

TOWARDS A SRI LANKAN SACRAMENTOLOGY

**A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS ON
CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTOLOGY
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE SRI LANKAN CONTEXT**

R T B ABEYSINGHE

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DEDICATION

*FOR ALL LOCAL LITURGISTS, MUSICIANS,
LYRICISTS, ARTISTS, DRAMATISTS AND THINKERS
IN THE PURSUIT OF AN INDIGENOUS
SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY*

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PREFACE

Sacraments or the Sacramentality of anything, in whichever way we may choose to accept it, is the meeting point between the Divine and the Human. In other words sacraments explains what we do and why we do it and also in our minds justify as to how God perceives and accepts our limited offering.

While it is a broad definition to begin with, the field of sacramentology itself has over the millennia become a wide area of discussion and debate. Much before the reformation and much time after it, the plethora of thinking that has gone into simple practices of our faith, has filled many many pages in scholarly work.

Like in all aspects as Sri Lankans we received the faith mainly from the western world, and with it the sacramental theology that accompanied it. Even today we are reluctant in making even minor changes to our inherited thinking on sacraments.

While efforts have been present in making worship, liturgy and sacraments indigenous we are, at best at the very beginning. This work is to supplement this

intention. The collection of essays were written in a duration of nearly one year. These begin with addressing at least three questions with regard to a general Sacramentology. The second half of each essay is dedicated mainly in answering the question ‘if at all for a local context; then how?’

It did cross one’s mind to allocate even more themes which can be of support to the selected subject such as cultural, religious and liturgist. Yet the nine themes selected would be a ‘peek’ into this most interesting world of what is known as ‘sacramental theology’ in general theological academia. We hope that this would merely be the prolegomena of a wider and diversified discussion on the subject, which would cement even further our commitment towards this cause.

I thank God for this journey, my family, College, Diocese and Church who always continue to support me. Very specially my heartfelt thanks are given to Rev Heshan De Silva for undertaking to write the foreword to this book.

R T B Abeysinghe
Feast of St Mark 2021

FOREWORD

Sacraments carry with it, its plain definition of ‘outward symbol and inward grace’. These have become a significant aspect of our faith practice. While denomination -wise we do have different takes on the objectivity and meaning of sacraments, over the years the presence and practice of same have become part and parcel of the Church’s life.

We welcome this work with its intention of providing what a Sri Lanka can offer to the ongoing discussion on sacramental theology. As all theology is contextual the richness of our culture, heritage and thinking can indeed add to the value of sacramental theology in general.

What we find in many of our prayer books and other related literature are either direct translations from English work or very recent revisions. It is only since the independence and even a few years after which local theologizing came into being in sacramental theology and thereby in worship and liturgies.

Risk taking and sacramental theology have never been complementary in the bygone years. For examples of

such that of being the New World Liturgy at Devasaranaramaya and The Workers Mass of the Christian Fellowship were even frowned upon.

In our context we are surrounded with much blessing that contributes to our faith understanding. We in the Asian context choose to think in a particular manner and we have inherited much of our thinking patterns through the rich historical and social changes in this country. In this regard, we must not be afraid to present our faith in that understanding.

At the Theological College of Lanka, we encourage our community to be the flagbearers of this rich tradition. A local and indigenous theology and theologizing must come into effect through all what we aim to do.

While we commend this work unto God's grace, we hope that it will lead into fruitful discussion and furthering of our contribution towards this interesting subject area.

Rev Heshan De Silva

President – Baptist Sangamaya and Chairperson –
Theological College of Lanka Pilimatalawa

5th May 2021

1. LOCATING OURSELVES IN PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Sacraments become one of the most important aspects of our faith practice. Sacraments give insights, both into our theoretical theology and also on practical theology. It further explains how we understand the Ultimate Reality and how we address the Ultimate Reality. It also draws on varied aspects other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, ethnography and history, which makes up the context on which the sacraments become present and active. It also brings elements from church history and tradition, Biblical interpretations and embeds our experience into how we celebrate sacraments.

Unlike the Roman Catholic church, where a more uniform understanding of the sacraments can be found (that being said sacramental theology was challenged in the Latin American countries) the Protestant churches have been more liberal in their understanding. The Anglican church has welcomed a multitude of approaches, even going to the extent that each province or geographic area will be able to provide liturgies that

resound their own sentiments through their own identity and Sacramentology. That being said let us see how a Sri Lankan interpretation of Sacraments can make a contribution towards the broader discipline.

1. The Multi Faith Argument

The first is that our country is a ‘multi religious’ one and has been for millennia. All faiths in the country were in fact imported, which includes Buddhism and Hinduism which are followed by a major portion of citizens. Sri Lanka is also one of the few countries which have a majority Buddhist population and a ‘religion’ which is not actually a ‘faith’ in itself. The task of theologizing within a context, which is agnostic and sometimes atheistic, can be a daunting task. Christians have learned to be in a lived out faith-relationship with their majoritarian brothers and sisters of different faiths. Many are the aspects that Christians have tried to inculturate in their faith lives in this context. A Sacramentology that is witness to a multi- faith context will always include considerations of the same.

The sacraments would need to be practiced, interpreted and witnessed to make sense of it to a multitude of other faiths. Buddhism and Hinduism do have within these

religions, symbols and cultural practices that have come down through the ages, in what could be interpreted as their own sacraments. Some of these cultural and traditional practices are elaborate, colourful and resplendent with meaning which is derived from their own rich histories and theological thrusts. In that light, Christianity can share some of these insights in our faith practice as well in contextualization.

These sacraments of oriental faiths can be dissimilar to the Christian idea in other ways but still proves its presence with a strong traditional backing. The Christian minister is made aware that he or she does in fact, puts into practice what he or she is called to perform, in the midst of such a variety of sacramental practices. The current Sri Lankan sacramental services are full of colourful and rich elements, which cater to the heart of the faithful. One well known fact with regard to the Roman Catholic establishment in Sri Lanka was that their sacramental services catered meaningfully to all the senses of the people. This was lacking in the protestant churches which followed later and hence the power or retention was low comparatively.

A question might come up as to how well other faiths could influence aspects in another faith. This can be true

to the extent that when in a minority, you tend to keep close to your own faith and this is extremely true of our evangelical brothers and sisters. The answer may lie on the philosophy of the denomination. The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka and its churches are in collective agreement with the policy on working with other faiths. And it is very much a policy of inclusivism. While this has been decried by the extremes in each denomination, this policy and its interpretation has only gotten stronger as time has passed by.

Then, to have a look at the Anglican Church and its mission in the country, it is obvious that this church dwells heavily on the inclusivist end in the spectrum. Thereby, the relationships between the majoritarian faiths and Anglican Christians have become stronger over the years. And locating the Diocese of Kurunagala, which is centered in the heart of the country; one of its main emphases has been interfaith collaboration. The liturgies and worship of the church have been decorated with local literature, tunes, arts, customs and rituals. Local stories, chants, dances, architecture and ethos have found a place in how the church worships and practices its faith in context. To cite a few examples, at the Eucharist and at the prayer of humble access all clergy prostrate before the table. It is widely understood that

this practice comes from the Buddhist custom based on the utmost reverence one can give to the act of Holy Communion. For the wider Anglican church, who may not follow transubstantiation or the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but rather emphasize on transignificance or consubstantiation or merely a memory meal, this departure is quite stark.

As far as contextualization goes, the Anglican church in Sri Lanka and the Diocese of Kurunagala in policy, have been heavy proponents of same. And when we look at context, the first and most striking feature we can observe is the multiplicity of religions, ethnicities, customs, traditions and the cultures. Here the concept of 'culture' means the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist culture which is found everywhere in the life of Sri Lankans. While faith can be something that can be escaped upto some degree, the culture of the nation is something that influences persons daily. In our sacramental services we remove our shoes on entry to the churches and we spend many moments of silence. And greeting is done with folded palms except in a very few city churches. These can be the influence of the dominant culture.

Therefore a study on the sacraments of the Christian church would bring to the table a look at how other

faiths and cultures would influence our practice. While persons from a mono cultural or single faith context have to learn new cultures the Sri Lankan experience is Christians as visitors to an already existing mixed culture. So the idea of a lived out faith journey with other faiths and cultures is not only an option but also a necessity. With sacraments a visible part of a faith, the influence and impact of the wider context is inevitable. A Sacramentology may not be obliged to take into consideration the context on which it is celebrated, yet it is free to inculcate the context that it is being celebrated upon. Jesus at the last supper shared bread and wine, which were observed, by locals in Ceylon when the Portuguese landed as white stones and blood. In many churches the use of roti and plain tea can be found.

Owing to being surrounded by multitude of cultures and faiths, the main line Christian churches have come to view it more as an inescapable reality rather than a curse. And in some corners this fullness has been understood as a blessing and through which sacramental practice is enriched.

2. The break with the colonial faith history

For nearly four hundred and fifty years Sri Lanka was under foreign rule. Being under a foreign rule influences many aspects of life. Christianity was present in Sri Lanka even before but as an organized religion, Sri Lanka underwent a re- faith planting stage with the advent of western powers. Faith administration under the Portuguese, Dutch and the British was a totally different experience for the Ceylonese. It was a different experience for the reason that it was now the faith of the administration. So far the country was ruled by Buddhist and Hindu kings, and both of these categories could also be called as colonial rulings. Anyway, what could be in stark contrast was that the Christian faith was embodied in a foreign culture as well.

Quite contrary to what we might believe under foreign rule, Christian faith was welcomed primarily because it was carried in the capsule of this foreign culture. There is ample evidence to support that much of the work of foreign administrations took root and was spread for nearly half a millennia, because of a certain 'awe' for the culture it housed. It must be agreed upon that this may not have been so for many other countries and contexts. But in the Sri Lankan context, the tales are many of how

missionaries fell in love with the context and vice versa. Maybe the departure between an imperial administration and the authentic faithful could have led to this and possibly to the nationalist waves which led to the independence movement.

