time the Father of Life had called them to share his thoughts with them.

"You faithful servants of mine," out of the blinding sphere of light the voice of the Father of Life sounded like a mighty rush of wind. "You heavenly host who have served me for ages past, rejoice with me! As the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace we have in our unfathomable wisdom decided to create life on planet Earth - life manifold; in shape and character. Each form, color or inherent strength will bear our seal and it will give us great joy to

²⁴⁹Gen 1:1 - 2:3.

see the newly created variety act together in a unified wholesome oneness."

There was not a sound to be heard when the Father of Life finished his speech. At first only here and there but then mightily swelling the celestial beings broke into a new song of jubilee glorifying the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace:

"Glory and honor and praise be to the Only Sovereign,
the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace!

Mighty is he to create whatever he wills.

To speak and to make happen,

to command and to create

is all the same with him!

With our own eyes we shall see

the miracles wrought by the Most High.

He has told us about them already

and it all will come to pass

exactly in the way he has decreed it

in his own heart.

His will is good, pleasant and perfect.

We worship him and commit ourselves
to him for whatever work he is about to do."

And while they were still praising they could see how the Father of Life together with the Word and Great Revealer went on to put their decision into practice. Brimming with

life the Great Revealer hovered over the waters which covered planet Earth while the Father of Life engaged the Mighty Word to give the first command into the darkness of chaos: "There shall be light!" And light shone on planet Earth. And the Father of Life saw that this light was perfect. So he separated the light from the darkness and called the light "daytime" and the darkness "nighttime". Thus out of evening and morning there came into existence what we call "day". This happened for the first time in the history of planet Earth.

After this the Father of Life said: "There shall be an area in the midst of the waters which shall separate the waters from each other." And the Father of Life created that area and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above it. That is how the Father of Life formed the dome which we see above and the air which makes it possible for us to live. - From evening and morning the second day had unfolded and come into existence.

On the third day the Father decreed the water under the dome to retreat to certain places so that the dry land could be seen. He named the dry land "earth" and the gathering of waters "sea". Then he saw that it was good and he liked it that way. After this he called plants into being, small and big. Each one he gave a different form so that they could

be distinguished and all of them were able to bear seeds or to multiply by sprouts. The Father of Life enjoyed the variety of plants created and together with the Mighty Word and Great Revealer he delighted in their creation's completeness.

On the next day the Father of Life ordered the stars to come into being: a big light, the sun, for the day and a smaller one, the moon, for the night. Their task was to separate the day from the night as well as to mark days and seasons and years. The Father of Life himself gave them their places in the world system which included planet Earth. - The Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace was thoroughly pleased with the creation of this fourth day and he called it "good" in every respect.

"Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth and under the big dome," the Father of Life commanded the next day. And he made the great sea monsters and the long eel, the jolly squid and all the other brothers and sisters of the creatures living in the sea. He also called birds into being and whatever else with wings bustles about in the air. What a beautiful sight and joyful noise they all made! The Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace was delighted about his creation because he saw that it was good. Then the Father of Life blessed the new creatures and said: "You creatures in the sea, be

fruitful and multiply and fill the waters! And you, birds, multiply on the earth!" From evening and morning the fifth day had been completed.

On the sixth day the Mighty Word of the Father of Life could be heard again: "Let the earth bring forth animals: cattle and creeping creatures as well as beasts, each after its own kind." And so it happened. To each one the Father of Life himself gave its form, fur or skin and feature. And he saw that this creation, too, was good and he was very pleased. Then he said: "Let us make man with characteristics close to our own. They shall be able to think, feel and will like we do ourselves. Their task shall be to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds under the sky, over the cattle in the field and over anything that has life on earth. The whole earth shall be under their dominion." So the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace created man. He took himself to be the example when he created them to be his representatives and made them male and female. Then he blessed them and said: "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. You are to rule over the fish in the sea, over the birds under the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. See here, I hand over to you every plant producing seeds and every tree whose fruits contain seeds. This shall be food for you. All the other green plants are food for the animals

which move on earth." When the Great Three in One looked at all he had created he was extremely pleased because he saw that it was very good.

On the following day the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace had completed all the creational work which he had set out to do and he now retreated into his rest. He had worked a full measure each of the six days. Now he blessed the seventh day and decreed that mankind and their cattle²⁵⁰ should join him in his rest on the seventh day of every week in the same manner. This way a remembrance and an ongoing participation of his nature was made available to mankind. Every man who regularly enjoys it during his life on earth will ultimately be fully absorbed into it once his life on earth is over.

Thus the heavens and the earth were regenerated and made into a habitat for man and animals and plants. This was done by the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace who, by his great power and might, created every living being.

The story concerning the creation of anything on the earth has been retold here according to how it is written in the Book of Life and it can be looked up there as well.

²⁵⁰Exod 20:10.

6. Story Three - "The Creation Of Man"

a. Introduction

The story on the creation of man needs some explanation for the reader who has always been wondering why there are "two creation stories". This account is directly linked up with story two and it is told as if looking with a magnifying glass at the creation of man as a part of the whole act of creation. Story three is retold here in order to explain the purpose and goal of the creation of man and woman. Learning to see their existence this way will all be news to the Buddhist reader.

b. The Creation of Man²⁵¹

This story happened during creation time. The Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace had already called the plants into being. But he had not yet commanded the rain to fall, so their seeds still rested in the fields. Also, there was nobody to cultivate the ground yet. But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.

It was on the sixth day of the creational works of the Great Three in One²⁵² when the Father of Life took earth from

²⁵¹Gen 2:4-24.

²⁵²Gen 1:26-27.

the ground, formed it and built a man. He breathed into his nostrils his own breath, the breath of life, and the man became a living being. He was the Great Three in One's final and most delicate creation.

Thus was perfected the re-organization of planet Earth and the creation of various entities which the Great Three in One had set his mind to call into being. In all of it the innermost being of the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace could be sensed and seen. The creation of man was highlight and goal at the same time and the Great Three in One rejoiced on eventually beholding him after all the time he had spend thinking about him and planning for him in love. We remember, the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace had made that decision many time periods ago out there in the sphere of magnificent light - the decision to create mankind who would be gifted in a threefold way with intellect, emotions and a will. The threefold task of the human beings was designed to represent the Great Three in One on Earth, ruling there as kings, to bring glory to the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace and to serve him by multiplying themselves, having dominion over all the animals and taking care of the land. In all of this the Great Three in One used himself as an example in creating mankind. The task entrusted to him renders man prominent in all of creation and bestows purpose and its realization to his life.

After the breath of the Father of Life had turned the man into a living being the man looked around. He sat on dark soil which shone from moisture and the blue air arched over him. Not a single blade of grass was yet to be seen and no tree or shrub embellished the landscape. The animals still hid as the bareness of nature was not attractive for them.

Then the Great Three in One planted a garden and put the man there. For his own and man's delight he used this garden to display the whole realm of beauty found in creation. It was a place of abundance and bliss. Here it sprouted and blossomed and it was pure joy to let the eyes glide over the soft hills and lovely meadows, to rest at - murmuring brooks and to relish the cool of the woods. Like a silver-colored ribbon the stream ran majestically through the land and further south split into four big rivers. Blue mountains in the far north drew the border to this peaceful picture.

"You shall live in this garden and feel at home here," the Father of Life said to the man. "It is your privilege to cultivate it and take good care of it. I have provided you with everything you need: food from plants, shrubs and trees, physical strength for the task before you and satisfaction in the success of your labor. Everything in this garden you may use as belonging to you, it is under your

command. However, follow me to the center of the garden. There I have to explain something to you." In the middle of the orchard the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace had planted the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now the Father of Life and the man went to the orchard together. The various trees there with their delightful fruits looked inviting. The Father of Life said: "All of these trees are at your disposal and I want you to enjoy their fruit. All of them - except for these two trees here." The Father of Life stepped forward towards two trees which stood a little separate from the other ones at the very center of the orchard. "I have to forbid you to eat the fruit of both these trees. This one of Life put his hand on a strong branch of the one closer to them, "is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You shall not eat from it for if you do so you shall surely die. I tell you this today so that you can be obedient to my commandments." The man fell down and worshipped the Father of Life. He had heard and understood what he had been told. His heart was drawn close to his maker in reverent dedication. He resolved that he wanted to serve him in perfect faithfulness and that his life should be a constant praise honoring his creator.

The Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace decided that it was not good that the man should live alone. "I

will make a helper to complement him," he thought. Then the Father of Life brought to the man all the animals he had formed from the earth and all the birds under the sky. It was the man's task and privilege to give them their names and thus to associate them with his own surroundings. But among all those animals there was not a helper found who would have been suitable for the man.

So the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. Then he took from part of his side and closed the flesh up at that place. What Jhe had taken the Great Three in One fashioned into a woman and brought her to the man. When the man saw her he shouted for joy, welcomed her and said: "Now, this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh! I will call her woman because she has been taken out of man." And the man rejoiced in the woman who had been given to him by the Father of Life. He loved her for what she WAS: a miracle of creativity from the hand of the creator, the ultimate completion of the re-organization and re-creation of planet Earth. The woman was a human being like himself, created to complement him and on the other hand dependent on his consideration and support. Mutual understanding and delight in each other were the hallmarks of their relationship.

The report on the creation of man in the Book of Life closes here with the words: "For this cause a man shall

leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." This means: the strong affection a man feels for a woman will cause him to leave the persons who have up to then been closest to him and to forsake the security their fellowship entailed. He severs the powerful physical and emotional attachments in order to establish with his wife a new, solid partnership for life in marriage. Due to their loving devotion to each other they form a new spiritual unity. In this all-encompassing personal fellowship they practice a main feature of humanity: the devotion of mutual support.

We just heard how the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace established the first two human beings as kings, servants and proclaimers of his glory and might on planet Earth. The man and the woman were faithful in their task to multiply and to subdue and cultivate the good land which the Father of Life had entrusted to them. They ruled over the animals and used many of them to help with the chores. In reverent dedication the man and the woman served the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace, causing him to delight in and showering his creation with any good thing. In turn his creatures praised him by growing and prospering so that the glory of the Great Three in One resounded from one end of the Earth to the other.

7. Story Four - "Man In The Garden"

a. Introduction

Story four describes man in Eden, his majestic rule over creation but also man as the learner and discoverer, the pioneer. As man is growing into his God-given role as ruler and king, his experience is that the task is too big to be taken on by himself alone and that God's relationship with man is what he needs. This relationship is a delight to both of them.

In order to introduce the Buddhist listener/reader to the worth of the individual in the sight of God and God's loving and caring relationship to man, the story is put together from various parts of the Bible but clearly has its roots in Genesis 2 and partly in Genesis 3.

In Eden the balanced harmony of God, man and nature is to be found. The story describes man's longing for harmony with God for which he, after being dispelled from the garden, will search all his life until he finds it in Jesus Christ. The story is also a picture of "the paradise to come" when God will create a new heaven and a new earth. This event, yet to happen, is described in the last story of the series on God's plan of salvation.

b. Man in the Garden

In the garden which the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace had planted²⁵³ the man and the woman were very happy and so was the Great Three in One whose presence was always with them.²⁵⁴

The man and the woman were both naked and not ashamed.²⁵⁵ They were growing into their responsibilities as rulers over the animals whom they trained to help using their respective abilities.²⁵⁶ It was a joy for the Great Three in One to watch how mankind made their own discoveries and to see them draw conclusions from their observations. For example, one day rain made them look for shelter and soon they built their first lean-to hut under a tree, made from a layered jumble of branches and some enormous leaves.

In the cool of the day they would walk with the Father of Life through the garden,²⁵⁷ discussing and evaluating and planning.²⁵⁸ "Tomorrow I should get finished with putting the hedge up," the man remarked as they approached the new

²⁵³Gen 2:8,15.

²⁵⁴Matt 28:20.

²⁵⁵Gen 2:25.

²⁵⁶Gen 1:26,28.

²⁵⁷Gen 3:8a.

²⁵⁸Exod 33:11.

enclosure. "Then I can think about what we could plant there." - "What would you like to plant?" the Father of Life asked. "Well, we have the water close by, so how about some of the plants with their ears of grain which you, O Father of Life, have planted along the river? Those taste delicious." - "Rice, you mean?" the Father of Life showed his excitement. "That's a good idea. However, you will have to form a bed in the land which can take ten inches of water and then break up and turn over the ground before you can scatter the first seeds." This kept the man busy for quite some days. The labor was especially taxing as he also had to train a waterbuffalo to help him.²⁵⁹

The woman gathered fruit and ears of grain.²⁶⁰ The Father of Life had showed her how to make a fire and she would toast the seeds before she called the man for a meal. One day she contemplated the powder each grain contained. Shouldn't it be possible to separate the powder from the husks; by pounding the seeds? She tried it and thus produced flour. Mixing it with water and baking it on a hot stone made crisp waffles and a delicious surprise for the man. He praised her for her good insights and went about preparing two stones, a flat one and another one to role on it, and

²⁵⁹Ps 8:6-8.