As in many cases, when living under a foreign rule, either there is a tremendous push to hold fast to the new culture or to resent it totally upto the extreme of severing ties with it. However, owing to the fact that Christianity's effect on the Sri lankan social, political and religious landscape the Church in Sri Lanka has come to the conviction of a middle path between the two. It is surprising to see how the Church has maintained this stance, even amidst critics from both sides who would push for either end as the stance for the Church. On the side of the push for a localized culture in faith practice, we find the famous statements of an Anglican and a Methodist minister 'to not only be Christian Ceylonese but rather Ceylonese Christians' and 'to replant the Christian plant with the shackles of the western pot that accompanied it in the local soil'.

As in all places of Anglican Christian faith practiced imposed from a foreign rule, the translation of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer in the Sinhala language

came into being just after two years from the surrender to the British in 1820. The first Tamil Bible was in 1802 but it was an adaptation from India. These versions underwent nearly forty revisions altogether well up to the independence, which also reflects the struggle of the local congregations to understand the Word in their own context. In Sri Lanka as there were several denominational types such as low and high church, reformed and evangelical, Roman Catholic oriented etc the approach for the inculturation in both the above publications was a melting pot. In 1928 the first prayer book came into being with an inculturated sense, and from there on, several liturgies reflected a heavy use of local idioms, language, culture, symbols etc in its versions. This push for local liturgies and worship must be in gratitude for the foreign rule. This might be a very hard aspect to prove, but when a congregation is under a different culture you start to appreciate your own culture. Therefore this recognition must be given.

However, on the other end a balance was sought between the congregations who maintained a relationship with the western culture. For that same matter when too much risk taking has been attempted, as we'll see later, there is always the chance of being labeled as too liberal. Therefore on this front, so much revision has taken place

but with the western culture still intact. For example some churches and liturgies resound like ‘visiting our home church in England’ for most Britishers who visit Sri Lanka. And ‘they’ sometimes propose that the western aspect of worship has progressed so much farther and the Sri Lankan situation has become more stagnant. The sacrament of Baptism, which was interpreted solely along western cultural lines, was only recently (in 2015) drafted into a more local, and customized version, where even other faithful could understand its core meaning.

The Sri Lankan identity on the world stage is not known, primarily because of the delicate balance between the two ends that makes it difficult for the end of promotion to have a high reception. Yet especially in the Anglican Communion, with more diversity becoming promoted the opportunity to promote local versions are becoming more available. The impact of now looking at a subject such as Sacramentology, after years under a rule which banked doctrines in entirety is that newer interpretations and new perceptions are being added into the field of sacraments. It will also be an interesting study to compare how other national churches share in the same sentiment. The African nations have come much forward in the description of their faith in terms of their own

feelings and emotions. While the sacrament itself will not change, the concept and the intention can be given a richer meaning when opened into the local culture. While realizing that Sri Lankan Sacramentology is at an early period it also leads into uncovering hidden treasures, suppressed emotions and developing theological reflection.

Therefore a Sacramentology that has undergone; first a love of some sorts, then a falling in line, then revisionist thinking, then radical inculturation and now a progressive path in the journey of contextualization can be of great use to the wider context. It can provide a canvass on which how Christians from a dormant state with regard to liturgical attributes, have found their voice. It also deals with what they themselves have been unable to accomplish, as well and how they think of proceeding towards it.

3. Liberation oriented theology

Sri Lanka is a developing nation. It has to its merit several accomplishments in education and healthcare. It is titled as a middle income country and has a lesser poverty rate than capitalist countries, essentially because of its socialist policies. Some may question each word in

the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (resplendence), based on its modern history. However, the Sri Lankan identity as a friendly nation with a low cost of living and adequate law to keep it in the high human development index category can be a positive.

On the negative side, the country is re-struggling against the best form of governance, internal and external politics leading into violence, the aftermath of a civil ethnic war, discrimination at different levels and economic stability. Apart from these, structurally the country has a majority population in rural areas and villages. In the Diocese of Kurunagala 90% of all people within the diocesan boundaries live in villages and plantations. The advent of the industrial age has been delayed in this country. While the poverty rate is low, with socialist policies, generally the entire population is positioned at a low wage or income level. Therefore those who do fall into the edge of poverty are at a dire state. While boasting of a very good education system and providing many bright minds, the system does not promote retention. And with a highly competitive education system, many are left behind who may get involved in social evils, politics, drugs, violence etc.

Even though the paradise island has many accomplishments, the social-economic-religious environment brings with it something different, than what a higher thinking, progressive and developed nation might bring into the equation. In the same light we talk of salvation in the light of freedom from all evils in this world itself. In the Indian subcontinent we tend to term 'salvation' as 'liberation' and pour upon it other words such as Moksha and Nibbana from Hindu and Buddhist traditions to further illustrate this freedom or unburdening from pain, bondage and suffering. Here the 'liberation' aspect signifies upto a greater degree of what we pray in the Lord prayer of 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' and fine tunes with the liberation aspects of Latin American countries. What most churches do miss is that at each service, whether it be a service of the word or the breaking of bread, the pews are filled up with people who needs to feel better, connected to the greater mystery of what happens when we gather. Unlike the times in the bygone eras, where persons could be kept captive by the faith even without understanding it, the current populations may seek or even demand the making sense of faith practices.

What the Church practices as instruments of liberation; such as the word it preaches, the policies they propose,

social actions they take part in and the sacraments they celebrate cannot be far away from the suffering of the masses. Herein as well, we find one end of thinkers who took sacraments to a different level and at most times they found at odds with the Church. One theologian had his membership revoked for a writing called 'Eucharist and Human Liberation' and another, the famous Michael Rodrigo faced death. We as a Church are very quick to label and corner those who use the sacraments to promote the idea of liberation. A famous example is the May Day mass, where the working people are celebrated with their struggles. At the offertory it is customary to bring a red flag, with clenched fists, and working tools to be offered at the altar. This sort of view is not widely upheld but among the more progressive communities it has its presence.

While Sacramentology cannot be everything for everyone, when we seek the Lord's grace with external signs, it must take into consideration the emotions and anxieties of the many. The interpretation of clergy who administer these sacraments in a top to bottom hierarchy with authority itself, it has been equated to the ignorance of the Roman Catholic church where the liberational ethic took ground. The recent version of the Anglican liturgy displays as its front cover a 'people's edition'

which, might take it a bit more towards a congregational work of God. As congregations engage in Baptism and Eucharist, the latter almost every Sunday or even more frequently the aspect of ritualism must be overtaken by significance of what we are doing.

Therefore a Sacramentology that is given birth to in a context where people are vulnerable, marginalized, discriminated, downtrodden with equally high powerful and political wings overpowering them, the need is to make sure the words of Jesus in the beatitudes of how this suffering must be of joy and blessedness. And this Sacramentology must also lead our faith lives. In Baptism this must be looked at how we become a model community. In the Eucharist the symbolic breaking of one body and one bread must then become a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom. It must give motivation and encouragement to the many. Within a mostly agricultural setting, the meaning itself we give to the gifts of the earth must then touch the hearts of congregations whether they are of the Christian faith or not.

The Sri Lanka, experiment in this task has not only been confined to the sacrament itself. But also with the worship, hymns, prayers, words of response, postures and even the silences are be all directed towards the

communal worship which breaks away from a strict hierarchy, but now speak to the condition and the emotions of the faithful. With a Sacramentology poised towards these aspects from the modern era in Sri Lanka, we can now offer some contribution to the ongoing academia and reflection on a wider stage. Hence when we place this phenomenon coming from a context that reflects something in need of more than nourishment to the body, the beholder might be able to grasp how well sacraments can become the greatest witness in our faith practice.

4. Asian emotionalism

Sri Lanka shares with many developing countries the social issues discussed immediately above and the multicultural aspect. As an Asian country I feel that Sri Lanka also shares something that became a contrast from the times of western influence, which can be the emphasis laid on emotionalism in life. Not to be mistaken that other persons in other geographical areas are of a robotic nature without emotions ! but that when considering the first world, people tend to be less rational and involve must sentimentality into the operations of life. The ‘mystery’ or the ‘mystic’ that first gave enthusiasm for travelers to seek India, Japan or Iran

can be understood in this manner. The African cultures will also have some sort of relation to this and vice versa.

In contextual theology, the break is made not to look at common phenomenon in the light of what has been taught by a foreign enterprise or in any framework that the previous models would have proposed. The intention would be to look at the phenomenon in no light at all!

giving emphasis to the context on which we are theologizing upon. In this case, unless we capture this unheard and silent voice of emotionalism, an administration of sacraments with already preconceived notions will not be of effective use. The challenge will be to give recognition to the experiences and the context on which this is borne. The idea and nature of the ‘mystery’ of sacraments shrouded also in a culture of mystery, will engage the keen student to be engrossed in this mesmerizing world.

To depart from Sacramentology and to come to Sacramentality; we find that almost anything and everything in these contexts do bring emotions and makes connections with people and the divine. Once again the critics who are firmly stood on the western platform of intellectualism and rationalism might disavow of this sort of pantheism. One anecdote from

our Diocese was the work of our second Bishop, a local but also an Oxford graduate, who inculcated dances and drums /conch shells for the procession, little entrance commonly called the announcing of the Gospel and the great entrance of the offertory with the Communion elements. Most congregations who were moulded in the western rational thinking thought that he was possessed!

Yet to this day, thanks to his intervention dances make way at processions and offertory and also the drums and conch shells are sounded at the announcement of the gospel. The main rationale for this can be attributed to the emotionalism that surrounds the Asian cultures. While the former displays the respect, the latter displays the grandeur that has been observed in ancient customs in the country. The simple setting of the altar where two Sesath or Fans are adorned signifies that the King is present or in the mist. In the Royal kingdom halls for secular kings this was the respect that was paid and hence its contextualization into Christianity. One might question whether the presence of the divine King cannot be deduced without these works? And the answer is No, but also this caters to the senses and the emotional heart strings of the community present.