²⁶⁰Gen 2:18 .

called his construction "a mill". The woman could easily operate it and he enjoyed watching her making flour.

The Father of Life had taught the man how to manufacture an ax and how to handle it. Sometimes the man could be found considering wood, stone and strong plant ligaments or the hollow compartments of a bamboo stem, trying to think of ways these gifts of nature could be put to use.²⁶¹ But the best time for good results from his craftsmanship came when need caused a request. With the encouragement of the Father of Life and the delight and wonder of the woman the man was able to produce many helpful tools for their daily use.²⁶²

The Father of Life was very pleased with the woman and the man and he blessed the work of their hands.²⁶³ It gladdened him tremendously to observe his two human beings using their intellect in the caring for and keeping of the garden and ruling over the animals. Both of them reflected their creator's wisdom in the handling of all these affairs.²⁶⁴ And as the human beings willingly partook in the freedom which gives without asking for a favor back, as it was demonstrated by the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and

²⁶¹Prov 12:24.

²⁶²Ps 8:6.

²⁶³Ps 65:9-13.

²⁶⁴Heb 2:7-8.

Grace, they broke through to the enlightenment of who their creator is and what they themselves were meant to be.²⁶⁵ The progressive revelation of this truth made them ultimately happy and they thought of the fellowship of the three of them [as total bliss.²⁶⁶

Nature in the garden reflected a balanced harmony. Also, the relationship of the Great Three in One with the man and the woman was based on mutual trust and a deep respect and devotion for one another.²⁶⁷ There was nothing which could satisfy the man and the woman more than to look out for one another in shared support, encouraging one another about the tasks before them²⁶⁸ and to give honor and glory to the Great Three in One who was their maker. To him they bowed and it was for His sake alone that they counted their lives worth living.²⁶⁹ Together with the rest of creation they worshipped him, the Great Three in One Full of Mercy and Grace, and their adoration filled the air with the presence of the Almighty.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁵1 John 4:16.

²⁶⁶Isa 43:7.

²⁶⁷Ps 91:14; 73:25.

²⁶⁸1 John 4:12.

²⁶⁹Ps 63:3-5.

²⁷⁰Isa 51:3.

E. Conclusion

The stories written for this model of contextualization for Thai people about God's creation of the world and surrounding events try to answer some of the questions about God as creator, His main characteristics and His dealings with mankind. Buddhists argue against, and even more tend to ignore, the fact that there has been a deliberate beginning of the world; they also suppose that God must be ignorant Himself because He does not seem to care about the suffering He has caused by bringing about His creation; furthermore Buddhists cannot imagine what the God of the Christians would have to do with people at all. They have questions on the personality and integrity of God, cannot figure out what His Son or even the Holy Spirit would have to do with Him or them and sum it all up in the statement: "What should I have to do with the God of the Christians, when my Buddhist religion is so much older and thus proven right and better than theirs?"²⁷¹

All of these questions and maybe many more are answered to a certain extent in the four stories presented. The stories may not only provide reading for leisure but provoke many questions in an alert reader's mind, gradually remodeling some of his thought patterns and even changing his world

²⁷¹The Buddhist era started in 543 B.C.

CHAPTER VII

EVALUATION

For a long time a host of missionaries to Thailand have searched for ways to communicate the gospel by means the Thai people can understand, appreciate and eventually accept as the Good News coming to them personally through the loving intention of their Heavenly Father. Besides preaching, many effective ways have been found like radio messages which have a wide circle of Buddhist listeners, Christian literature, cassette tape ministries (which are primarily effective in rural areas), typical Thai dance and drama depicting Christian truth and the Jesus film presented in Thai as well as some minor languages of Buddhist groups in the country.²⁷²

Aware of the fact that missionaries tend to teach those who are willing to listen in the way they have been taught

²⁷²Johnstone, 531.

themselves (namely abstract thinking) I have here attempted to introduce a new model of contextualization concerning teaching the Good News via story telling. For this a research on communication - how the Thai among themselves receive, process and share a message - had to be undertaken and was presented in chapter two. The chapter on the Christian versus the Buddhist world view gave some additional helpful insights in this respect. Then conclusions in the field of contextualization have been drawn with the hope that the results can be used by many of those who are working in all kinds of circumstances when they convey the message of the gospel to Thai Buddhists. Some sample stories of the series on God's plan of salvation were added.

On the whole I have tried to point out a way how to help the Thai people realize that faith in the God of the Christians is not just something for Westerners to believe in but is meant for everybody in this world including the Thai. I have also stressed that it will take a special effort for Christians from abroad to labor for the Christian cause in Thailand. They have to adjust their thinking and form of presentation to that of the Thai.²⁷³ This has to be done without losing the biblical theology which most of the

²⁷³David J. Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic Books, 1978), 69.

laborers have acquired in connection with their original culture. With the passing of years spent in the country of service missionaries have to forgo parts of their original culture to a large extent. This, however, frees them to take on some features of their host culture and thus become still more effective. Yet the real challenge of a missionary is to not lose his identity in the swirl of surrounding cultures. This is done by holding strong to the saving and sustaining grace of Christ. The goal is to become like a Thai to the Thai as it is them whom he wants to introduce to and teach the word of God. In the process he has to be careful not to turn them into "somewhat Westernized" Christians but to restore them to their own people as true children of the Most High and as responsible partners in their own society.

I believe that the gospel has to be communicated to the Thai in ways familiar to them. Personally I am interested in writing essays in the form of short stories explaining biblical themes in the same style as has been done in the stories contained in this paper. Ideally, however, this should eventually be done by the Thai themselves and I just hope that they will pick up some of these stories and start writing something like them.

Further research should be done in the poetry styles of the Thai and their forms of presentation (chanting, drama, dance, puppet shows, fine arts).

It is my sincere prayer that God may help us to be faithful to His call and not to lose sight of the fact that He is "able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us".²⁷⁴ It will take all of our energies and all of the gifts which He has given us. It will take our full surrender again and again. Yet all of this is to be poured at His feet not in our own strength but in total dedication, leaving it to our God to use it as a fragrant sacrifice for Him whom we are privileged to serve.

²⁷⁴Eph 3:20.

APPENDIX I

EXEGESIS

A. EXEGESIS OF GENESIS ONE AND TWO

1. Introduction

I have chosen Genesis chapters one and two for contextualization because I am deeply convinced that the stories of creation and the fall of man hold the key for a basic understanding of the person of the God of the Bible and His intents for mankind. Here the problems of the human race are dug up at their roots and thus a way is opened for a totally new understanding of oneself but moreover for the God who created man and his surroundings.

The doctrine of creation is evident in numerous places in the whole Bible. God refers to Himself as Creator (e.g. Job 38 and 39; Isa 40 - 45; Rev 21:6; 22:13) or is referred to by others as such (e.g. Ps 89:11,12; 90:2; 148:5; Jer 10:16; Mal 2:10; Mark 10:6-9; John 1:1-5; Eph 3:9; Rev 10:6). This is very often done to demonstrate God's power

and might in order to make it clear that God the Creator is due all the worship of His creation (Acts 17:24) . In several places there are explicit statements of why God created the world: for His glory (Isa 43:7), for His Son Jesus Christ (Col 1:16) and to demonstrate His grace (Eph 1:4-6) . The Bible is very clear about the fact that God created this world through His word (Gen 1:3,6,9 etc.) which is His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:1-2; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2) . God (Gen 1:1; Ps 90:2) together with Jesus Christ (Gen 1:3; John 17:24) and the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2; Prov 8:22-31) existed before creation and were involved in it. On the other hand, God is not only the Creator of the world but also its Owner and Sustainer (1 Chr 29:11; 2 Chr 20:6) . The whole creation depends on Him (Ps 104:29-30) . His unlimited power is proven by His creation (Job 41 and 42; Isa 40 - 45; Amos 4:13) . Even though the earth may perish, God is praised for remaining the same as He has been for eternity (Ps 102:25-27) . God can be known as Creator by His creatures because of the fact of His creation (Rom 1:18-20) . Also men speak in awe to and about their Creator (e.g. Job 32:22; Ps 24:1-2; 90:2; Prov 14:31; Eccl 12:1; Isa 45:9; 1 Pet 4:19; Heb 11:10) and God the Creator is called upon for defense (Job 35:10; 36:3) .

two which speak of God's work as Creator in chapters 1 and 2

explicitness and compactness. There, in a nutshell, we meet the God of the Bible – His personality and His intentions for the earth and mankind.

2. Background to Genesis

a. Authorship

The five books of the Pentateuch were written anonymously. Within the text we find many hints that Moses has written extensively, yet we do not know which texts exactly have been provided by him.²⁷⁵ It is thought that a great deal of the materials and the framework of the Pentateuch stem from Moses apart from whomever was his biographer and/or editor of the present form. However, if the final writer was not Moses himself, it evidently was a man of comparable stature, as the core and content of the Pentateuch go back to Moses.²⁷⁶ j

b. Historicity of Primeval History

Genesis chapters one and two is generally regarded as non-historical in the usual sense of the word. However,

²⁷⁵Helmuth Egelkraut, ed., Das Alte Testament: Entstehung - Geschichte - Botschaft (Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 1989), 74. J

²⁷⁶Derek Kidner, Genesis - An Introduction and Commentary (Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1967), 15.

this is not only due to the fact of the extreme remoteness of the ages described. Here we are also led into an area of the past that antedates all known history and is not comparable to the realities which characterize the empirical world as we find it today. Occasionally one has pointed to what seems to be parallels found in mythological literature of the Near East. But the Bible's understanding of God, man and creation, and its whole world view is totally different from all that we find in the area of mythology. Everything we read in the Bible bears testimony to the fact that Genesis chapters one and two is not mythological but God's work at the beginning of history. So, for Karl Hartenstein the accounts of Genesis one to eleven are no ethnological legends but basic dates of biblical revelations; as real events they constitute the fundamentals of any historical development of the past.²⁷⁷

C. Literary Style in Genesis

Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25 are of different literary genre. As for Genesis chapter one it can be easily observed that the text is neither a narrative nor a record but a carefully constructed series of imperatives each

²⁷⁷Arnold Schwarz, Mission, Gemeinde und Oekumene in der Theologie Karl Hartensteins (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1980), 160.

followed by a statement of result and evaluation. It is liturgical language close to that of a number of Psalms.

Chapter two is phrased in narrative style and differs greatly from the language used in the first chapter. But in this second chapter pragmatic order and distinct progress can also be observed. The reader finds himself almost partaking in a drama. God is described in human terms as potter (2:7,19), gardener (2:8), surgeon (2:21) and initiator of marriage life (2:24).

Chapters one and two not only differ in literary style, they also see the story of creation from different angles and this way are complementing one another. It could be said that chapter one refers to God as high and almighty, while chapter two describes Him as coming down to His creation. By using different literary forms to describe creation the author shows that he is an artist well-versed in getting his readers/listeners to understand his texts. In addition, the names applied are precious hints as to what is to be expressed: an author calling his main actors "human race" (Adam) and "life" (Eve) shows clearly that he wants this piece of writing not to be taken literally.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸Egelkraut, 88.

3. Main Topics in Genesis One and Two in Relation to their Contextualization for Buddhists

a. Structure of the Exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a

In the following exegesis, I limit myself to those elements which are important for the process of contextualization in a Buddhist environment.

b. God the Almighty Creates the World - Exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Genesis 1:1-2:4a is an account of God creating heaven and earth. The text shows clearly that everything God created is something He wanted to create, something He had thought about beforehand.

Genesis 1:1 serves both as heading over this biblical account as well as the beginning of the Book of books. The first: location marks a point in time beyond human imagination: "In the beginning" - there is a beginning! And with the description of the beginning of this world the Bible already foreshadows the reality of an end. Only God is eternal (Rev 1:8; Isa 44:6), earth is temporary.

"In the beginning, God:" the eternal God stands as the personal God at the beginning of world history. The word used of God, Elohîm, is the word generally applied to God in the Semitic world. The Creator is the One who has the whole world in view. This should be kept in mind as one seeks a

suitable term in a language not influenced by Christian thought categories.

The word "created", Hebrew "bara", is a holy word which is only used with God as subject. When this word is employed, there is never a material mentioned that God would utilize to create something.²⁷⁹ The miracle which will be born out of it is inherent in it.