The Sacramentology that comes from a context where emotions are valued, beyond a certain rationalization can also add to the psychological dimension of the sacraments as well. Evangelicalism has gripped most parts of the Christian world and certainly challenges the Indian Subcontinent by the total eradication of intellect. In countries such as Sri Lanka the evangelical denominations or free churches have jeopardized the intricate balance that has been struck with the interfaith collaboration discussed earlier. But none can disagree with the emotionalism that comes into play with these new churches. One way the mainline churches have countered this culture is by imbibing emotionalism into their own faith practice as not to show contrast. The Anglican church, which weighs down heavily on sacramental practice must also innovate in this regard to capture the cultural and emotional sentiment.

The drama of the Eucharist as it has come down to this day, elaborates it with postures, movements, music, singing and the like. If the faithful are educated to the level of observing the mystery unfold in a dramatic and theatrical style, the attraction for some will also be more and this is supplementary to the actual spiritual welfare of the sacrament. Asians while also weighing down to the side of emotionalism they also are different in terms

of communication. While blanketing the whole of Asia may not be appropriate in this manner, but at least in the Indian Subcontinent, persons are not always at ease with direct confrontation. More emphasis is laid on the relationship and this might have been captured by non Asians in their communication with the locals. A culture of silence has been observed in some quarters of Asian communication.

There are several Asian theologies that have come into light such as Minjun, Water Buffalo, Dalit, Tribal, Adivasi and Womanist in which this component of a voice without sound is mentioned. This eventually leads the communities into a state of being trampled upon. And from this platform they theologize in relation to Jesus as the life giver and liberator with re-rereading of the Bible with a different lense. Under these circumstances, a Sacramentology which caters to people in this manner can be of great importance to the wider church which as discussed above will touch on areas such as psychology, communication, homiletics even aesthetics and arts. The mystery of these sacraments fits perfectly with the mystery that has been present or can be anticipated within an Asian culture. To the merits of liberation theologians within these regions there have been certain drives to develop reflections that capture

this sentiment. The Sri Lankan contribution has been minimal compared to its counterparts. Yet this fact has been captured amply in the liturgies, worship and sacramental celebration. And it must be shared to celebrate this witness in context.

5. Liturgical risk taking and progressiveness

Liturgical risk taking is not the monopoly of any geographical location or any particular denomination. Yet there are some communities that seem to have entered this arena quite late and for that reason seem to be over enthusiastic about engaging in same. Phillip Tovey a liturgical scholar mentions that the first Sri Lankan liturgy that came out in 1933 was revolutionary. It was so because it looked eastward and a break from the west. This liturgy was one of the two in the entire Anglican Communion that deemed fit for such a break. In structure and wording the liturgy followed influences from eastern liturgies and musical settings for the first time became reflections of indigenous folk, boat, farmer songs.

Of the two liturgies of worthwhile mention at this point, the first was referenced earlier as the May day mass. It

was unique in the sense that symbolism changed the entire worship to place it in a labourer's setting and with reference to his/her struggles and liberation. The second noteworthy liturgy came from a monastic community called Devesaranaramaya. The risk taking element is quite visible in the collect for purity where homage is paid to Christ, the Buddha, the Prophet Mohammed, Marx and many other Hindu sages of enlightenment. As our second Bishop who was mentioned above, endorsed this version for public use, the same who thought he was possessed were now certain of it! The mere mention of Marxist components in liturgies at a time where a Marxist led revolution was seizing power from the government where ten thousands of youth lost their lives was a controversy to say the least.

In both the above liturgies, the theology of the sacrament becomes something far away from an agape, memory, personal salvation meal. It goes beyond the concept of a narrow understanding of our Lord's words and become significant in proving a 'liberation' that is comprehensive. It brings hope of a future and a future community in eschatological terms. In the recent revisions of liturgies we find Sacramentology becoming more Lankan and its reception becoming more acceptable. This might also add to the subject of risk

taking as it symbolizes that the community to whom the worship is designed for, are content with same which may provide further impetus for sacramental theologians to further adapt these services. In a way working with the Anglican theologies is beneficial for this subject as this denomination has by far allowed for a plethora of interpretations to be given regarding this subject. On the Roman catholic and the Orthodox front the degree of change from their original interpretations is minimal. And risk taking is looked upon as something that would take many, many years of discussion and debate. In the same breath we can describe the work of Schillebeekcx and Rahner who presented, in a way not so radical to the academic community, the idea of transsignificance and transfinalization. Yet these were outright dismissed and the Church rejected even the opportunity for these to be attached as alternative meanings.

In the more free and protestant churches we find that Sacramentology opens avenues of varied interpretations, but on the whole the thrust of the subject as vital is absent. One reason we can afford for this purpose is the use of liturgies. On most occasions at least in the Sri Lankan context, new liturgies do not find space and the insistence that that must be so is also downplayed. As Sacramentology is based on either liturgies, traditions

and view of theologians and when importance is not given to these elements a Sacramentology might have difficulties in blossoming. What an Anglican/Episcopal community can provide at this point, especially in this subject, will be the freedom to take risks and also to make it part of the life of the Church. In Sri Lanka both the past and present liturgies keep on making its impact on the life of the community.

Based on its short life span of liturgical innovation, it is safe to say that, more can be expected as time passes by. Accompanying the theology will also be the other aspects of symbolism, customs, music and other art forms. It is not uncommon to see elephants in the procession of a traditional setting in the Church of Ceylon and the replacement of wine and wafers with milk rice and passion fruit juice. The all golden blazed thurable is replaced with the Hindu temple used coal carrier and sitting on the ground for services emphasizes the utmost for the highest as in a Buddhist temple. The epitome of the two liturgies of mention will be the reading of passages from other religious traditions and the mention of other sages within the service. In the New world liturgy while bread and cup being is being passed around, each person can offer his or her own interpretation of what this means for oneself. In the

workers mass, non Christians partake of the communion as well. It is not a surprise that thinkers on one end of the spectrum of Anglicanism itself might not always agree with this overly liberal approach. Yet the service is structured in such a way that its theology makes invitation for all to take part in the cup of suffering and hope.

At the outset it was mentioned that Sacraments provide one of the best practices where we identify ourselves and also how we know God. And the manner in which these sacramental services are conducted with contextualization leads us to understand of how we as Sri Lankans interpret the presence and operation of God. And in the cases where we might break off from the traditional, it also goes on to show how well we place ourselves in the community of God and the sensitivity we decorate ourselves with the goodness and richness of culture.

For further discussion

For the researcher locating his or her work within his or her time and space is vital for the sake of contextual theology. Making the context ‘speak’ in relation to the subject and God selected must be the task of contextual

theology. In Sri Lanka a relatively old country from 5BCE but with a Christian history of about one fifth of that period and an independent voice in Church related matters of about one tenth of the one fifth above, the context and surrounding of the country and people do seem to offer much more than what the Church in a short period could contribute. 'The best may yet to come' could be a fitting statement in the case the Church stands true to its progressiveness. And the realization that a 'whole new world is out there' in terms of our theologizing and reflection, further motivates minds to take from the past but look towards the future. Sacramentology being part and parcel of the Church comes impacted and influenced by all these aspects. To the credit of the national Church, significant milestones in Sacramentology have already been made, however with critique. While this is an important area in the faith of any locality, it has become evident that reflecting on these instruments of grace cannot be done in isolation from the context. Therefore as 'different winds' affect this subject, the academia and practice of same has become richer, deeper and meaningful. New themes and suggestions emerge in connection with other subject areas which makes this interdisciplinary.

2. SOURCES AND VOICES

Sources and Voices make contextual theology. These factors also add uniqueness to theology which is born through that context. Let us look at a few of these sources and voices (voices themselves become a source) that are essential in reflecting from a Sri Lanka context and which give it a certain identity.

a. When reflecting on Sacramentology from a Sri Lankan point of view, the first ‘source’ that comes into mind is the country itself, with its unique history, sociology, problems and aspirations. As a Church that continues to theologize ‘in’ this country or setting it is necessary to count it as source for reflection. Theological reflection takes place in ‘with the two experiences of the past and the present’. The present experiences take into consideration the personal or communal, religious or secular, social change and social location¹. All these factors define the status of the ‘context’ we theologize in and become ‘part and parcel’ for our theologizing experience.