God is active! His endeavors show will and deed. His creation of the world is the end of a burning longing within Him. "Heaven and earth" has been created without any pre-existing matter. Yet the material that came into existence has been willed by God and is neither evil in itself nor is it unreal.

At the same time no part of creation is divine. Nothing created should be worshipped - neither a material nor a spiritual force.

"Heaven and earth" describes the universe in its totality and all we can think of - visible and invisible. There is nothing which God has not created and there is no place to run to escape from Him (Ps 139). The expression "heaven and earth" also tells us of the sense of security we experience once we trust this Creator. His dominion over all the heavens and the earth is made visible in this one

²⁷⁹Ibid., 32.

sentence. Being Creator He is Lord and King of all the universe. Ps 24:1-2 draws this conclusion "The earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it; for he has founded it upon the seas. And established it upon the rivers."

According to common understanding, verse two of the Genesis account is an expansion of the statement in verse one, although syntactically it is a separate sentence. While verse one refers to the created universe in its totality, verse two has only the earth in view and speaks of the beginning in a language understandable by human experience.²⁸⁰ It appears that God's normal method is to work from the formless to the formed. This is part of the process called creation.²⁸¹ When we find "the Spirit of God hovering over the waters," we meet with the creative, life-giving principle, preparing the formations and the life to be called into existence by the Word of the Creator

²⁸⁰Together with Erich Sauer (Das Morgenrot der Welterlösung (Wuppertal: Brockhaus Verlag, 1985), 38.), B.F. Bettex and von Huene I hold that there is a wide gap between Gen 1:1 and 1:2. I want to suggest that the God of harmony and light would never have created something formless, empty and dark. In order to put the earth in such a pitiful state a catastrophe must have happened after its initial creation. One could suppose that it might have been the fall of Lucifer. According to this, theory the record from Gen. 1:3 onward thus registers an account of the recreation of planet Earth.

²⁸¹Kidner, 44-45.

(Ps 104:30).²⁸² It may not be too farfetched to see here the triune God at work: God the Creator (Gen 1:1), the creative Spirit (Gen 1:2) and the Divine Word as the mediator of creation (Gen 1:3).

Genesis 1:3-25 describe the order of the creation of the world. First, God provides the sphere of life. Then this sphere is filled with creatures. The stars are also being created and thus are not divine and are not powers which rule the life of man. Astronomy only has a function to differentiate years, months and days. Star watching is no way of predicting events on earth as astrology claims. Fish, birds and creeping animals are created immediately, before mammals, which are created on the same day as man.

In Genesis 1:26-29 the climax of creation is reached. The deepest thought of God is about to become reality: the creation of man. Contrary to the other acts of creation it is preceded by an inner divine resolve when God says: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." Here God is talking to His royal household.²⁸³ From the very start man's dissimilarity with and excellency compared to

²⁸²Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, eds. Biblischer Kommentar über das Alte Testament. Erster Teil: Die Bücher Mose, Genesis und Exodus (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1861), 16.

²⁸³Gerhard von Rad, Das Alte Testament deutsch - Das erste Buch Mose, Kapitel 1-12,9 (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), 44.

other; creatures is made plain. God rejoices at the prospect of having a created being that is an image of Himself to whom He can speak and who is able to fellowship with Him. As a reflection of God, man will not only be able to share but also to bear and to take responsibility for the tasks entrusted to him, that of fellowship with God and stewardship before God. Here on one hand his practical functions are described. On the other hand, his mental and ethical being which expresses God's qualities is observed.²⁸⁴ So the fact that man shall have "dominion over all creatures" is not the content of the message but the consequence of his bearing the divine image is. Man is enthroned by God to rule over the earth and all the creatures on it²⁸⁵ endowed with the powers of a king (Ps 8:5-8).²⁸⁵ He received these powers from God whose representative he is.²⁸⁶

"Male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). The creation of male and female contains God's full idea of the human race. It is praised and celebrated in three parallel sentences.²⁸⁷ Both are created in God's image: man and woman are equal in God's eyes. Despite their difference in sex

²⁸⁴Erich Sauer, Das Morgenrot der Welterlösung (Gütersloh: Evangelischer Verlag, 1949), 45.

²⁸⁵Ibid., 48.

²⁸⁶Egelkraut, 95.

²⁸⁷Keil, 29.

they have the same value before Him because each bears His image. They are both commissioned to serve God in this world by keeping and cultivating what He has entrusted to them, and only together they can fulfill His assignment to multiply. God blessed them as man and woman (Gen 1:28).

i

Here God put human sexuality as well as their rule over His creation under His blessing. He does this with warm
do it and with the
concern, with the knowledge that they can
trust that they will.

, was very good;"

Genesis 1:31 says: "God saw . . . it
another translation could be: "God saw . . . it was totally
perfect," related to the wonderful usefulness and harmony of
the whole creation. This shows us that originally God has
never put any bad or harmful thing into this world. Nothing
is bad in itself. It is man who under sin used it wrongly.
This is an insight valid up to now, as Paul emphasized, too
(1 Tim 4:1-5). It further indicates that from the beginning
there has not been a force co-eternal or hostile to God
within the universe.

God's finished task is sealed with the words: "he
rested" (literally "ceased from doing," from Hebrew "sabat",
the root of the word "sabbath"). This rest is reached as
the goal of creation.²⁸⁸ It makes plain that creation was an

²⁸⁸Walther Zimmerli, 1. Mose 1 - 1,1, Die
Urgeschichte 1. Teil. (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1943), 103.

initial act at the beginning of time, not to be confused with preservation. It is the rest of achievement, not inactivity, for God nurtures what He creates. This may be compared to the symbolism of Jesus "seated" after His finished redemption to dispense His benefits (Heb 8:1,2).²⁸⁹ Here we see God completing creation with the positive element of blessing and hallowing the seventh day. His blessing is in reality a sharing of powers of salvation, grace and peace. To Him hallowing not only means to declare something holy but to bestow the attributes of salvation on it — to bring it into a vital relationship with God, the Holy One.²⁹⁰ Yet God's rest is to be seen as an independent part of creation. However, here we do not witness the historical initiation of the Sabbath day, as many wish to understand it. Rather a rest is disclosed which existed before man was created and which goes on despite man's unawareness. The declaration mounts, as it were, to the place of God Himself and testifies that with the living God there is rest.²⁹¹ This rest is still big with promise for the believer, who is summoned to share it (Heb 3:7-4:11).²⁹²

²⁸⁹Kidner, 53.

²⁹⁰Keil, 31-32.

²⁹¹von Rad, 48.

²⁹²Kidner, 53.

Thus to be invited to participate in this rest on a regular basis is part of the God-likeness of man that lifts him above all animals which do not have such special days.

C. Creation in Detail: God the Father Creates Man and Woman
- Exegesis of Genesis 2:4b-25

While the liturgical report on creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a describes God as the Almighty by whose word things come into existence, the account in Genesis 2:4b-25 explains in human terms the creation of the first man and woman. Only those verses have been selected for exegesis which will be especially relevant for Buddhists.

Genesis 2:4b-25 is a narration which is primarily concerned with the needs of human beings but also with God and His creation. It shows God as a person and a Father: sensitive, enjoying, caring, waiting, understanding.

We see God at work as the potter, when He " . . . formed man from the dust of the ground" (verse 7). Man is a creature delicately formed by the great Master-Sculptor (the word "formed" is taken from the Hebrew "jazar", to be literally translated as "to potter". This describes the potter's work.).

Having been made from earth man is bound to the earth with his whole being.²⁹³ When God " . . . breathed into his

²⁹³Zimmerli, 135-137.

nostrils the breath of life . . . man became a living being." God's breath gives life to the man formed from dust. Should God withdraw His life-giving breath man would return to dust (Ps 104:29).

To be a living soul, contrary to common understanding, means that man is subject to an "eager neediness" (Prov 10:3; Isa 29:8) and a faint frailty (2 Chr 32:8; Deut 5:26).²⁹⁴ On the other hand, he is gifted and qualified through God's vigor (Ps 104:29-30)²⁹⁵ which undergirds his initiative (2 Sam 7:3).²⁹⁶

"The Lord planted a garden . . . there he placed the man whom he had formed" (Gen 2:8). As the Master-Gardener, God gets involved in cultivating His creation. He provides man with what he needs to live. Then man is introduced to his duty. His life is not to be spent in idleness but is filled with responsibility and tasks to be done. "To cultivate and keep" is God's command (verse 15). In obeying, man fulfills a God-given assignment and serves his Creator. This is an order contrary to our understanding of

²⁹⁴Hans Walter Wolf, Anthropologie des Alten Testaments (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1973), 55.

²⁹⁵Ibid., 59.

j ²⁹⁶Ibid., 86.

paradise. Man was employed and had to prove himself in an area where he did not own anything.²⁹⁷

In the Old Orient, knowing good and evil meant as much as being omniscient.²⁹⁸ As God's creature man is to live within the limits set by God. If God commands, "From the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat . . . you shall surely die" (verse 17), God treats man as an intelligent being and expects him to obey. Yet to be man means to have limited knowledge, and in the ethical sphere he needs to be told what is good and what is evil. He does not know by himself (Mic 6:8).

In Genesis 2:19 we observe God as the Master-Trainer, challenging man to exercise dominion over the animals according to the powers given to him. Naming someone is an expression of lordship (see 2 Kgs 23:34 when Pharaoh Neco changed Eliakim's name in Jehoiakim).

In fulfilling his duty, man outgrows the animal world. He is in need of a complement to himself. He longs for communion with and complementation through a counterpart.²⁹⁹ God observes this: "It is not good for the man to be alone.

²⁹⁷von Rad, 64.

²⁹⁸Ibid., 65.

²⁹⁹Hellmuth Frey, Das Buch der Anfänge - Kapitel 1 - 11 des ersten Buches Mose. (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung 1935), 39.

I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18). So God sets out to make exactly the right partner for him. Loneliness is here defined as helplessness.³⁰⁰ "The Lord made a woman from what he had taken from the side of the man".³⁰¹ So woman is not made from dust like man but from man himself! Thus an inseparable life unity and partnership between man and woman is predetermined.³⁰² Woman is different from man, and this difference is willed by God. In bringing the woman to man God becomes Best Man because the woman and man are in need of each other and belong together. In an instant Adam recognizes the new creature as the one being a part of him and belonging totally to him (Gen 2:23). He expresses his deep understanding by naming the new being with her rightful name. This naming signifies acceptance which leads to union. Man is overjoyed. Woman is God's good gift to him and is to be appreciated and honored. The statement that man and his wife will become one flesh (verse 24) describes the physical uniting of man and wife and their total unity which is declared that way. The urge for the sexes to get together is stronger than the

³⁰⁰von Rad, 66.

³⁰¹Talmud. Quoted in Rosemarie and Hansjörg Bräuner, Scheidung und Wiederheirat: eine biblisch-seelsorgerliche studie (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler Verlag, 1990), 23.

³⁰²Keil, 48.

bond with physical parents because the female was taken from the male: they belong together from the beginning.³⁰³

Both were naked and not ashamed (Gen 2:25). They had nothing to hide and nothing to fear from one another and there was nothing objectionable in the oneness of the first couple. Shame only enters their relationship later, as a result of sin (see Gen 3:7).

4. Conclusion

In Genesis chapters one and two, God as the Creator of heaven and earth is being introduced. In His creation His wisdom, love and deep thought can be observed as well as His holiness and almighty power. Thus these first two chapters of the Bible are the perfect start for anybody who wants to get to know the God of the Universe. Herje, in a nutshell, is a way for learning the holy fear of the Lord Most High as well as for a personal relationship with the holy "Three in One," namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. No evil distracts the observer's thoughts of an omnipotent God who means only well with His creation. History has just started and it is fresh and perfect and good, according to the intention of its Creator.

³⁰³von Rad, 68.

The biblical account goes on with the human race and its various developments. Yet, whatever the unfolding picture surprises us with, the Father God Almighty stays the same in His deep concern and interest for men, in His unceasing love and helpfulness and in His devoted care and mercy. Genesis chapters one and two are an invitation to come and glorify and trust the One who yearns to draw us close to His heart.

B. EXEGESIS ON THE THEME OF ANGELS

1. Introduction

In this exegesis on angels, I will only go as far as this theme is concerned with the stories presented in this paper. This means some investigation will be done concerning the creation of angels, their original condition, their personality, nature, number of and hierarchy among them, and their ministry. Furthermore some of the effects of Satan's fall will be considered.