¹Bevans, Stephen. (2012) *Contextual Theology for the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: James Clarke, p 9.

b. The second source of importance is the work of the Church or rather the mission of the Church. Here especially the Anglican or Church of Ceylon is highlighted due to its emphasis on Sacramentality and Sacramentology over other mainline denominations. Where ever the church becomes implanted it is called in the Spirit to become missionary and this can take many forms. The mission derived from the gospel must become meaningful to the audience or congregation that is present. The phrase, ‘gospel in culture’ becomes vital as it becomes the substance of religious truth that has the capacity to speak in any culture. The mission of the Church must be reflected upon, not as simply the propagation of ready-made doctrine but as the constant discovery of the gospel’s “infinite translatability” and missionary intention. The inability of the mission to ‘translate’ the gospel makes the ‘mission’ stagnant and incapable of producing anything, what we call contextual theology. In another light the will of the mission is a vital factor.

c. The third aspect of what can be considered as a source for Sacramentology is the work of thinkers and pioneers who formed the platform for a local theologizing. This group of initiators includes liturgists, theologians, church leaders, artists etc. As was mentioned in the earlier

reflection the country is very young in terms of liturgical innovation and risk taking. The few examples of what has taken place remain radical in the eyes of the many. Yet in our faith practice, sacraments are integral for mission and reflection. The contextual nature of theological reflection is rooted in the sacramental nature of Christianity.² He further goes onto discuss not only of the communion for this purpose, but of many other outward symbols of internal grace. However, the Eucharistic rite and its many interpretations stand out as developing and enriching the nature of contextual theology.

d. Theology flourishes best when it can learn from and contribute to various disciplines, faith communities, and debates on matters of public importance³. A theology of sacraments becomes effective when it has been baptized in the environment, change and the many voices that make up that environment. A Sacramentology that becomes only a rite but without any significance to a wider population; ends up becoming cultic in nature. Especially, in the trends of Sri Lanka along socio-

² Bevan, Stephen. (2018) *Essays in Contextual Theology*. Boston:Brill, p34

³Ford, David. (2000) *Theology:A very Short Introducton*. Oxford. Oxford University Press, p 20.

economical-religious etc lines our faith practice must dive into these realities and make sense of what we attempt to do, effective to what we experience outside. This itself can become radical in the sense that the Church must go out of its walls and restrictions in addressing the liberation of all people everywhere.

e. In this case the ‘privileged’ use of the Bible and its interpretation in contexts would be an important source towards this discussion. While the liturgical interpretation from the Last Supper has led to the sacrament as we know and practice of it today, coupled with other passages from the Biblical text, we are able to find meaning to this context in a special manner. Both the Johannine Last Supper scene and the Road to Emmaus story draw out the epistemological implications of the Eucharist: that despite the appearance of Christ’s absence from his followers, he would still be present with them in the Eucharist.⁴ And we become aware that when we do partake of the Eucharist we are commemorating Jesus. Parallels of sharing bread can develop our understanding from a secular point of view

⁴Arcadi, J. (2018). Known in the Breaking of Bread: A Biblical–Theological Foundation for the Eucharist. In *An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist* (Current Issues in Theology, pp. 26-61). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
doi:10.1017/9781108588560.003

or even from other scriptures, but we understand that we are led by our Lord's invitation to take part in this practice. We become motivated to 'act' with Jesus now part of us as communicants. Our foundation is theological and our mission centered on Jesus.

a) Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka (6°56'N 79°52'E), is an island country (65,610 km²) in South Asia in the Indian Ocean⁵. Sri Lanka's prehistory is dated from over 125,000 years ago and its documented history has a span of over 3000 years⁶. The genesis of Buddhism is well documented within the history of the country, with the Pali Canon (Collection of Scriptures in the Pali Language of Theravada Buddhism) being written in 29BC at the fourth Buddhist Council held in Sri Lanka.⁷ Indigenous tribes (Yaksha, Naga and Veddahs) were its original inhabitants and with the

⁵ WorldAtlas.com, (2019). *Sri Lanka*. (online). Available at <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/lk.htm#page> (Accessed 7 Nov. 20)

⁶ Deraniyagala, Siran U. (2014) Pre and Protohistoric settlement in Sri Lanka. *International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences XIII U. I. S. P. P.* (online). Available at : https://www.archaeology.lk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Prehistory_and_protohistory_of_Sri_Lanka.pdf (Accessed 23 May 2019)

⁷ Wiesbaden, O. (1983) Pali Literature. In : J. Gonda., ed, *A History of Indian Literature* Volume VII. 1st ed. Germany: Kempton, page 10

arrival of a prince from India called Vijaya Sri Lanka's monarchical rule was established.⁸.

Sri Lanka's kingdom shifted from the North Central regions towards the central regions for over 1900 years (380BC -1515AD). Sri Lanka was colonized by the Portuguese (1505-1656) the Dutch (1656-1796) and the British from (1796-1815). In 1948 Sri Lanka declared independence from the British Crown and became a republic in 1972. Today it has a semi presidential system of governance.⁹.

Its export economy is based on tea, rice, clothing and tourism. Sri Lanka is *rated high on the Human Development Index (a composite index based on life expectancy, per capita income and education) and is top ranked in terms of per capita income among the South Asian countries. Sri Lanka has a rich mix of ethnicity (Sinhalese 74.8%, Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils 16% and Moors 9.2% with small populations of Malays and Burghers), languages*

⁸ Mahavansa.org (2007.) *The Coming of Vijaya*. (online) Available at: <http://mahavamsa.org/mahavamsa/original-version/06-coming-vijaya/> (7 November 2020)

⁹ De Silva, K. M. (1981). *A History of Sri Lanka*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 133-210

(Buddhists 70%, Hindu 13%, Islam 9.2% and Christians 7.4%) and languages¹⁰.

b) The Church in Sri Lanka

It is widely believed that Christianity existed in Sri Lanka in the first century. This is attributed to the apostle Thomas who is also the patron saint of the land, who according to legend preached in Sri Lanka and a church in Gintupitiya in the Colombo suburbs is named after him. Records suggest that Christians in Kerala (also evangelized by St Thomas) and Persian Christians (communities who formed the Nestorian schism based on the doctrine of two persons of God and Jesus)¹¹ existed in Sri Lanka even before the advent of western powers in the 16th century. This is further evidenced by the location of Sri Lanka as a port which continuously brought traders from parts of the world who had also contributed to the continuation and enrichment of the

¹⁰ Department of Census and Statistics (2011). *Sri Lanka Census of Population and Housing*, (online) Colombo, Department of Census and Statistics, Available at http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2011/Pages/Activities/Reports/CPH_2012_5Per_Rpt.pdf (7 November 2020).

¹¹ Aprem, Mar. (2013) Early Christianity in Sri Lanka and India and Issues of Identity. *All things Assyrian*, (online) Available at <http://www.aina.org/ata/20130903031249.html> (Accessed 7 November 2020).

faith. One fact that has been detailed a number of times in the search for Christianity before the colonizers has been the Anuradhapura Cross which was found in the 6th century ¹².

When the Portuguese invaded Sri Lanka there were conversions to Roman Catholicism which was quite significant that even today almost 83% of all Christian faith adherents in the land are Roman Catholics. The Dutch missionaries in the 17th century were able to convert almost 21% of the population to Christianity. They also built the first Protestant church of the country in Wolvendhal in Galle in 1749 ¹³ In a liturgical sense this number has gradually decreased dramatically and it is attributed to the absence of the vivid sense of worship with the stimulation of the five senses that was present in the Roman Catholic rite.

When the British came to Sri Lanka several denominations took ground, primarily Anglicanism,

¹²Hocart A. M.,(1924). *The Ratana Pāsāda, the Western Monasteries of Anuradhapura, Excavations in the Citadel, The so-called Tomb of King Duttagamani, Privy Stones*.(1st ed). Archeological Department (Ceylon):Colombo, 51–52.

¹³Paranavithana,K.D. (2002). *Wolvendaal Church - Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka - 360 years of history*. (online). Available at <http://www.lankalibrary.com/geo/dutch/church.htm> (7 November 2020)

Methodism, Baptists, Presbyterians, Salvation Army and the American Ceylon Mission mainly through the work of the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel ¹⁴. Today these denominations belong to the National Christian Council and several independent churches form the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka. Even though a minority, the Christian faith has continued to impact the country significantly through governance, education, arts, social work and heritage.¹⁵.

“Anglican presence in Sri Lanka dates from the arrival of the first Colonial Chaplain, Cordiner, in 1799 under the Bishop of London. Consequent to the Anglican Churches of South India, North India and Pakistan becoming part of United Churches in their respective countries and the Anglican Dioceses of Burma becoming an autonomous Province, the wider historic Province of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon

¹⁴ Balding, J.W., (1922) *One hundred years in Ceylon, or, The centenary volume of the Church Missionary Society in Ceylon, 1818-1918*. Madras: Printed at the Diocesan Press, 63-68

¹⁵ Pinto.L (2013). *A Brief History Of Christianity In Sri Lanka*. (online) Available at <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/a-brief-history-of-christianity-in-sri-lanka/> (7 November 2020)

*ceased to exist. This situation resulted in the two Dioceses of the Church of Ceylon, namely, the Diocese of Colombo and Diocese of Kurunagala, becoming what is known as “extra provincial Dioceses”. The Diocese of Kurunagala was established in 1950 and was recognized legally in 1972. The Dioceses of Colombo and Kurunagala together, constitute the Church of Ceylon*¹⁶.

The Church of Ceylon today comprise of over two hundred institutions including parishes, schools, children and elders homes, farms, vocational training centers, social outreach centers and mission centers spread over each province and district in the country. From its inception the Church of Ceylon had to grapple with the multi- natured situation in the country. The Church membership is made up of Tamil, Sinhala and Burgher communities who speak English, Tamil and Sinhalese languages. It also boasts of varied and diverse socio-economical backgrounds ranging from the private

¹⁶ Diocese of Colombo (2015). History of the Church of Ceylon Diocese of Colombo. (online). Available at <https://www.dioceseofcolombo.lk/diocese/history> (Accessed 7 November 2020)

schooled elite to the labourers and farmers of the country.

The Diocese of Kurunagala must be mentioned especially in the case that even today almost 90% of her membership is drawn from the plantation and village farmer communities. The first Bishop of the Diocese Rt Revd Lakdasa De Mel, confronted this reality with a holistic approach which at one end proposed that this rich cultural mix must be made a missional and policy perspective in the Diocese and on the other hand he reached into the arts, architecture, literature, customs, ideology and many other factors which were prevalent to adapt within the ministry of the Church.¹⁷.

From 1950's leading into the 80's was a period of great change within the country. In one way it was the breaking away from the colonial past but also it led into a vacuum which was to be filled up with the indigenous resources, thinking, potential etc. The Church was in a way influenced by these happenings and on top of that,

¹⁷Abayasekera. Jeffrey, (2002). *Bishop Lakdasa De Mel : Called for justice and uplift of poor*. (online) Available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20150924111814/http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2002/10/27/fea08.html>. (7 November 2020)

the presence of diverse cultural atmosphere insisted that the Church also had to adapt to be ‘faithful in context’¹⁸.

Sociologically, we see that gradually Sri Lankan Christians became more and more aware of the process of diffusion¹⁹ in their society. By introducing and implementing the term contextualization (to adapt according to the context) the Church tried to be sensitive to this natural process of diffusion. Often many people in a particular cultural or religious community tend to think that they have nothing or very little to do with the customs and practices of other communities. But the realization of diffusion in the Christian community led some Christian leaders to venture out into creating new experimental Christian communities in Sri Lanka²⁰.

c) Thinkers

The first work of the missionaries was the translation of the prayer book (Book of Common Prayer) which is an essential element in Anglican worship. In Sinhala it was

¹⁸ Diocese of Kurunagala (2019). *History*. (online). Available at http://www.dioceseofkurunegala.com/history_of_kurunegala_diocese.php. (7 November 2020)

¹⁹ ‘the action of spreading in many directions’ -

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/diffusion>

²⁰ Fernando. Keerthisiri., (2009). Integrity and Integration of Christian Community in Sri Lanka. Colombo: S. Godage & Brothers., 27-32

published in 1820, and various other editions²¹ were later produced up to 1955. The editions are also part of the attempt that was made to inculturate faith practice. It was not uncommon to find local idiom and ethos in the prayers and practice of the later edited prayer books. The Tamil version was imported from South India. This practice shows a translation model²² of inculturation.²³ However from a secular view point the ‘independent voice’ of the Church was not heard.

*Christianity was interpreted on western lines,
and in non-indigenous concepts. The
missionaries imposed on their adherents in Sri
Lanka the conventional forms of Western
Christianity almost in their entirety, oblivious of
the value of indigenous art forms – music,
drumming, dance and architecture – to Christian
worship.*²⁴

21 Griffiths, D.N. (2002), *The Bibliography of the Book of Common Prayer 1549-1999*, London: the British Library.

²² A translation model has as its concern the preservation of the tradition while adapting faith expressions to a particular context. Stephen Bevans, *CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY* 2020 available at https://na.eventsclooud.com/file_uploads/ff735620c88c86884c33857af8c51fde_GS2.pdf (accessed on 7th November)

²³ Tovey, P. (2004), *Inculturation of Christian Worship*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 4.

²⁴ De Silva, K. M. (1981). *A History of Sri Lanka*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 221

The first motivation for Contextual Liturgies in Sri Lanka was in 1933 with the ‘Ceylon Liturgy’. However, the adopting of this process is credited to Bishop Lakdasa De Mel, the first Sri Lankan Anglican Bishop and last Metropolitan of India:

the early Church was incredibly daring in baptising the national culture into Christ... (hu)man’s religion had to enter into his environment and culture, taking over places, seasons and customs associated with pre-Christian religious observances and with inspired intuition turning them to Christian profit... (s)he who fears to make a mistake ends by making nothing...The wide accommodating charity of primitive days has given way to self-conscious dread of syncretism which testifies to the lack of spiritual powers within .²⁵

Therefore in his thinking the aspect of foreignness had to be replaced by an authentic Ceylonese

²⁵ De Mel, Lakdasa, (1956), *The Christian Liturgy in Ceylon*, The Thirty Third Hale Memorial Sermon Chicago: Seabury.

Christianity.²⁶ Elizabeth Harris reviews the whole movement and sees it as a Christian rapprochement with Buddhism.²⁷ The movement has not been systematically examined but this was considerably improved by a recent publication by the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, which brings together many examples of this movement.²⁸

When he was priest a rural village church in the south of the country the use of the music of folk songs such as the boatmen's song, cartmen's song and the songs of the farmers became part of Christian worship. A musician Devar Surya Sena was instrumental in bringing local tunes and chants into the mainstream services. Devar Surya Sena wrote more about the setting in the *Centenary Book*.²⁹ While lamenting the use of western

²⁶DeMel, L. (1956), *The Christian Liturgy in Ceylon*, Hale Memorial Sermon, http://anglicanhistory.org/asia/lk/demel_liturgy1956.html (Accessed 10 November 2020).

²⁷ Harris, E. (2016), Art, Liturgy and the Transformation of Memory: Christian Rapprochement with Bhuddism in Post-Independence Sri Lanka, *Religions of South Asia*, 10.1 pp 50-78.

²⁸National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (2014), *Jesus Christ: Sri Lankan Expressions*, Colombo: National Christian Council of Sri Lanka.

²⁹Devar Surya Sena (1945), Sinhalese Music in Church Worship, in de Soysa, H. *The Church of Ceylon her Faith and Mission*, Colombo: Daily News Press, pp.187-189.

instruments and translated hymns in many services in Ceylon he mentions that trends have seen a different turn around the world. The Sunday Times quoted him on the liturgy saying:

The majestic theme of the GajagaVannama seemed to fit the Sanctus³⁰; a suggestion of the Boatman's Song – Sivpada tune seemed just right for the Agnus Dei. Bit by bit themes for each part of the service up to the Gloria were given to me. I was merely a channel. Some unseen power seemed to be directing.³¹

This process began at Baddegama in 1929.³² He was also motivated to bring in local dances that were indigenous

³⁰ Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

³¹ *Celebrating Surya Sena's musical endeavour with the Sinhala Liturgy*, The Sunday Times, Sunday April 19, 2015, <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/150419/plus/celebrating-surya-senas-musical-endeavour-with-the-sinhala-liturgy-145115.html> 71 Nov. 20).

³² Karunarathna.M.(2002). *Rev. Lakdasa de Mel: inspiring legend of Baddegama*.(online) Available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20110604225909/http://www.dailynews.lk/2002/10/28/fea03.html> (11 Nov 2020)

and liturgical.³³ Further this indigenization was also extended to architecture and the arts.

The most obvious witness to the Church being indigenous is the employment of the national architecture.³⁴

This was further supported by Sagara Jayasinghe who identifies a wider movement across the Church and calls it the ‘decolonization process of religious architecture’.³⁵ Several churches³⁶ were built to recreate the Kandyan king’s Audience Hall in the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy. Stone pillars were marked with traditional designs and wood carvings were a radical step away from the Victorian gothic of other churches.

This movement was seen as the struggle to ease the colonial roots and to bring about a local identity. D. T.

³³De Soysa, Harold (ed.) (1945). *The Church of Ceylon: Her Faith and Mission*. (Colombo: Diocese of Colombo).

³⁴DeMel, L. (1955), Experiments in Ceylon, *The Ecumenical Review*, 8, No. 1, Oct. 1955, p. 37.

³⁵ Jayasinghe, S (2015), “Identity Crisis” of Post-Colonial Church Architecture in Sri Lanka, *Research Gate*, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327419057>, p. 2.

³⁶Trinity College Kandy and Penideniya Training College chapel among the most famous (trinitycollege.lk/chapel/)

Niles who was pivotal in the establishment of the Theological College of Lanka for this exact reason gives his take in this now famous quote.

*Christianity was not really planted in the soil of Ceylon. Rather it was brought here in flower pots – its blooms pleasant to the eye and the nose – but without possibility of taking root because the treasure remained within earthen vessels*³⁷

Coming back to the first liturgy that was truly Ceylonese ‘*An Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion*’³⁸ was the outcome of a petition by like-minded clergy who sought for an independent expression at the Eucharist and it was valued as an attempt ... to give the religious consciousness of the people of the land an opportunity of adequate expression.³⁹ The committee who initiated this presented the draft to the Archbishop

³⁷ Crose, K. (1963). *Journal of Bible and Religion*, 31(2), 164-167. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1459367>

³⁸ The Ceylon Liturgy Committee, (1931), *An Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion*. Wellawatte: Wesleyan Mission Press.

³⁹ Beven, F.L. (ed) (1946), *A History of the Diocese of Colombo*, The Times CF Ceylon Co, p.117.

of Canterbury and it was consulted by Dr Srawley.⁴⁰ A note was also written in *Theology* by W K Lowther Clarke in 1933 where he describes the rite as ‘very beautiful and workmanlike and repays careful study’.⁴¹

In 1933 the service was locally adapted and it was much different than the 1662 liturgy that was in use across the Anglican Communion and in Sri Lanka at that time.⁴² Wigan notes that the only other liturgy of the time to make such a move was the 1920 Bombay liturgy which was directed as a ‘plea for a distinctive liturgy for the Indian Church’.⁴³ It is accepted that both these liturgies were highly influenced by the liturgy of St James⁴⁴ and showed a definite turn towards Eastern use.

⁴⁰ Jasper, R.C.D. (1954), *Walter Howard Frere. His Correspondence on Liturgical Revision and Construction*, Alcuin Club Collection No. 39, London: SPCK, pp. 252-255.

⁴¹ W.K.L.C. (1933), *The Ceylon Liturgy, Theology*, Vol, 26, No. 152, Feb 1933, p. 101.

⁴² Wigan, B. (1964), *The Liturgy in English*, London: OUP, pp. 82-93.

Wohlens, C. *The Book of Common Prayer. The Ceylon Liturgy*, <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/India/ceylon.html> (Accessed 2020-11-10)

The Ceylon Liturgy: An order for the Administration of Holy Communion (1938), Madras: SPCK in India Burma and Ceylon

⁴³ See, Wigan, B. (1962), *The Liturgy in English*, Oxford: OUP, p.94.