2. Creation of Angels

Created by Jesus Christ as God's creative agent (Col 1:16), the angels came into existence as immortal and incorruptible beings (Ps 148:2,5-6; Luke 20:36). Each one of them stands apart as a direct creation of God and

complete as an individual.³⁰⁴ However, angels do not procreate like humans (Matt 22:28-30). Here may be found the reason that they are sometimes called "the sons of God" (Job 1:6; 2:1). Timewise the angels' creation happened before the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:4-7).

3. Their Original Condition

a. Their Nature

The intricate natures of angels reflect the creative wisdom and power of God (Ezek 28:12-15)³⁰⁵ as well as His glory. They are creatures of light because God, the Light Himself, shines from them (Rev 18:1).³⁰⁶ They were created good and holy in the same way as God pronounced all His creation good (Gen 1:31; 2:3). They are specifically called holy (Mark 8:38) and live in a good and holy atmosphere as they enjoyed God's presence (Matt 18:10) and heaven's environment (Mark 13:32).

³⁰⁴Herbert Lockyer, The Unseen Army (Heathfield, Sussex: Errey's Printers, n.y.), 19.

³⁰⁵Dickason, 25.

³⁰⁶M. Basilea Schlink, Reiche der Engel und Dämonen (Darmstadt-Eberstadt: Evangelische Marienschwesternschaft, 1974), 68-69.

b. Two Classes of Angels

However, since the time of the willful rebellion of one of them, Satan, against God, there exist two moral classes of angels: the chosen ones who remained loyal to God (1 Tim 5:21) and the evil, who followed Satan in rebellion against God (Matt 25:41).

c. Privileges and Limitations

The privileges of the elect angels are to know God in a holy relationship and to worship Him in the joy of that relationship and in the beauty of holiness (Ps 29:1-2). At God's command they congregate before Him (Job 1:6; 2:1) and serve Him as quickly as wind and as fervently as fire (Heb 1:7). The angels are amazed at God's creative works (Job 38:7) and undoubtedly also have some insight concerning His purpose and program for the ages. On the other hand, angels also have their limitations. One of them is space. They must move from one place to another which involves time and, on occasions, delay (Dan 9:21-23; 10:10-14).

Another limited action is power. Even though the power of angels is greater than that of man (2 Pet 2:11) and angels control some elements of nature under God (Rev 7:1; 16:8-9), they are limited in authority (Job 1:12; 2:6). Sometimes elect angels struggle with evil ones (Rev 12:7)

and need assistance (Dan 10:13). They are also limited intellectually. They do not compare with God and are in need of His revelation concerning the how and when of Christ's return (Matt 24:36). They have inherent and acquired wisdom and they seek to learn through investigation (1 Pet 1:11-12). They are also limited in holiness as some of them fell into sin and bondage throughj defection from God's will (Isa 14:12; Rev 12:3-4). In a||l that they do or do not do, angels are responsible to God (Ezek 28:12-19; Matt 25:41; John 16:11).

4. Personality of Angels

From the Bible we can know that angels are made in essence as persons because they have intellect, emotions and will.³⁰⁷ Intellect is demonstrated by a desire to learn (1 Pet 1:12) and by being able to speak (Matt 28:5). Apart from this God calls them wise (Ezek 28:12, 17). However, their intelligence is limited; they do not fully understand the redemptive work of Christ (1 Pet 1:11-12). They have emotions because they respond to God's wondrous creation with joy (Job 38:7). Angelic seraphim worship God with awe and a deep sense of reverence (Isa 6:3). Angels also rejoice about the saving of a repentant sinner (Luke 15:10).

³⁰⁷Dickason, 30.

In Hebrews 1:6, God appeals to the angels' wills by commanding them to worship. Originally all angels chose to do what was God's will for them. But Satan declared his rebellion against God with five assertions of "I will" (Isa 14:12-15). Concerning their will a limitation can be observed when we compare the power of the will of Jesus Christ over the will of a legion of defected angels (Luke 8:28-33).

In essence it can be said that angels, as sons of God by creation (Job 1:6; 2:1) possess the image of their Creator-Father, namely personality and holiness. Personality provides them with the capacity to have fellowship with the person of God and holiness is the character required to enjoy that fellowship.³⁰⁸

5. Nature of Angels

Angels are spirit beings without bodily form as humans know: it and are normally invisible (Col 1:16). From Matthew 25:41 we know that fallen angels are not capable of repentance unto salvation and that all of Satan's followers are destined with him to the lake of fire. Therefore it can be deduced that the elect angels remain fixed in holiness and that the evil angels remain fixed in wickedness. Concerning

³⁰⁸Ibid., 32.

their source of power, it is permitted or commanded by God and exercised by God's will (Gen 19:12-16; 2 Sam 24:14-17).

6. Numbers, Organization and Rank

Angels are numbered in myriads (Dan 7:10; Heb 12:22; Rev 5:11), multitudes (Luke 2:13) and legions (Matt 26:53).³⁰⁹

As the Author of order and organization, God lets His characteristic be reflected in His creatures to a greater or lesser extent. Angels manifest this characteristic in that both the elect and the evil, are well organized. This is evidenced in many assemblies we read about in the Bible (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps 89:5-6). Also, God's angels are undoubtedly organized under the archangel Michael in a kind of military administration (Rev 12:7-9). There seem to be various levels in the organization of angels as can be seen in the several titles ascribed to them by eight Greek terms: thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, powers, angels, world rulers and wicked spirits (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:10.15).³¹⁰

³⁰⁹Alfred E. Thompson Eade, The New Panorama Bible Study Course No. 2 - The Study of Angelology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Bookhouse Company, 1975), 1.

³¹⁰Dickason, 87.

Concerning rank it can be observed that the unimaginably vast number of angels are highly organized and ranked according to their class (e.g. Lucifer in Ezek 28:12.14.16) and position (e.g. Michael in Dan 10:13).

7. Ministries of Angels

The extensive and varied ministries of angels are carried out in heaven and on earth and are, for the most part, beyond the observation of man. The angels' primary ministry seems to be that of worship and praise to God (Job 38:7; Isa 6:3; Rev 4:6-11; 5:8-13).³¹¹ This attitude of worship leads to the activity of service. As can be observed there seem to be two main categories of ministers of service, namely priestly ministers (Heb 1:7) and personal messengers (Ps 103:20; Luke 1:19,26-33; 2:8-14). Angels also minister to God by carrying out certain aspects of His government (Ps 103:19-20; Dan 10:13,21; 12:1; Heb 1:14; Rev 7:1; 16:3,8-9) and by protecting His people with the goal to glorify God's name (Ps 34:7; Isa 63:9; Heb 1:14). Apart from this they are also executors of God's judgment (Gen 19:1,12-13; Ps 78:49; Exod 12:13,23; 1 Chr 21:15-18; 2 Kgs 19:35).

³¹¹Schlink, 74-81.

Angels are actively involved in God's plan of salvation which He has for mankind. In this sense they are spectators of our change (1 Cor 4:9; Eph 3:10), messengers of our King (Luke 1:1; Heb 2:2), helpers in our need (2 Kgs 6:17; Acts 12:7), fighters for our final victory (Dan 12:1; Rev 12:7-9), guardians of the God-made world order (Dan 4:13), executors of God's judgments (Isa 37:36; Matt 13:39) and worshipers of God's deeds of redemption (Luke 2:13-14; 15:10).³¹²

8. Position of Angels in Relationship to Christ and Man

While Christ is superior over angels as a person and in position (Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:4-7; 2:2-3,5-10), man is made a little lower than the angels (Ps 8:4-6; Heb 2:5-7). There are some main differences between man and angels: while angels are essentially spirit (Heb 1:14), man is spirit and material body (Gen 2:7); while angels are not a race (they do not procreate, Matt 22:28-30), man is a race. Angels are greater in intelligence, strength and swiftness. Also, angels are not subject to death (Luke 20:36) while man is.³¹³

Redeemed man's position in Christ affects his relation to angels (Eph 1:4-14). In Christ he is chosen (verse 4),

³¹²Ibid., 31.

³¹³Ibid., 57.

God's child (verse 5), redeemed, has received forgiveness of sins (verse 7), has knowledge of redemption (verses 9-10), is heir to Christ's throne (verse 11) and is sealed with the Holy Spirit to be His own (verses 13-14). Ultimately the angels, elect and evil, will be subject to the judgment of God's saints (1 Cor 6:3).

a. Man's Attitude Towards Angels

Man is to respect the persons of angels (Dan 10:1-18), appreciate their ministries (Heb 1:14), and to admire their example (their incessant worship, their total allegiance and their dedicated obedience). But he is not to worship them. This is forbidden by God (Exod 20:1-6), pointed out by the Apostle Paul (Col 2:18) and refused by angels as glorified man's fellow servants (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9). The Apostle Paul also warns of an overdue occupation with angels (Col 2:18).

9. Satan's Fall and Its Effects

All angels were created by God through His Son, the Lord Jesus (Col 1:16-17) and there is no creature that was not created by Him (John 1:3). God cannot be directly involved in creating evil, for He is holy.³¹⁴ Thus it is obvious from reason and from the Bible that all angels were

³¹⁴Dickason, 127.

created in a holy state, each a direct creation of God and all at or near the same time. Satan fell from this originally holy state when he rebelled against God and so incurred his own condemnation (1 Tim 3:6). He enticed perhaps a third of the angels to defect with him (Matt 25:41; Rev 12:4). Since then Satan and his angels are permanently wicked and opposed to God, His program and His people.

There is no clear revelation as to when exactly Satan fell. However, there are limits to the possible time which we may deduce from biblical evidence. Angels were present when God "laid the foundations of the earth" and "set its measurements" (Job 38:4-5), for it was then when "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). This involved all the angels rejoicing with God. Satan and his angels fell, then, sometime after the original creation of the heavens and the earth but before man was led to sin. With the fall of Satan also a fall of his territory seems to have happened, which is described as being "subject to futility" and brought into "slavery to corruption" (Rom 8:20-21).³¹⁵

³¹⁵Sauer, 1985, 37-38.

a. The Sin of Satan

Satan's sin is rebellion against God (Isa 14:12-17; Luke 4:1-13; Rev 20:7-9) which makes him to put everything he can get his hands on in rebellion with God.

b. The Work of Satan

Satan is an opposer of God's person (1 John 3:10) and of God's program by counterfeiting God's system of truth (Eph 2:2; Ps 14:1-3) as well as God's sovereign rule (Gen 3:1-5). As "god of the world" (2 Cor 4:4), Satan is the deceiver of nations who directs whole governments and prevents unsaved man from accepting the truth. At the same time he is waging warfare against Christians (Eph 6:12), accusing and slandering them (Rev 12:10), planting doubt (Gen 3:1-5), tempting to sin, e.g. lying (Acts 5:3), sex sins (1 Cor 7:5), occupation with this world (1 John 2:15-17), relying on human wisdom (Matt 16:21-23), taking pride in spiritual matters (1 Tim 3:6) and giving in to discouragement (1 Pet 5:8-10). Satan also incites persecution (Rev 2:10), prevents service (1 Thess 2:18), infiltrates the church through false teachers (2 Cor 11:13-15) or false disciples (Matt 13:38-39) and also promotes division within the Body of Christ (2 Cor 2:10-11).

10. The Subject of Demons

a. Proof of Demons

It seems very probable that Satan's angels are known in Scripture as demons. Proof comes from various sources.³¹⁶

Heathen religions have in their history an account of demon-controlled religions all of which clash severely with the Hebrew faith and Christianity.

The Old Testament regards demons as existing evil entities (Gen 6:1-10).

That the "shedhim" (Deut 32:17; Ps 106:36-37) . . . were real demons, and not mere idols is proved by the Septuagint translation of the term by "daimonia" (demons); the Jews regarded idols as demons who allowed themselves to be worshipped by men (1 Cor 10:20). It seems certain, moreover, that the "seirim" were also demonic conceptions (Lev 17:7; 2 Chron 11:15; Isa 13:21).³¹⁷

During Christ's ministry He spoke about Satan being the ruler of a host of demons (Matt 12:22-28).

All of the New Testament writers, with the exception of the author of the letter to the Hebrews, note that there are demons or evil spirits.

³¹⁶Dickason, 150-52.

³¹⁷Merrill F. Unger, Biblical Demonology (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1957), 36.

b. Explanation of Their Names

- Occurrences in the Old Testament

"Shedhim" (Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37). A plural word meaning rulers, lords. This word speaks of idols as lords since in Hebrew culture images were regarded as visible symbols of invisible demons.

"Seirim" (Lev 17:7) means demon-satyrs.³¹⁸

"Elilim" (Ps 96:5). Here demons are identified with idols. This plural word conveys emptiness, the nothingness of idols whose real power lies in the demons behind those idols.³¹⁹

"Gad" (Isa 65:11). This is the demon-god Fortune, also called Baal, or Bel.

"Qeter" (Ps 91:6) means destruction; Qeter was regarded as an evil spirit.

- Occurrences in the New Testament

"Daimon", meaning demon. In the New Testament the emphasis for this word is on evil power or bad influence.

"Daimonion". Most frequently used term in the New Testament in this respect, meaning idols or pagan gods.

³¹⁸Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible - King James Version, comp. and ed. Spiros Zodhiates (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1984), Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, 199.

³¹⁹Ibid., 13.

"Pneumata", meaning spirits. In any case the context makes clear that these spirits are demons (e.g. Luke 10:17-20).

"Angels". In Matthew 25:41 the referential expressions "the devil and his angels" seem to equate Satan's angels with demons.

C. Doctrines of Demons

Throughout the Old as well as the New Testament it can be observed that doctrines of demons exist. Typically, those doctrines are always rigid and lawful, e.g. keeping days and months and festivals and years (Gal 4:10), taking only certain foods (Col 2:16), holding on to taboos (Col 2:21) - even hurting oneself (1 Kgs 18:28).

11. Conclusion

Elect as well as evil angels play a significant part in the lives of men and thus have a distinct place in God's plan of salvation for mankind. Concerning the elect angels, knowing their personalities and understanding their tasks helps Christians to appreciate these swift helpers and to praise God for them. As for the evil angels it is necessary for mankind to be aware of their existence, to learn about their strategies and to engage in warfare against them with

APPENDIX II

THAI TEXTS OF STORIES ONE TO FOUR

A. Story One - เรื่องที่เกิดขึ้นก่อนการสร้างโลก

ณ ที่ที่กว้างใหญ่ ไร้ขอบเขต อยู่ลึกเข้าไปนั้น เป็นที่สถิตของ "ไครองค์" ผู้ยิ่งใหญ่ ที่นั้นมีแสงสว่างสุกใส นำอัสสรัย ไม่มีผู้ใดสามารถเข้าไปถึงในบริเวณนั้นและไม่ได้รับอนุญาต แม้แต่จะมองพระพักตร์ของไครองค์ผู้นั้นได้เลย เพราะบริเวณรอบพระที่นั่งมีแสงสว่างแรงกล้าสะท้อนกระจายออกมาตลอดเวลา

ไครองค์นี้ นอกจากแบ่งเป็นสามองค์ที่มีลักษณะแตกต่างกันแล้ว ขณะเดียวกันยังรวมเป็นองค์เดียวหรือเป็นหนึ่งเดียวกันอีกด้วย แต่ละองค์ยังมีความเป็นบุคคลที่สมบูรณ์พร้อมและเมื่อรวมกันจะมีความเป็นเอกภาพกลมกลืนกัน องค์หนึ่งชื่อว่า "พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต" ^๕ องค์หนึ่งชื่อว่า "พระสัพพัญญุตญาณ" ^๕ องค์หนึ่งชื่อว่า "พระสัพพัญญุตญาณ" ทุกๆสิ่งที่พระวณะและพระสัพพัญญุตญาณทรงกระทำก็ทำตามแผนการของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต ขณะเดียวกันทั้งสามองค์ก็ช่วยเหลือซึ่งกันและกันไม่มีครั้งไหนเลยที่องค์ใดจะทรงกระทำสิ่งหนึ่งสิ่งใดตามลำพัง ไครองค์ทรงทำงานโดยมีความคิดเห็นตกลงพร้อมต้องกันและช่วยเสริมซึ่งกันและกันทรงมีความคิด ความรู้สึก ความประสงค์อันเดียวกันตลอดเวลา ลักษณะที่แตกต่างกันของไครองค์นั้นเองที่ส่งเสริม ช่วยกันให้ถึงเป้าหมายที่ได้ทรงตั้งไว้นั้นได้ เพราะทั้งสามองค์รู้ **ทิณฺญํวิ ; ขฺลฺลฺยา** ถึงกระนั้นแต่ละองค์ก็ทรงพอพระทัยในลักษณะของตัวเอง

การมีอยู่ของไครองค์นี้มีแทรกซึมอยู่เต็มทั่วไปในจักรวาลที่เรารู้จักและจักรวาลที่เรายังไม่รู้จัก พระองค์ทรงเป็นผู้บริสุทธิ์อย่างสมบูรณ์ในลักษณะทั้งสามองค์นั้น ไครองค์ไม่มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงไม่ว่าตามกาลเวลาหรืออายุขัย ไม่มีการเริ่มแรกและการสิ้นสุด ด้วยเหตุเหล่านี้จึงเป็นองค์ผู้ลึกลับ อยู่ในฐานะ

เหนือกว่าเรา ความสามารถก็อยู่เหนือต่ำกว่าระดับความคิด

ตอนนี้ ไตรรงค์กำลังปรึกษากันเรื่องการทรงสร้างชุดผัดแลรับใช้ เมื่อพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต

เพราะต้องทำตามพระบัญชา พระวณะทรงเสนอว่าควรให้โอกาสชุดเหล่านั้นพิสน้องตัวเองและเรา
จะรู้ว่าองค์ใดที่มีใจยอมจำนนอย่างแท้จริง พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตจึงทรงตกลงพระทัยเห็นด้วยตามนี้
และตรัสตอบว่า หลังจากช่วงระยะเวลาพสนพวนพน เบแล้ว ชุดองค์ใดที่มีความสตัยซอกก็จะสตัยซอ

ชุดต่อพระบัญชาที่ตรัสออกไปแล้วจึงไ

ยง

สินการไม่สตัยซอดังกล่าวก็จะยังคงอยู่คือ สิทธิอำนาจที่ชุดนั้นได้รับยังมีเหมือนเดิมทุกประการ
เงื่อมมือของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตเป็น แล้วพระวณะ, พระสพญญตญานทรงหมอบลงสรรเสริญพระบารมีแห่งขั้วพระบารมี

หนึ่งเดียวกันเป็นไตรรงค์เต็มเปี่ยมไปด้วยความเข้าใจและชื่นชมยินดี เนื่องจากการทรงตัดสินพ
ระทัยอย่างยุติธรรมนี้ทำให้เห็นแน่ชัดถึงอำนาจและฤทธิ์เดชของไตรรงค์ว่าทรงควบคุมเหตุการณ์ที่จะ
เกิดขึ้นแน่นอนในเวลาที่ถูกกำหนดไว้แล้ว ไม่เปลี่ยนแปลง

6.

พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงทราบว่า มนุษย์จะยอมตามจุดที่ไม่สัจซื่อด้วยการตัดสินใจของตน

มนุษย์จึง ไม่มีคุณสมบัติพอที่จะปฏิบัติตามพระประสงค์ของพระองค์ เวลานานเขาจะเบนเหวอนลกเกาะ

ของเขาสืบสนยุ่งเหยิง ไม่สามารถหาทางกลับมามาตามทางของพระองค์ได้

มนุษย์ด้วยกันจะช่วยพวกเขาให้รอดจากความตายด้วยเช่นกัน เขาเป็นเหมือนคนตาบอดเดินเปะปะอยู่ในความมืดมิดแม้พระองค์จะ

ออกเพื่อโอบอุ้มเขาให้พ้นจากความหายนะ เขาก็ไม่สามารถมองเห็น ไม่ได้ยินยังคงเดินตามเสียงของ

ชาติที่ไม่สัจซื่อที่ได้เปลี่ยนเป็นชาติชั่วร้ายนั้น แม้พระองค์ประสงค์จะเอื้อมมือไปหาเขาแต่เขาก็สะบัดหนีไป ตามความพอใจ ความต้องการของตน แต่ถึงแม้ว่าโลกจะถูกครอบครองโดยจุดที่ไม่สัจซื่อซึ่งตกลงมาจากสถานที่ ที่เคยสถิตอยู่ก็ตามแต่ด้วยกฎหมาย ข้อตกลงของไครองค์ที่ทรงตั้งไว้แล้วโลกจะได้รับชัยชนะกลับคืนมาเป็นของพระองค์อีกครั้งหนึ่ง แต่สำหรับการตัดสินใจพระทัยเกี่ยวกับการทรง

การล้างให้สะอาดบริสุทธิ์เพื่อ

filmivmmmmidmm

เขามีฐานะแตกต่างจากจุดของพระ

พระองค์จะทรง

ล้างเขาให้สะอาดแทนความสกปรกจากการกระทำการต่อต้านต่อพระองค์ หลังจากนั้นคนที่ยอมพระ

รับใช้ที่สัจซื่อและเป็นพยานประกาศความยิ่งใหญ่ของพระองค์ ชงเมองลงเวลาแล้วพระวณะจะทรง

5

ในชัยชนะที่จะเกิดขึ้นแน่นอนพระวณะทรงตรัสว่า ความบริสุทธิ์ชอบธรรมของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต จะมียุติตลอดไป ด้วยฤทธิ์เดชของพระองค์จักรวาลต่างๆจะ

ความจริงของ ไครองค์เป็นสิ่งเดียวที่ขัดทุกสิ่งในจักรวาลให้ตั้งมั่นคงอยู่ การทรงตัดสินเจอยางชอบ

ธรรมทุกอย่างไม่เคยเปลี่ยนแปลง นั้นเป็นเหตุผลว่าทรงสำแดงความสัตย์จริงในพระองค์เองเสมอต้น
เสมอปลาย เมื่อเหตุที่ไม่สัตย์ชั่วครองโลกนี้โดยถูกต้องตามกฎหมายของไตรองค์ตั้งแต่แรกดั่งนั้นหาก

fIsI^anufmjJwnmuTDiifl ก็ต้องโดยถูกต้องตามกฎหมายของพระองค์ด้วยคือการทรงสร้าง

มนุษย์ให้มีหน้าที่ต้องต่อสู้ช่วงชิงมาเพื่อชัยชนะด้วย

fIUvn-mfTWOs:

ช่วงชิงโลกคืนมาโดยถูกต้องตามกฎหมายของใคร

เพราะความฉลาดแกมโกง มนุษย์จะเลิกละสนใจในพระองค์และเปรี๊

จิตใจ

ของเขาจะมีคณมนมีคอบคมองไม่เห็นความจริงของพระองค์ อีกทั้งการตัดสินใจต่อต้านพระองค์จาก

พวกเขาเอง เขาจะมมคุณสมบตเพียงพอที่จะหาหนาทของตนเอง เหลสมบูรณ เค พระวณะดรสว

ด้วยพระสติปัญญาอันลึกล้ำชาญฉลาดขอ

คล้องกับกฎหมายของไตรองค์ ส่วนพระองค์เองพร้อมที่จะยอมอุทิศทำตามทุกสิ่งทุกอย่าง

ณา ณาทั้งสองพระองค์เป็นศัที่พระองค์ทรงรักและพอพระทัยอย่างยิ่ง **fiitjfniiJVivii^m'uiflig^fw**

มีความคิดเหมือนกันทรงมีความมั่นใจ

มีดโดยทางที่พระองค์ทรงตัดสินพระทัย จะทรงไล่พวกเขาที่ไม่ยอมเชื่อฟังจากอำนาจมีดด้วยราคาที่ถูก

กำหนดไว้แล้ว ราคานี้สูงมากและความยุติธรรมของพระองค์จะเป็นสิ่งที่ทำร้ายพระองค์เอง พระบิดา

งมีส่วน

บิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตเป็นราคาของเครื่องบูชา

แต่เมื่อทรงตกลงตามที่ไตรองค์

ด้วยทรง

ทรงเห็นชอบด้วยกัน พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงอนุญาต

ะองค์จะ

ร่วมในความเมตตากรุณาของพระองค์

ากมนุษย์

ไถ่ล้าง

พระองค์จะยอมมอบชีวิตบุตรสฤทธสมบูรณนเพื่อจะเ
เบกรับความผิดทดแทนแก่ผู้ที่ทำร้ายต่อพระ

องค์และจะเสียชีวิตเพื่อพวกเขา แต่ด้วยฤทธิ์อำนาจที่มีอยู่ในพระองค์จึงจะมีชีวิตขึ้นมาใหม่ เพราะจิต

สถิตและนั่นจะทำให้แผนการของไครองค์สมบูรณ์ ด้วยการกระทำของพระวณะโดยการขอมมอบ
ชีวิตเพื่อยกความผิดของมนุษย์ออกไป พระองค์จะทรงทำให้คนมากมายกลายเป็นคนชอบธรรมแต่พระ
องค์จะกลับกลายเป็นศัตรูกับความผดอง และนี่เป็นสิทธิของพระองค์เพื่อจะมีชัยชนะต่อศัตรูที่ต่อต้านพระ
องค์ ดังนั้นจึงทำให้พระองค์ทรงมีอำนาจเหนืออำนาจทั้งหลาย เหนือแผนคน เหนือการปกครองและ
ทรงอยู่เหนือสติปัญญาการรอบรู้ของบรรดาเทพทั้งหมดทั้งสิ้น ทุกสิ่งจะมอบไว้ให้อยู่แทบพระบาท
ของพระวณะและพระองค์จะทรงนั่งอยู่เค

หลังจากเสร็จสิ้นคำตรัสของพระบิดา

พระ

การเพื่อสำแดงฤทธิ์อำนาจสง่าราศีอันยิ่งใหญ่สมบูรณ์ให้ประจักษ์ แผนการนั้นดีและสร้างความพึงพอ

มนุษย์กับพระองค์เพื่อรับใช้พระองค์

ทุกสิ่งเหล่านี้เป็นแผนการที่ไคร

องค์ทรงตกลงตัดสินใจร่วมกัน ความเมตตากรุณาและความสัตย์ซื่อของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตตั้งอยู่บน

ขอเชิดชูยกย่องพระองค์ในอำนาจอันยิ่งใหญ่ตลอดกาล....