⁴⁴ Liturgy of St. James, a eucharistic service based on the Antiochene Liturgy, said to be the most ancient Christian liturgy. Liturgy of St James. Available at

The Sri Lankan liturgy as it came to be known after independence had minor revisions in 1977. However more radical changes were made in, 1988, 1997, and 2013.⁴⁵ Narmmasena Wickremasinghe indicates that the push for change was from an evangelical group who wanted to withdraw all words ‘inconsistent with the pure word of God’.⁴⁶ Tovey notes that some of the changes were of a positive nature, the use of modern English, the addition of an Old Testament lesson, the moving of the peace to before the offertory, the increase of congregational participation⁴⁷. Bishop Jabez Gnanapragasam commented that the intention of the

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Liturgy-of-Saint-James> Accessed on 11 Nov. 20

⁴⁵ Buchanan, C.O. (1975), *Further Anglican Liturgies*, Bramcote: Grove Books.

Church of Ceylon (1997), *The Holy Eucharist – The Lord’s Supper*, [Colombo: Church of Ceylon].

Church of Ceylon (1988), *The Holy Eucharist or The Lord’s Supper*, Ratmalana: Deaf School Press.

Church of Ceylon (2013), *The Holy Eucharist – The Lord’s Supper*, Colombo: Unie Arts (PVT) Ltd.

⁴⁶ Wickremasinghe, N. (2011), Liturgy at the Synods/Council of the Colombo Diocese, in Diocese of Colombo, *Diocesan Council Salient Trends 1885-2010*, Colombo: Diocese of Colombo, pp. 90-91.

⁴⁷ All of these were a positive development updating the liturgy to the ‘norms’ of the contemporary Liturgical Movement.

compliers was to provide an original and authentic liturgy for today's Sri Lanka.⁴⁸

d) Realities

The first three Sri Lankan Anglican Bishops emphasized that *we are not only Sri Lankan Christians: we are also Christian Sri Lankans*.⁴⁹ The rationale for a cultural, emotional, traditional, societal oriented is expressed in the following long quote by a recent Bishop.

“Worship in the Church of Ceylon is solemn and participatory and includes cultural elements such as drumming, dancing, indigenous lyrics, the prostration, use of the rotti or chapathi as the host, and the lighting of the traditional oil lamp. Clergy preside barefooted; and sesath (colourful banners on colourful poles which symbolize the presence of the monarchy) are carried in Liturgical processions and adorn the sanctuary to indicate that worship is directed to Christ the King. In some congregations and on special

⁴⁸ Quoted in Bilimoria, M. (2015), Sri Lanka, in Chapman, M. (et al.) *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies*, Oxford: OUP, p. 225.

⁴⁹ Billimoria, Marc, (2016), ‘Christian Liturgy in Sri Lanka’ in Chapman M, Clerk. S, & Percy M, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies*, Oxford: OUP

*occasions such ordinations worship is tri-lingual. In many congregations it is bi-lingual. Music is provided from either an organ or eastern instruments such as the tabla, serapina and sitar. Contemporary feature in the Canon of the Eucharist is the reference to “Sages” along with the Law and the Prophets as vehicles of God’s revelation to humans.*⁵⁰

The voice of ‘culture’ and masses that represent the culture of a present context becomes a source that cannot be alienated or neglected in the mission of the Church. While liturgy and worship become one aspect alone in this mission, they remain one of the most important. Indigenization played a major role in this transformational thinking. As mentioned above this movement touched many aspects of the life of the faithful. While different aspects of church life were influenced by indigenization, it was in the liturgies of the Church of Ceylon that the process was to bear fruit.⁵¹

⁵⁰ De Chickera, Duleep (2013), ‘The Church of Ceylon (Extra Provincial to the Archbishop of Canterbury)’, Markham, Ian S., et al *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion*, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell

⁵¹ Chapman, Mark D., Clarke, Sathianathan & Percy, Martyn (eds) (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies*. Oxford: OUP.

Unlike other religious traditions where even the religious language is archaic and incomprehensible, the Church has made far greater strides in their missiology. This is part of the Church's missiological imperative, the interaction of worship and culture and also a dialogue of Gospel and culture.⁵²

The aims of these liturgies is to relieve of "Anglo Saxon Captivity"⁵³ and to "Overcome cultural alienation" whereby still many in the Church are drawn to the western model of worship and liturgy and find themselves at odds with the majority of the population.⁵⁴

Few liturgies of note can be described here where Sacramental theology has been transformed. Contextualization of the Liturgy, breaking away from the Greco-Roman model in the Eucharist within an Asian liberation theology and local culture approach was done in the 1960s by Sevaka (servant) Yohan Devananda of the Devasaranaramaya (Refuge in God monastery) and Vijaya Vidyasagara of the Christian-Marxist

⁵² Tovey, Phillip, (2004), *Inculturation of Christian Worship*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

⁵³ Sykes, Stephen and Booty, John, (1988), *Study of Anglicanism*, 1st edn., London: SPCK.

⁵⁴ Tovey, Phillip, (2004), *Inculturation of Christian Worship*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

organisation, the Christian Workers' Fellowship (CWF) in their respective New World Liturgy and Workers Mass⁵⁵

Devasaranaramaya pioneered the New World Liturgy with elements from other religions and secular ideologies and became a center for contextual liturgical innovation that

*became an outstanding model for combining meditation and action, withdrawal and engagement, contemplation and struggle. The 'New World Liturgy' of the center captures this multifaceted orientation of the ashram.*⁵⁶

Dornberg identifies 'Kingdom of God theology' in the articulation of this liturgy, which he elaborates as

an ecclesiological one which stresses that God's Kingdom is larger and more manifold than the

⁵⁵ Devananda, Yohan, (1968), *If They Had Met*, Devasaranaramaya NWP, Colombo: Wesley Press.

England, John. C, (1986), Indigenization in Davis J.C (ed.), *Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 1st edn. London: SCM Press.

⁵⁶ Ariarajah, S. Wesley (2018). *Moving Beyond the Impasse: Reorienting Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

*Church: a thought which has great relevance considering Sri Lanka's multi-religious atmosphere ...*⁵⁷

The May Day workers mass was a liberation oriented liturgy where red is worn by clergy with the hammer and the sickle motif on vestments, where the tools of labour are brought forward at the offertory. In the words of Vidyasagara one of the pioneers of this service order

The naturalness with which people of other faiths and persuasions are able to participate in CWF services is itself confirmation of the power of Christ to draw and unite people when he is presented in a manner intelligible to their cultural ethos and thought forms... In the Workers' Mass for instance there is found a truly Asian harmony of word and silence, of stillness and movement. The ceremonial of the Mass too is essentially local in character. The national dress of the servers, the use of sesath, pandams and incense burners of the type used in temple processions, the dancing during offertory, the

⁵⁷Dornberg, Ulrich (1992) *Searching Through the Crisis: Christians, Social Change in Sri Lanka in the 1970s and 1980s*. Colombo: Logos

*prostration after the elevation, the manual gestures of the clergy and people together with the musical orchestration and the blowing of the conch shell and sounding of drums all contribute to making this liturgy a truly Sri Lankan product*⁵⁸

These two liturgies have specifically captured two very importance aspects of the Sri Lankan culture which are multi religiosity and socio-economic liberation. One Roman Catholic theologian describes this as the double baptism⁵⁹ that Sri Lankan theology must undertake in finding meaning. The ethos of a mere memory meal of the Eucharistic is far surpassed when it is imagined and pondered upon a context of multiculturalism and multiclassism.

However the tension an academic might have in this pursuit is not what can be experienced totally at the pew level. Under this the 'voices' that must be considered are also of the evangelical wing of the Church and the mere

⁵⁸Vidyasagara, Vijaya (2007). *Christian Ministry to the Workers: Challenges and Opportunities*, Colombo: Diocese of Colombo.

⁵⁹Gutzler, Antoinette, "The Soteriology of Aloysius Pieris: An Asian contribution" (2002). ETD Collection for Fordham University. AAI3037217.
<https://research.library.fordham.edu/dissertations/AAI3037217>

traditionists. Both these groups share similar anxieties in the social outreach of the Church through these liturgies upto some point. At the same time the traditional wing of the church has feared the dilution of ‘other truth’ into the already existing salvific structure. Ostracizing of even attempts to adapt a liberative element into the Eucharist has come under fire.⁶⁰

On the other side the Evangelical wings even in the main line churches have seen an increasing discord with sacramental practices. It is influenced by the increasing Free Church movement which at times also interferes with the religious harmony of the country⁶¹. The idea of a Sacramental church which only caters to themselves or not cater at all, seem to be a more realistic evaluation based on the comments of these groups. This leads the Church into tension but it also makes for the more progressive persons within the main line churches to become ‘voices in the wilderness’ and this might be one

⁶⁰ _____ ”Fr Tissa Balasuriya”.

<https://liberationtheology.org/people-organizations/fr-tissa-balasuriya-omi/> Accessed on 11 November 2020

⁶¹ Matthews, Bruce.(2007). Christian Evangelical Conversions and the Poitics of Sri Lanka. *Pacific Affairs*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262139024_Christian_Evangelical_Conversions_and_the_Politics_of_Sri_Lanka
 Accessed on 11 November 2020

grave challenge to the future of liturgical progressiveness.

e. The privileged use of the Bible

Here we can discuss a few portions of Biblical texts and how it translates into a wider context and more so in to the Sri Lankan scenario.

The Abundance and Equality – Ex 16.4 the depiction of Manna from heaven symbolizes the abundance in this case of food, that is available through God's providence. In situations in this country and also the world where millions sleep with one meal a day and half of the populations are malnourished, we call into question how this has come about. Is it that we withhold our generosity to others, and we are unable to share what we have? On a larger world scale, we see how war, politics, corruption and the like have made some countries have deaths of children due to hunger. Like in the words of Mahatma Gandhi that the world is sufficient for everybody's need but not for everybody's greed, stands quite true. It leads us to understand that the sharing of our Eucharist is a call to identify and support those who lack nourishment. We can venture further and think of this nourishment not only in terms of food but also of other issues, which makes inequality amongst humankind. The 'table of

equality' that the Lord provided at the supper gives insight into a future of equality and sharing. In the Sri Lankan context we find the struggles of many people who are in poverty and who are unable to tend for themselves and their families. They also remain in this situation sometimes due to structures. The plantation community who symbolizes their bread through roti or a wheat flat bread, are unable to progress socio – economically due to their labour which has been exploited with the plantations, yet they end up earning the most foreign income to the country.