ความชื่นชมยินดีนี้เป็นอยู่เนิ่นนานและยังคงมีอยู่จนกระทั่งทุกวันนี้...

B. Story Two - เรื่องการสร้างโลก

เรื่องนี้เป็นเรื่องที่พาดเกี่ยวกับการจัดระบบระเบียบใหม่ของโลกเรา

ระ

บๆ

าที่

ลึกล้ำของพระองค์ทำให้ชุดผู้รับใช้เหล่านั้นต้องประทับใจ ขอมรับ ทำให้เกิดการมอบน้อม นบนอบ

ขำเกรงในความบริสุทธิ์และความยุติธรรมของพระองค์โดยสิ้นเชิงพระสง่าราศีของพระองค์เป็นที่น่า
ประหลาดใจน่าอัศจรรย์อย่างยิ่ง

วันหนึ่ง พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงเรียกบุตรผู้รับใช้เป็นกองทัพบกที่คุ้มครองอยู่ตั้งแต่แรกมาเข้าเฝ้า
เพื่อจะทรงเปิดเผยพระประสงค์ของพระองค์ ตรัสว่า บุตรที่สหายชื่อของเราทั้งหลาย วันนี้เราจะบอกเรื่อง
น่ายินดีแก่ท่าน พระองค์ตรัสด้วยสุรเสียงก้องกังวานน่าฟังและน่าเกรงขาม ไตรรงค์ได้ตัดสินใจว่าเรา
จะสร้างสิ่งมีชีวิตขึ้นมาและสรรพสิ่งเหล่านั้นจะมีรูปลักษณะมากมายหลายชนิด แต่ละชนิดก็จะมี
ลักษณะพิเศษเฉพาะในตัวเอง ทุกสิ่งจะมีสีสัมผัสมีพลังที่ถอดรูปแบบพระลักษณะมาจากไตรรงค์ แม้ทุก
สิ่งจะมีความหลากหลายแตกต่างกันแต่ก็จะรวมอยู่เป็นหนึ่งเดียวกันอย่างสมบูรณ์

สิ้นเสียงตรัสของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต บริเวณที่นั่นก็อยู่ในความเงียบกริบ... ไม่มีแม้แต่เสียง
หายใจสักนิดหนึ่ง foni^SifIfj^mmiganiniinni^เสียงก็เริ่มดังขึ้น..ดังขึ้นไปทั่วบริเวณจนกลายเป็นเหมือนเสียงพลังน้ำสายใหญ่พุ่งขึ้นสูงจากแผ่นดิน นั่นคือเสียงยกของสดุดี ถวายเกียรติแด่ไตรรงค์

ขอสดุดีถวายเกียรติแด่ไตรรงค์ผู้ยิ่งใหญ่

ผู้ทรงฤทธิ์อำนาจสร้างสิ่งสารพัด

พระวณะของพระองค์ตรัสสิ่งใดก็เป็นไปตามนั้น

fli4wini9^iiiflsii0^mw^8fft)i5a^TisYiiJiTfi^

พระองค์ให้เราอยู่ในสิ่งที่บังเกิดขึ้น ใจของเราก็อ่อนนถุ์ที่จะเห็น

พระประสงค์ของพระองค์นั้นสมบูรณ์ กระทำให้เราพอใจเป็นอย่างนัก

เราขอเคารพยกย่องและยินดีรับใช้พระองค์ตลอดกาล...

เสียงบรรเลงนั้นก้องกังวานต่อไปพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงเริ่มจัดระบบระเบียบให้โลกใหม่
จากแผ่นดินที่ว่างเปล่าและมีคิมดินนั้น และพระสัพพัญญุตญาณทรงปกป้องคุ้มครองอยู่

พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตตรัสว่า จงเกิดความสุข ความสว่างก็เกิดขึ้นแก่แผ่นดินโลกพระองค์
ทรงเห็นว่าความสว่างนี้สมบูรณ์ ทรงแยกออกจากความมืดและทรงเรียกความสว่างว่า วัน เรียกความ

มควู คน เป็นการทรงสร้างวันแรกของประวัติศาสตร์โลก หลังจากนั้นพระองค์ตรัสให้หมอกควน

แยกตัวจากพื้นน้ำและสิ่งมีชีวิตเล็ก ๆ ปรากฏขึ้น ทรงสร้างโคมโค้งเหนือพื้นน้ำที่มนุษย์สามารถมองเห็นได้
ทรงเรียกว่าฟ้าเป็นการทรงสร้างวันที่สอง

ในวันที่สาม พระองค์ให้น้ำที่อยู่ใต้ฟ้ารวมอยู่แห่งเดียวกันและให้พื้นมีพื้นที่แห้ง พระองค์ทรง
เรียกที่แห้งนั้นว่า แผ่นดิน และเรียกน้ำนั้นว่า ทะเล ทรงเห็นว่าดีพระองค์ทรงสร้างพืชคือผักหญ้าต้นไม้

ที่มีลักษณะแตกต่างกันและมีเมล็ดด้วยเพื่อขยายพันธุ์ต่อไป พระวณะ, พระสัพพัญญูญาณทรงชื่นชมยินดีเพราะพืชเหล่านั้นเกิดขึ้นมากมายและสมบูรณ์

วันถัดมาพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต, พระวณะ, พระสัพพัญญูญาณทรงร่วมกันสร้างกลุ่มดาวเช่นดวงสว่างดวงใหญ่เพื่อส่องสว่างในกลางวันชื่อ ดวงอาทิตย์ ดวงสว่างอีกดวงเพื่อส่องสว่างในกลางคืนชื่อดวงจันทร์ และดวงดาวต่างๆด้วยทุกดวงทำหน้าที่แยกวันออกจากคืนทำให้รู้ฤดู, วันและปีด้วยพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงจัดให้ดวงสว่างเหล่านี้อยู่ในจักรวาลไครองค์ทรงเห็นว่าดี เป็นการทรงสร้างวันที่สี่

ในวันที่ห้าพระองค์ตรัสว่าจงมีสัตว์ในน้ำ *fiunihiluoiniff* พระองค์ทรงสร้างปลาต่างๆเช่น ปลาวาฬ, ปลาโลมาปลาไหล, ปลาการ์ตูน เป็นต้น. ทรงสร้างนกบนท้องฟ้าเช่น นกกระชอก, นกกระยาง, ขาว, นกเป็ดน้ำ, นกแก้ว, นกขุนทอง และนกอื่นๆอีกมากมายที่เราเห็น *ttttu9limSimlVwmw* เคลื่อนไหวแหวกว่ายฉวัดเฉวียนไปมาคึกคักเต็ม ส่วนนกนั้นต่างก็กระพือปีกโฉบบินวนเวียนว่อนไปส่งเสียงจ๊างจ๊างแซ่แซ่แข่งกัน ดังกเดิม ไปด้วยความชื่นชมยินดีชมเชยว่า รวมทั้งเดือองค์และทูตทั้งหลายด้วยที่เห็นสิ่งมีชีวิตเหล่านี้และพระองค์ทรงเห็นว่าดี พระผู้สร้างจึงอวยพระพรแก่ชีวิตใหม่ให้สัตว์ในน้ำมีลูกคอกและให้นกต่างๆเพิ่มพูนมากขึ้น

วันที่หก ไครองค์ตรัสว่าจงมีสัตว์ต่างๆเช่น *f p n m u* สัตว์เลื้อยคลานและสัตว์ป่า *elenma'ui* เกิดขึ้น พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงให้รูปร่างลักษณะของสัตว์ต่างๆแตกต่างกันออกไปตามชนิดของ มนุ ทรงเห็นว่าสิ่งทรงสร้างนี้ดีแล้วทรงตรัสต่อว่า ให้เราสร้างมนุษย์ขึ้น เขาจะเป็นผู้ที่สามารถเผชิญหน้ากับเรา สามารถพูดคุยกันปรึกษากันได้ มนุษย์จะประกอบ ไปด้วยความคิด ความรู้สึก ความตั้งใจ เหมือนเราและหน้าที่ของเขา คือ ปกครองดูแลบรรดาฝูงนกในอากาศ, ฝูงปลาในน้ำ, สัตว์เลี้ยง, สัตว์ป่า และสัตว์เลื้อยคลานเหล่านั้นทั้งหมด พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงสร้างมนุษย์ผู้ชายและผู้หญิงพระองค์ ทรงเป็นแบบอย่างในการสร้างคือ มนุษย์จะเป็นตัวแทนจากพระองค์ในการรับผิดชอบ 'ดแลโลก พระ องค์ทรงอวยพระพรพวกเขาตรัสแก่เขาว่า, เหม่ลูกหลานมากจนจนเต็มอยู่ทั่ว เบบนแผ่นดิน และเขาจะมีอำนาจครอบครองสัตว์ทั้งหมด พืชและต้นไม้เหล่านั้นจะเป็นอาหารของเขา สวนสวดต่างๆจะกินพืช ทุกชนิดที่มีเมล็ดเป็นอาหาร เมื่อใดองค์ทรงมองดูการทรงสร้างในวันที่หกนั้นทรงเห็นว่าดีสมบูรณ์ แล้วและทรงพอพระทัยเป็นอันมาก

วันต่อมา ไครองค์ทรงวางมือจากงานทั้งปวงและทรงอวยพระพรแก่วันที่เจ็ดนั้น พระองค์มีพระบัญชาว่า มนุษย์ควรหยุดพักจากการงานในวันที่เจ็ดเหมือนพระองค์ทรงหยุดพักจากการทรงสร้าง *flaglTrtnivimi* สิ่งนี้จะช่วยให้มนุษย์ไม่ลืมพระกรุณาของพระองค์

นี่เป็นเรื่องเกี่ยวกับโลกเราและจักรวาลที่ถูกจัดขึ้นใหม่โดยสมบูรณ์ เรื่องที่อ่านจบไปแล้วนี้ มีบันทึกอยู่ในหนังสือแห่งชีวิตไว้ด้วยเช่นกัน

C. Story Three - การก่อกำเนิดของมนุษย์

เรื่องนี้เกิดขึ้นหลังจากไตรรงค์ทรงจัดระเบียบให้จักรวาลเสร็จแล้ว และโลกเราคือส่วนหนึ่งในจักรวาลนั้น

ก่อนเวลานั้น ยังไม่มีต้นไม้และต้นไม้พืชตามท้องทุ่ง เมล็ดพืชยังฝังอยู่ในดินรอการงอกเงยออกมา ในเมล็ดพืชนั้นมีพลัง มีลักษณะพิเศษเฉพาะเพื่อจะเจริญเติบโตและขยายพันธุ์ต่อไป แต่พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตยังไม่ให้ฝนตกลงมายังพื้นแผ่นดินโลก ต้นอ่อนในเมล็ดพืชเหล่านั้นจึงยังไม่งอกเงยขึ้น นอกจากนี้ยังไม่มีมนุษย์ที่จะทำอะไรได้อีกด้วย พระองค์ตรัสให้น้ำไหลขึ้นจากแผ่นดินแล้วน้ำนั้นก็ทำให้ชนทุกหนทุกแห่งชุ่มชื้น พระองค์ทรงหลบเอาตนจากห้วงอวกาศมายังพื้นดิน ทรงลงมาดูแลเขาโดยเป่าลมเข้าทางรูจมูก มนุษย์นั้นจึงมีชีวิตหายใจได้

ด้วยการสร้างสรรค์สิ่งขึ้นในโลก ทำให้แผนการการจัดระเบียบแก่โลกเสร็จสมบูรณ์และแสดงออกถึงลักษณะบุคลิกซึ่งถ่ายทอดจิตใจของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตด้วย แต่มนุษย์เป็นจุดประสงค์หลักที่พระองค์ทรงเน้นในการทรงสร้างเพื่อถ่ายทอดพระลักษณะของพระองค์ออกมาตามที่เคียดใจตั้งแต่

ในการตัดสินใจ หน้าที่ของเขาคือ ปกครองดูแลสัตว์ต่างๆ ใช้ประโยชน์จากดินพร้อมทั้งดูแลรักษาและนานแสนนานมาแล้วว มนุษย์จะเป็นตัวแทนของพระองค์บนโลกนี้ เขาจะเป็นผู้ที่มีความรู้สึกลึกซึ้งคิดตรองทุกสิ่งทรงสูง เองได้

กษัตริย์ปกครองโลกเท่านั้น มีลูกหลานกระจายเต็มทั่วแผ่นดิน หน้าที่ของเขาเหล่านี้ควรให้เกียรติแด่ แต่บนท้องฟ้าบนเขาสูงส่งและบนผืนแผ่นดินแห่งความสูงใหญ่ของพระองค์ด้วย หน้าที่นี้จึงทำให้มนุษย์มีเป้าหมายการปฏิบัติออกไปทั่วทั้งแผ่นดิน

หลังจากมนุษย์ถูกขับจากดินและลมหายใจที่เข้าไปนั้นคือพระวิญญาณจากพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต เขาได้รู้สึกตัวว่ากำลังอยู่บนพื้นดินที่ชุ่มชื้น เขาสูดเอาอากาศสดชื่น ร่มเย็น ส่องขึ้นไปเห็นแผ่นดินฟ้ากว้างสีครามสดใส ขณะนั้นยังไม่เห็นต้นไม้ต้นหญ้าที่จะสร้างความมีชีวิตชีวา ส่วนบรรดาสัตว์ต่างๆ ก็ยังไม่ปรากฏให้เขาเห็นในบริเวณท้องทุ่งอันกว้างเปลา่นั้นพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงจัดเตรียมสรณแห่งหนึ่งไว้ให้เขาอยู่อาศัย บริเวณสวนแห่งนั้นงดงาม อุดมสมบูรณ์เต็มไปด้วยสง่าราศีของพระองค์เพื่อ

สร้างความสุขความเบิกบานใจอัน ล้นพ้นให้แก่มนุษย์นั้นและแก่พระองค์เองด้วย รอบๆ ตัวของมนุษย์นั้นเขาสังเกตเห็นพชพฤกษากวางอกเงย ผลพบนวดคนขึ้นมา มองเห็นต้นไม้ที่มีดอกผลิบานชูช่อสดสวย

มองเลขข้างออกไปไกลเห็นภูเขาเป็นแนวยาวสลับบ้างซ้อน บริเวณไม่ไกลตัวนักมีสายธารน้ำใสเย็นคด
เคี้ยวไหลผ่านกระทบบ่อนหินดังริกๆสะท้อนแว่วไปในสวน ริมลำธารมีต้นไม้ต้นหญ้าขึ้นอยู่เขียวสด
บรรยากาศเย็นสบายสร้างความรื่นรมย์ใจให้เขาเป็นอย่างยิ่ง

ในสวนแห่งนั้น มีแม่น้ำใหญ่สายหนึ่งไหลจากสวนและแยกออกเป็นสี่สายไปทางใต้ ส่วนทาง

ความสุขสบายทุกอย่างในสวนนี้ เจ้ามีสิทธิพิเศษจากผืนแผ่นดินนี้ที่จะ
เราให้ทุกอย่างที่เจ้าต้องการไป

ใจจากผลแห่งการเก็บเกี่ยวด้วย ทุกอย่างในสวนเป็นของเจ้า อีสระอยู่ในกำมือของเจ้าที่จะเลือกวิธีการ
ดูแล แต่มีเรื่องหนึ่งที่เจ้าจะต้องบอกเจ้า, พระองค์ทรงพาเขาไปยังบริเวณที่มีต้นไม้ดอกผลมากมาย
หลายชนิด ภายใต้ลำต้นที่แผ่ขยายกิ่งไม้ใบผลนั้นร่มรื่นน่าเอนกายลงพักผ่อน พระองค์ตรัสตอบกับเขา

ว่า ผลไม้เหล่านี้ทั้งหมด เราปลูกเอาไว้เพื่อเจ้าจะได้มีอาหารกินอย่างอุดมสมบูรณ์และที่เจ้าเห็นอยู่ตรง
กลางของสวนแห่งนี้คือต้นไม้แห่งการรู้คิดรู้ชอบ

เจ้าจะเค็ดกินไม่ได้เป็นอันขาดเพราะ

เราขอบอกเจ้าวันนี้

เพื่อเจ้าจะยอมฟังเรา แล้วมนุษย์นั้นก็น้อมตัวลงแนบพื้น

พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต จิตใจของเขาปรารถนาจะถวายตัวรับใช้แล

ผู้ช่วยที่เหมาะสมให้แก่เขา พระองค์จึงนำสัตว์ต่างๆที่ทรงปั้นจากดินมาให้เขาดังชื่อ เขารู้สึกภูมิใจใน
สิทธิหน้าที่พิเศษในการตั้งชื่อสัตว์เหล่านั้นแต่สัตว์เหล่านั้นก็ไม่มีคุณสมบัติในการช่วยเหลือพอ ตรงกับ
ความต้องการของเขา พระองค์จึงทรงทำให้มนุษย์นั้นหลับลึก ทรงชักชีโครงซี่หนึ่งของเขาออกมาแล้ว
ทรงทำให้เนื้อติดเข้าสนิทกันแทนกระดูกซี่นั้นเหมือนเดิม พระองค์ทรงสร้างผู้หญิงจากกระดูกซี่โครง
นั้นแล้วนำมาหมั้นมนุษย์นั้นแทน ทนทนเขาเห็นเขารู้สึกคนเด่น ถูกคาดหวังจากผู้หญิงนั้น พดว..
เรอนแหละ! ๒9fiSjgn^i94i?im0'Hi44ii94i?i ขอตั้งชื่อว่าหญิงพราหมณ์ออกมาจากชาย เขา
ได้แสดงความชื่นชมต้อนรับหญิงที่

สร้างสรรคอันมหัศจรรย์ของพระองค์ tfttyjilmifaiijijumifoulin เหมาะสมเป็นผู้ช่วยเหลือเขาขณะ
เดียวกันหญิงนั้นก็ต้องการ การปกป้องดูแลสนับสนุนจากเขาด้วย ความเข้าใจและความชื่นชมซึ่งกัน
และกันเป็นเครื่องหมายแสดงออกถึงค

ทรงสร้างสรรพสิ่งบนโลกของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต

ในบทบันทึกของพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตนี้ ปิดลงด้วยคำตรัสว่า...

"เพราะฉะนั้น ผู้ชายจะจากพ่อแม่ของเขาไปใช้ชีวิตอยู่ร่วมกับภรรยา และทั้งสองจะมีความผูกพันกลายเป็นอันหนึ่งอันเดียวกัน" เพราะความรัก ความพึงพอใจในผู้หญิงนั้นมีแรงจูงใจดึงดูดเขา มากพอที่จะละจากรักของพ่อแม่ที่เคยให้ความอบอุ่นปลอดภัยให้แก่เขาและหลุดออกจากความผูกพันทางสายเลือดในครอบครัวไปสร้างความรัก ความผูกพันอันมั่นคงแก่ครอบครัวใหม่ของเขา ความรักซึ่งกันและกันเช่นนี้ทำให้จิตวิญญาณของทั้งสองหลอมรวมเป็นหนึ่งเดียวและโอบล้อมทุกสิ่งในชีวิตเข้ารวมกันไว้ นี่เป็นสิ่งที่บ่งบอกถึงลักษณะของความเป็นมนุษย์คือ ความมีเมตตารักใคร่ความเห็นอกเห็นใจและการช่วยเหลือเพื่อเสริมสร้างซึ่งกันและกัน

พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต ทรงแต่งตั้งให้มนุษย์ทั้งสองเป็นมนุษย์คู่แรกที่เหมือนดังราชาและราชินีปกครองดูแล เป็นผู้รับใช้ของพระองค์ที่ได้รับเกียรติสูงส่งในโลกที่ทรงจัดขึ้นใหม่นั้น พวกเขาทำงานตามหน้าที่บนแผ่นดินนั้นทั้งยังปกครองบรรดาสัตว์หลายชนิดเพื่อมันจะช่วยเขาในการทำงานให้สำเร็จได้ พวกเขาทำงานรับใช้พระองค์ด้วยความสัจซื่อเต็มใจและมุ่งมั่น ดังนั้นพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตจึงทรงตอบแทน อวยพระพรแก่เขาจากผลของการทำนายน้อย่างมากมาย พืชผลที่พวกเขาปลูกก็ออกดอกออกผลเจริญเติบโตงอกงามมากขึ้น เพื่อเป็นการแสดงถึงการให้เกียรติแด่พระองค์ flin^amjuwumi flUflajmwiv/Ufl'ulan..

D. Story Four - มนุษย์ในสวน

ณ สวนนั้นที่ใครองค์ผู้เต็มไปด้วยความเมตตากรุณาได้ทรงจัดเตรียมไว้ให้ มนุษย์ผู้ชายและหญิงนั้นต่างก็ชื่นชมยินดีอยู่ในสวน ทั้งใครองค์ก็ทรงปลื้มเปรมไปกับพวกเขาด้วย

มนุษย์ทั้งชายหญิงคู่นั้นต่างก็ไม่ได้สวมใส่สิ่งใดบนร่างกาย ทั้งไม่รู้สึกลอยกันด้วย พวกเขา กำลังเรียนรู้จักการรับผิดชอบ ปกครองสัตว์ต่างๆตามลักษณะพิเศษเฉพาะของมันพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงมองดูและสังเกตเห็นพวกเขาได้ค้นพบสิ่งโน้นสิ่งนี้ใหม่ๆ เขามีความเห็นพ้องกันที่จะจัดการกับสิ่งเหล่านั้นด้วยความคิดสร้างสรรค์เช่นเมื่อฝนตกเขาจะมองหาที่แห้งเพื่อสร้างเพิงที่ปกได้ร่มไม้โดยใช้ต้นไม้ กิ่งไม้ ใบไม้มาประกอบกัน

ในเวลาเย็น พวกเขาก็เดินเล่นกับพระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิต พูดคุย ปรีกษากันและวางแผนงานร่วมกันด้วย ชายนั้นพูดว่า วันรุ่งขึ้นเขาจะทำรั้วกันบริเวณสวนให้เสร็จ เขาคิดว่าจะปลูกอะไรดี พระองค์ตรัสย้อนว่าอยากปลูกอะไรล่ะ เขาว่าข้างๆสวนมีธารน้ำไหลผ่าน เขาอยากปลูกต้นไม้ที่มีเมล็ดเยอะๆ อย่างที่พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตเคยปลูกไว้ พระองค์ตรัสว่า ข้าวหรือเปล่าเขาตอบด้วยอาการตื่นเต็นว่า ไซ้

แล้ว,เมื่อนั้นร่อยมากเขาจะต้องปลูกอย่างไร พระองค์ทรงอธิบายให้เขาว่าต้องมีการเตรียมพื้นที่ของ

Y

Y

Y

Y

3

๑ ๕ ๘ ๖ ๘ ๗

แล้วจึงเรียกชาวนั้นมากินร่วมกัน วนหนง,หญิงนั้นถูกคิดถึงสิ่งที่อยู่ในเมล็ดข้าวนี้

ได้มันที่จะแยกเมล็ดออกจากเปลือกแล้วหุบให้ละเอียดคงจะได้ปริมาณมากพอ เธอก็พยายามคิดก็ได้ผง

1

เอ๋ยชมเรารู้สึกภูมิใจในตัวเธอ หลังจากนั้นเขาก็พยายามหาก้อนหินขนาดพอเหมาะเพื่อให้หญิงนั้น

B

,

Y

Y

ชำเลื่องมองมาทางที่หญิงนั้นทำงานง่วนอยู่บ่อยๆ พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงสอนชาวนั้น ให้รู้จักทำ

เครื่องมือสำหรับขุดหรือตัดเพื่อนำ

เขากลับมาคด สงเกต เปรียบเทียบดู

Y

Y

บิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตและอาการปลื้มใจ พอใจในฝีมือของเขาจากหญิงนั้น เขาจึงได้คิดค้นทำอุปกรณ์