Stewardship and Dignity – Ezekiel 4.9 the prayer at the offertory, we pray that 'You are the giver of this bread, fruit of the earth and of human labour'. It calls us to remember that the splendence of the earth provides all the nourishment we need and bread and wine are the labour of humans. The wonderfulness of the earth and everything in nature sustains us. It is a call to protect what protects us. And when we come to labour at agriculture, at most times this trade is looked upon as something that is inferior. In the farmer communities in Sri Lanka, which was also known as the 'store house of the east', due to its agricultural produce in the early centuries, there are hardly any persons who want to go into farming. This is a situation that has made Sri Lanka

depend on exports even in rice, which is the staple food of the land. In this way when we partake of the communion it reminds us of the daily and simple aspects of life. These are all life giving and it is life giving because of the hard labour of people whom we at most times discard from society. The use of village, folk and farmer tunes and chants in the liturgy are but a small degree of respect that can be paid for the work of these persons.

Eschatological Kingdom -Acts 2. 46 – The early community used the breaking of bread to symbolize ‘communion’ with each other. It was significant that even today in the Jewish culture ‘the breaking of bread’ symbolizes that one person is in harmony with another. In a society that is increasing in xenophobia and discrimination, we critically look at how the Christian community can envision a different future. Does it mean that Christianization is the only solution? If pluralism is valued then how will each sector of the society learn to be in communion with the other? Is the world moving only towards an ethical communion rather than a religious one? For the sake of humanity, new models of co existence are reflected upon now with more vigour than ever before. It is here that we become presented with the opportunity to reflect on the Eucharist and its

symbolism to a future society; a society where barriers are broken and bondages are not known of. In Sri Lanka's present situation we find religious extremism jeopardizing the balance of harmony that was present for over two and half millennia. Global as well as local players influence this crisis negatively. In the midst of such danger we reflect on Jesus who we find in the Eucharist who called us to love one another unconditionally and to go to the level of even laying down one's life.

The Unworthy Partaking - 1 Cor 11. 20 – In this passage Paul rebukes persons for their greed and carelessness in this holy act. With the intention of the Lords Supper to nourish us through the body and blood of God's son Jesus Christ, we reflect on the other aspects that deal with personal discipline, holiness and attitudes. For one example we can quote the ecumenical pilgrimage of the church in Sri Lanka. It is said that at the Lord's Table we share the one cup but when we come out into our own denominations we share different cups. In the similar manner 'the bread which we break is it not a sharing of the body of Christ' bring with it concerns on the ecumenical stage. In Sri Lanka we find denominations further being polarized while 'visible' unity is overshadowed by the practical situation. Another

aspect we can add to this discussion will be our ethical conduct, whether this be in discrimination of persons based on class and ethnicity. While the cases of such discrimination are rare there is tension between the urban and the rural sectors of the Church, and for that matter of any denomination. While the Church was witness at some point in the harmony of the country where Tamils and Singhalese live together, there are also concerns that some Christians have increasingly favoured the present government, who have changed the constitution and the rule into an authoritarian regime. With the sweeping of the present government many calls for justice and peace in the country have been deafened out, cases for missing persons in the last stages of the war have become swept under the carpet and a overarching militarization has been found in everyday life. A major portion of Christians also voted in favour of these changes or what was anticipated as similar changes. This calls into question the calling of being 'free' in the Christian sense and what our attitudes towards this concept must be.

III. LOCALS AND GLOBALS

The global village is a reality that cannot be discarded. It has brought each country closer together. The flow of information has become faster through communications. This has made every aspect of life from any part of the globe be accessible to others. Globalization has made travel, trade, and even transmission of culture convenient and rapid. One area main area that has certainly got impacted to its maximum, through the reality of globalization is education.

More than ever, at any given time in the history of the world, education has become accessible. Sharing of content has become convenient. The task of scholarship has become closer to each academic community than it was traditionally. Research that takes place in one context is readily available to another. Joint programmes can now be accomplished with ease, and critique of others done is also possible with relative ease.

However, when we look at sciences, with its renowned and ‘contributory’ aspect, what scholarship offers can be similar. For an example in physics there could be three experiments taking place on wave lengths at different parts of the world. More or less they will all use the

same scientific principles, same equipments and same manner of measurements. What they hold to be 'true' is accepted as based on empirical data, investigation and results.

However, this differs when we come into the realm of humanities and social sciences. This is because there can always be different interpretations which spring up from different contexts. The curve skews further apart when we talk of something such as faith or interpretation of faith or how people practice faith. Theology, as the academic wing of how faith governs religious beliefs is no exception when it comes to the effects of globalization. And we might call it as one subject area that has become increasingly susceptible as globalization spreads its influence.

As Schreiter notes the task of theologizing has been influenced by the following phenomena

- as social relationships are realigned,
- cultural production is both homogenized and fractured,

- and peoples migrate and mix at an unprecedented rate?⁶²

He later goes onto show that four discourses such as feminist, ecological, liberation and human rights are some of the emerging trends stemming from this phenomenon. Coming to nearly two and a half decades of post publication of this book, we might observe other trends as well. One of these could be the religious discourse, where we find it affecting traditional religion with either total alienation or extremism.

The importance of theologies which started to emerge in the second half of the last century has indeed challenged the traditional understanding of the subject. The dominant theology or rather the method which was based on thinking and cultures of the west, were conflicted with the newer trends. In some way these trends were not welcomed and it was looked upon as diluting factors. At times they became special areas within theology but was totally unaffected by it.

The recognition for 'context' as resource, has brought the dilemma or in some cases, the advantage for thinkers

⁶² Robert J. Schreiter. *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*. Maryknoll, Orbis, 1997, p ix

to learn and use different interpretations in their task. When we find two or more aspects of the same issue described, which is unlike in the sciences, it can either be understood as an enriching experience or on the other hand a struggle. Fortunately in theological circles across the developed academia the recognition of ‘thinking about thinking’ has reached an acceptable state. Therefore contextual theologies are now finding its voice among establishments.

In this light are we able to define what is ‘truth’? Is truth univocal when concerning some aspects? Or can anyone keep on defining something that has come down to us in an authoritative manner. In a spiritual sense, when we define the human quest as limited to find the immeasurable qualities of God or a Supreme Being, the more attempts we do are a witness to the majesty of God. If Christianity has concluded that research is not necessary in the task of knowing the operation of God, then the answers we have should suffice to give solutions to all the questions of the world. Since this has not taken place, we continue studying the faith in relation to context, history, other religions and the Bible.

When we dawn upon sacramental theology or in this case the Eucharist as one of these elements that can be

disputable, it certainly has its precedents much before this time period, where we are comfortable over interpretations. Literally, metaphorically and spiritually battles have been waged over the interpretations of the last supper of our Lord. From a mere memory meal to a mystery, to a rite of extraordinary holiness proportions to liberation theologies, the range of interpretations for the Eucharist which comes down to the one line ‘do this in remembrance of me’ are varied, substantial and enriched with meaning.

Was ever another command so obeyed? For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need from infancy and before it to extreme old age and after it, from the pinnacles of earthly greatness to the refuge of fugitives in the caves and dens of the earth.⁶³

From the Last Supper to the other meals of the Gospels and the New Testament literature itself, the context and

⁶³Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London: Dacre Press, 1945, pp. 743–4.

the intention of the idea have faced several explanations. In the Orthodox Church the lengthy liturgy for the Holy Communion, so resplendent with ritual, actions, symbols and most importantly the priority given to the celebration, may sometime surprise the student to see how this simple meal had got translated into such an elaborate event.

When we follow elaborate masses of the Roman Catholic Orthodox and the Anglican rites we see the culmination of the entire worship and in a way the culmination of their entire faith resting on this action. The action which has become the sole authority of ordained ministers and the many years of training that takes to understand and present the mystery to people, becomes a symbol by which, we are known to the outside world. Out of the many practices Christians may have in their element, for an outsider to the faith the veneration and reverence that is afforded to the Eucharist would be the best example of what might keep them in awe.

In a different light a Roman Catholic priest in Sri Lanka who was a doctor in sacred liturgy, left all his scholarship and went to live with Buddhists in a rural town, where he continued this celebration among them.

His emphasis on the celebration was so unique, it has been documented in non Christian literature as well. It was the 'being' of God amidst people, it was the journey of the suffering God amidst suffering people. In an act of barbaric devastation he was shot ⁶⁴by insurrection groups while he was celebrating the Eucharist and his blood splattered over the vessels, a symbolic Passover with horrendous consequences.

The context of the Eucharist and how it then leads us to understand God are proposed when we study this celebration. It becomes the perfect place where we look ahead, to God whom we celebrate and look back, to ourselves who do the celebrating and understanding each element in time and space. Also influencing the myriad of thoughts regarding this Sacramentology is tradition. The faith and policy of the denomination becomes critical to how we choose to understand this mystery. And it goes without saying that both denomination and tradition are also vice versa influenced by the culture that it was given birth in. The best example for this is the original meal of our Lord.

⁶⁴ Alex Perera. Fr. *Michael Rodrigo Assassinated in 1987: A Man serving PeopleAll people*. Sunday Times. 12 November 2017. Retrieved from <https://thuppahis.com/2017/11/13/fr-michael-rodrigo-assassinated-in-1987-a-man-serving-people-all-people/>

Whatever the precise origin or origins of what later emerged as the Eucharist, the meal traditions of the Gospels are best understood within their Semitic environment, and by what apparently distinguished them from other Jewish meal traditions. From the brief overview of these first-century ce witnesses to ‘eucharistic meals’, it is possible to identify several theological motifs.⁶⁵

Bryan Spinks later goes onto describe the motifs such as eschatological, ecclesiological, soteriological, Christological etc which, thereby gives an insight into what the celebration is and why the celebration is commemorated in any context.