เครื่องมือมากมายสำหรับการได้ในชีวิตประจำวัน

Y

Y

พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตพอพระทัย

Y

Y

พระองค์ทรงปลื้มพระทัยที่เห็น

ต่างๆควด เหมือนกับเป็นการสะท้อนออกถึงปัญญาจากผู้ทรงสร้างพวกเขามา เมื่อพวกเขาได้ใช้

*

Y

อิสระในการแสดงออกโดยการให้แต่สิ่ง

กับที่พระบิดาเจ้าแห่งชีวิตทรงให้แก่พวกเขา ด้วยเหตุนี้เขาก็ได้รู้ชัดเจนว่า ไตรรงค์ผู้ทรงสร้างองค์นี้
คอส เคาและเขาเองคือไคราที่รเบคเผยทละชั้นๆจากพระองค์ถึงความจริงในเรองนั้นทำให้เขารู้สึกว่า

Y

*

Y

*

ธรรมชาติที่อยู่ในสวนนั้น สำแดงออกถึงความสมดุเหมาะสมอย่างกลมกลืน และการอยู่รวม

กันระหว่างไตรรงค์กับมนุษย์นั้นก็ดำรงอยู่ในลักษณะที่ไว้วางใจ เคารพ มีการเสียสละอุทิศตัวซึ่งกัน

Y

Y

Y

และกิน ไม่มีอะไรที่ทำให้พวกเขาทั้งสองมี

รรเสรีญยกย่องให้เกียรติแด่ไตรรงค์พระผู้สร้างของเขา

หนูน

ใจในการทำงานที่พวกเขาควรกระทำและส

พวก

เขารู้สึกเกรงกลัวต่อพระองค์ เพราะสำนึกว่าเป็นผู้ประทอนชีวิตที่มีคุณค่าแก่เขาหากไม่มีพระองค์
พวกเขาก็ไม่ปรารถนาจะมีชีวิตอยู่ต่อไปอีก

เสริญพระเจ้าผู้สร้างด้วยกัน ทำให้
บรรดาทาสอบอวลเต็มไปด้วยไออุ่นแห่งความเมตตากรุณาของพระองค์

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Books

- Appichato, Bikkhu. Vipassana - the Art of Non-Attachment. Bangkok: Dhamma Spread Publication, 1986.
- Bailey, Kenneth E. Poet and Peasant: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Bavinck, J. H. An Introduction to the Science of Missions. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960.
- Beyerhaus, Peter. "Possessio and Syncretism in Biblical Perspective." In Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity?, eds. Yamamori and Tabor, n.p. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975.
- Bowrie, Katherine, ed. and trans. Voices from the Thai Country Side: The Short Stories of Samruam Singh. Madison, WI: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1991.
- Bräumer, Rosemarie und Hansjörg. Scheidung und Wiederheirat. Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler Verlag, 1990.
- Buddhasada, Bikkhu. Handbook for Mankind. Translated by Santikaro Bikkhu. Thailand: Buddhasada Foundation, 1988.
- Buddhasada, Indapanno Bikkhu. Christianity and Buddhism. Thompson Memorial Lecture, 1967.

- Cadet, John M. The Ramakien - The Stone Rubbings of the Thai Epic. Bangkok: Dodansha International LTD., 1982.
- Cooke, Joseph E. "Gospel for Thai Ears." Photocopy. Bangkok, OMF, 1978.
- Costas, Orlando. Christ Outside the Gate. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982.
- Dahlke, Paul. Buddha, die Lehre des Erhabenen. Germany: Goldmann, 1986. j
- Davis, John R. Poles Apart? - Contextualizing the Gospel. Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan Publishers, 1993.
- Die großen Religionen der Welt. Translated and edited by Hans-Joachim Schoeps and Fritz Bolle. München: Droemersch Verlagsgesellschaft Th. Knaur Nachf., 1968.
- Eade, Alfred E. Thompson. The New Panorama Bible Study Course No. 2 - The Study of Angelology. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Bookhouse Company, 1975.
- Egelkraut, Helmuth, ed. Das Alte Testament: Entstehung, Geschichte, Botschaft. Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 1990.
- Frey, Ruth. Arbeit unter Kindern. Moers: Brendow Verlag, 1975.
- Gilliland, Dean S. "Contextual Theology as Incarnational Mission." In The Word Among Us - Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today, ed. Dean S. Gilliland, 9-31. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989.
- Gogerly, D. J. The Kristiyani Prajnapati pr The Evidences and Doctrines of the Christian Religion in Three Parts. Part 1: on Buddhism. Colombo: Christian Vernacular Education Society, 1885.
- Gration, John A. Contextualization of Theology. Wheaton, IL: John A. Gration, 1991.
- Hesselgrave, David J. Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic Books, 1978.
- _____. and Edward Rommen. Contextualization - Meanings, Methods and Models. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1989.

Hoppenworth, Klaus. Der Buddhismus - Handbuch mit Quellen-
texten. Wannweil, Schweiz: Verlag Wort im Bild, 1977.

Jensen, Richard A. Telling the Story. Minneapolis, MN:
Augsburg Publishing House, 1980.

Johnstone, Patrick. Operation World. Grand Rapids, MI: Zon-
dervan Publishing House, 1993.

Keyes, Charles F. Thailand - Buddhist Kingdom as Modern
Nation-State. Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1989.

King, Winston. Buddhism and Christianity: Some Bridges of
Understanding. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press,
1962.

Kirsch, A. Thomas. "Economy, Polity, and Religion in Thai-
land." In Change and Persistence in Thai Society, eds.
G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch, 172-96.
London: Cornell University Press, 1975.

Komin, Suntaree. "The World View Through Thai Value Sys-
tems." Traditional and Changing Thai World View, by the
Joint Auspices of the Southeast Asian Studies Program
and of Chulalongkorn University Social Research
Institute. Bangkok, 1985.

_____. Psychology of the Thai People - Values and
Behavioral Patterns. Bangkok: National Institute of
Development Administration, 1991.

Kraft, Charles. Christianity and Culture. Maryknoll, NY:
Orbis Books, 1979.

Kretser, Bryan de. Man in Buddhism and Christianity.
Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1954.

Kriengkraipetch, Suvanna and Larry E. Smith. Value Conflicts
in Thai Society. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University
Printing House, 1992.

Larson, Donald N. "The Viable Missionary: Learner, Trader,
Story Teller." In Perspectives on the World Christian
Movement, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne,
444-51. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981.

Lockyer, Herbert. The Unseen Army. Heathfield, Sussex: Er-
rey's Printers, n.y.

- Luzbetak, Louis J. The Church and Cultures. Techny, IL: Divine Word, 1963.
- Mulder, Niels. Everyday Life in Thailand: An Interpretation. Bangkok: Editions Duankamol, 1979.
- _____. Inside Thai Society. Bangkok: Editions Duankamol, 1992.
- Neely, Alan. Roberto De Nobili: An Example of Missionary Identification. Wake Forest, NC: Case Study Institute, 1982.
- Nicholls, Bruce. "Towards a Theology of Gospel and Culture." In Gospel and Culture, eds. John Stojtt and Robert T. Coote, 69-82. Pasadena, CA: William |carey Library, 1979.
- Pascal, Blaise. The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978.
- Petchsongkram, Wan. Talk in the Shade of the Bo Tree. Translated by Frances E. Hudgins. Bangkok: Thai Gospel Press, 1979.
- Romarheim, Arild. "The Aquarian Christ." Areopagus 3 (Pentecost 1992): 20-24.
- Rosenkranz, Gerhard. Der Weg des Buddha. Stuttgart: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1960.
- Roth, Robert. Story and Reality. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973.
- Rutnin, Mattani, ed. The Siamese Theatre. Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1975.
- Sauer, Erich. Das Morgenrot der Welterlösung. Gütersloh: Evangelischer Verlag, 1949.
- _____. Das Morgenrot der Welterlösung. Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1985.
- Schaeffer, Francis. Wie können wir denn leben? Stuttgart: Hänssler Verlag, 1977.
- Schlink, M. Basilea. Reiche der Engel und Dämonen. Darmstadt -Eberstadt: Evangelische Marienschwesternschaft, 1974.

Schwarz, Arnold. Mission, Gemeinde und Oekumene in der Theologie Karl Hartensteins. Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1980.

Shaw, J. C. The Ramayana Through Western Eyes. Thailand: Craftsman Press, 1988.

Smith, Alex G. Siamese Gold - The Church in Thailand. Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan, 1982.

Steyne, Philip M. Gods of Power - A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Animists. Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1990.

Tambiah, S. J. "Literacy in A Buddhist Village in North-East Thailand." In Literacy in Traditional Societies, ed. Jack Goody, 86-107. Cambridge: University Press, 1968.

Terwiel, B. J. A Window on Thai History. Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1989.

The Tripitaka. Dhamapada, n.y.

Three Worlds According to King Ruang. Translated by Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds. California: Asian Humanities Press, 1982.

Unger, Merrill, F. Biblical Demonology. Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press. 1957.

Wagner, Elizabeth. Tearing Down Strongholds - Prayer for Buddhists. Kowloon, Hong Kong: Living Books for All, 1989.

Wanner, Walter. Erzählen kann jeder. Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 1982.

Weerasingha, Tissa. The Cross and the Bo Tree. Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1989.

Wolf, Hans Walter. Anthropologie des Alten Testaments. München: Kaiser Verlag, 1973.

_____. Anthropologie des Alten Testaments. München: Kaiser Verlag, 1977.

2. Commentaries

Dickason, C. Fred. Angels - Elect and Evil. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1987.

Frey, Hellmuth. Das Buch der Anfänge - Kapitel 1-11 des ersten Buches Mose. Stuttgart: Calwer Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1935.

Keil, Carl Friedrich and Franz Delitsch, eds. Biblischer Kommentar über das Alte Testament. Erster Teil: Die Bücher Mose, Genesis und Exodus. Leipzig: Doerffling und Franke, 1861.

Kidner, Derek. Genesis - An Introduction and Commentary. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1967.

von Rad, Gerhard. Das Alte Testament deutsch - Das erste Buch Mose, Kapitel 1-12,9. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953.

Zimmerli, Walter. 1. Mose 1-11, Die Urgeschichte 1. Teil. Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1943.

3. Texts

New American Standard Bible. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1977.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Edited by Henry Bosby Wolf. Springfield, MA: G. & G. Merriam Co., 1973.

Zodhiates, Spiros, ed. The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, King James Version. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1984.

4. Termpaper, Thesis

Deininger, Friedrich W. "Folk Buddhism as a Challenge in Preaching the Gospel in Thailand." M.A. Thesis, Columbia Biblical Seminary and Graduate School of Missions, Columbia, SC, 1991.

Wagner, Rudolf. "Die Sicht der Welt und des Menschen in der Bibel und im Buddhismus." Termpaper, Freie Hochschule für Mission der AEM, Korntal, 1991.

Wunderli, Samuel. "The Significance of Shame and Guilt-Oriented Consciences for Cross-Cultural Ministry." M.A. Thesis, Columbia Biblical Seminary and Graduate School of Missions, Columbia, SC, 1990.

5. Periodicals

"Adopt-A-People." Bulletin of the U.S. Center for World Missions 1-2 (January - February 1993): 6.

"The Royal Ceremony of Worshipping the Former Kings of Ayutthaya at the Three-Balconied Pavillion in Ayutthaya." The Siam Society Newsletter 2 (June 1988): 2.

Bosch, David J. "A New Paradigm - Mission as Contextualization." International Bulletin of Missionary Research 4 (October 1990): 149-52.

Gration, John A. "Conversion in Cultural Context." International Bulletin of Missionary Research 4 (October 1983): 157-62.

Matsunami, Yoshihiro. "Significance and Appeal of the Ramayana." Asian Culture 37 (Summer/Autumn 1984): 10-15.

Padilla, Rene C. "The Contextualization of the Gospel." Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 24 (September 1978): 12-30.

Priejst, Robert. "Missionary Elenctics: Conscience and Culture." Missiology: An International Review 3 (July 1994): 291-315.

Rutnin, Mattani Moj dara. "Ramakien - A Living Cult and Tradition in Present-Day Thailand." Asian Culture 37 (Summer/Autumn 1984): 30-35.

Sherk, Wilbert R. "Missionary Encounter with Culture." International Bulletin of Missionary Research 3 (July 1991): 108-10.

Smith, Alex G. "Insights for Frontier Missions to Theravada Buddhists." International Journal of Frontier Missions 10 (July 1993): 125-28.

Steffen, Tom. "Missiologial Education for the 21st Century." Evangelical Missions Quaterly 2 (April 1993): 178-83.

The Willowbank Report - Gospel and Culture. Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 2. Wheaton, IL: LCWE, 1978.

6. Lecture j

Komin, Suntaree. Lecture, Bangkok, 23 February 1993.