The practice of the Jewish meal with its varied connotations originated from the Israelite background. The use of wine and bread, in the context of the upper room seating were influenced by the habits of what the Jews have been observing as their cultural practice. Here we have found ourselves to think of this as the Passover meal. If for anyone who is without knowledge of what

⁶⁵ Bryan Spinks. SCM Press, London 2013.p71

the Passover means, the similarity of both the meals are quite impossible to grapple with either in a faith or non faith setting.

Therefore, the context of the practice as well as the intention becomes key to understand this action. The liturgical academia led mainly by the Roman church had of course not categorised the Real Presence of Christ in this manner. The Western ideals⁶⁶ of the Eucharist, for whichever polar they may lie have always been made to collaborate with the focus on the elements. Allowing for a long quote, we see how the philosophy, tradition and the focus becomes enshrined in at least three schools of thought; *such as Corporeal Mode, the Pneumatic Mode, and the No Non-Normal Mode,*

On the far-left (realist) side of the spectrum is the first family of modes, the *Corporeal Mode*. This mode states that at the consecration of the elements, the substances of Christ's body and blood become present in some fashion related to the consecrated elements. The manners within this mode vary due to what the manner might say about the consecrated elements, how the elements are related to the body

⁶⁶White, J. F. (1999). *The Sacraments in Protestant practice and faith*. Abingdon Press.p14

and blood of Christ, and what the process might be for the substantial presence of Christ arriving at the location of the consecrated elements.

Moving to the right from the Corporeal Mode is the *Pneumatic Mode* of the presence family of views. These views hold that Christ becomes present in a non-substantial way. The manners within this mode differ on the role that the elements play and what role the body of Christ plays in the benefits that accrue to the recipient of the Eucharist.

....on the far right (non-realist) side are views that fall under the *No Non-Normal* presence family of views. These views state that in the Eucharist Christ is no more present or no more especially present than he is in his normal presence in the universe. Thus, if a No Non-Normal Mode theorist thought that Christ enjoyed the attribute of being omnipresent, than that theorist would hold that Christ is present everywhere in the universe. His presence in the Eucharist, on this view, would be no different from his presence at any other location.⁶⁷

⁶⁷Arcadi, J. (2018). *Discerning the Body of Christ. In An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist* (Current Issues in Theology, pp. 1-25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
doi:10.1017/9781108588560.002

However, this categorization becomes based on aspect of presence alone. While the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist becomes of great substance to the faithful, the entire message of the celebration and its subsequent categorization could be multifaceted. This is being said in the light of the many discussions that have emerged on why we celebrate the Eucharist.

A pure salvation of the personal self, as has been the dominant doctrine of the Roman church has not left much room for any theological reasoning. While not without its critics, the practice and the philosophy that made it emanate in this manner has been the cornerstone of Roman thinking and continues to this day. Here we find the word Transubstantiation that makes the entirety of the Eucharist and the liturgy, sacred where the adherents meet the real Christ in the host as they take part in the celebration.

The transformation of the simple meal into the mystery and the essence of Transubstantiation is heavily documented and found in apologetics eagerly.

by the end of the twelfth century the idea of transubstantiation, transformation of the species

into Christ's body and blood or the substitution of the elements with the substantial divine presence, while their accidents remained visible, had entered the canon law⁶⁸

The majoritarian denomination that was present till the great schism, the Roman Catholic church built on this and as we see a continuation to this day. This stemmed from an Aristotelian platform where the discussion was on substance and accidents⁶⁹. The objective of this understanding is a philosophizing that is made in a particular manner, which is even contradictory to the new Testamental Church. Here the communion or the breaking of bread symbolized the communion or rather a socialist nature of the community. As they shared in everything of material possession the Eucharistic meal became a symbol of hope, love, caring and community. Once again we question of the intent of the Roman Catholic understanding whether even this act became a symbol of division, rather than unity, where the pagans were separated from those of the 'light'. Was it in some way a political statement of the Constantine rule where,

⁶⁸Izbicki, T. (2015). *The Real Presence of Christ, the minister, and the materials of the Sacrament. In The Eucharist in Medieval Canon Law* (pp. 21-85). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
doi:10.1017/CBO9781316408148.005

⁶⁹Andrew Davison (2013) . *Why Sacraments*. SPCK, London. p 42

this act became part and parcel of ‘belonging’ but not ‘believing’?

The proposal that Christ is present in the sacrifice and the fire of the mass, has become enshrined in its adherents to the level that before Vatican II, food or water was not allowed before partaking in the sacraments. The holding of a paten when administering the bread and the total consumption of the elements after the service or the reservation of the sacrament as Holy are aspects of the sanctity that is afforded under this theological thinking. Yet the theory also faces its critique in different manner.

By paradox, the catholic transubstantiation, which denies the continued existence of bread and wine after the consecration, actually defends the previous being – not merely meaning- of those elements.⁷⁰

While the challenging of this set sacramental theology has remained over decades the best known examples of any opposition were met in the Latin American

⁷⁰ O'Connor, J. T. (2005). *The Hidden Manna: A theology of the Eucharist*. Ignatius Press. p 162

struggle⁷¹ which was political, social and economical in element that reflected in the understanding of the Eucharist within that context.

The next best examples of impact that could have made a difference to the monopoly of the Roman rite were the thinkers Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner. They were instrumental in bringing terms such as ‘transignification’ and ‘transfinalization’ into the liturgical vocabulary. In the former it signifies that while the elements may remain the same, the meaning or the significance of the commemoration is changed. Both these stances expound a transformation of the meaning rather than the elements, and they ground it Biblically. Transformation is the biblical root of the contemporary explanation of the Eucharistic mystery in terms of transignificance and transfinalization.⁷²

The former of the two concepts, transignificance was the result of an Encyclical of Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*,

⁷¹John Frederick Swaller (2011) “The Mid-Twentieth-Century Church.” *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America: From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond*, NYU Press, pp. 213–230. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qg53g.14. Accessed 21 Nov. 2020.

⁷²Farren, J. A. (1968). Joseph M. Powers, SJ, Eucharistic Theology (Book Review). *Thomist: a Speculative Quarterly Review*, 32(1), p129.

published in September 1965, where transubstantiation alone was seen as adequate explanation of the mystery. Schillebeeckx explains that

new emphasis for the concept of Eucharistic presence: Because the “new” emphasis is concerned with the intimate presence of Christ in the hearts both of the individual believer and of the community of Christians, the Eucharist must remain on the level of interpersonal relationship: of the presence of one person to another person.⁷³

Both these theories faced severe backlash and were not confined into teaching spaces. Yet these add much value and we can observe a paradigm shift in the intention of as to why this celebration takes place. It is then not merely the understanding of a personal salvation but it goes beyond in explaining how the mystery applies to the ‘other’, the community and the world at large. Far too often the western models of theologizing have bought with it an understanding that fitted their overall

⁷³Barlow, P. (2019). "*It is bread and It is Christ's body too:*" *presence and sacrifice in the eucharistic theology of Jeremy Taylor* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin City University). Unpublished P 121. Accessed from <http://doras.dcu.ie/23557/1/P%20A%20Barlow%2015212014%20PhD%2015.07.2019.pdf>

policy in Christianization. In an African anecdote, the colonisers had the Bible, we had the land, they said let us pray, and the Bible was ours the land was theirs. The Sacramentology of both the Roman and the Protestant churches were similar in that it was merely the answering of the call for salvation of the faithful within the compounds of the church. This did not allow for any understanding for other religious truths or in a greater deal for other aspects of struggles to be intertwined with Christian faith practice.

To quote one Roman theologian who was excommunicated in Sri Lanka for his writing on the controversial ‘Mary and Human Liberation’ cites that a country the ‘domestication of the sacraments within the colonial system’⁷⁴ was conditioned by the priorities and needs of them alone which were exclusivity, classism and conversion. This calls us to re-think about how we as Christians in the orient must now shake off this western coating and make the reality of Jesus’ words of liberation and integration become part of the mission of the Church.

⁷⁴Balasuriya, Tissa. *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004.p 5

To develop this further in and by being in communion with God we realise that we are also in communion with our neighbour and the world. When we break communion we also break communication. If we break communication, in that we become blind and deaf to the realities of the world then we cannot take in part in this holy act. The Eucharist therefore is not a mono themed celebration. Its implications are many and each must be valued as it becomes a sacrament.

The 'implication' is not always observed. This is unfortunate in that it weakens our sense of the social significance of the whole action. It is so easy for the individual to adopt the attitude shown by the phrase, 'make my communion', a phrase which indicates a stress on the individual which is quite out of keeping with the whole Eucharistic action, where the individual is significant in and through his membership in the body of Christ. The one bread which is broken reminds us of this, whereas an unbroken wafer with its continuous separate existence does not.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Kilpatrick, G. (1984). Lecture VII. In *The Eucharist in Bible and Liturgy* (pp. 90). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
doi:10.1017/CBO9780511554704.008

Moving into the Protestant Church the Eucharist has much more space than the above in its theological task. It was a call to understand the nature of the act in a different light. Following the reformation the Anglican church retained and maintained a disciplinary focus towards the Eucharist, and while the concept of Real Presence became subdued (but not entirely as the high church movement, Caroline divines and the Oxford movement made headway in retaining some aspects of the Roman understanding). In general the Anglican church became more understanding of the cultural aspect of other communities. Its precedents maybe seen in the poetic imaginations that were present even within England.

The Eucharist, then, becomes the location of a profound imaginative shift: the process of working out how this rite signifies under the new dispensation in fact forges new ways of understanding signification itself, as well as serving more immediately practical liturgical purposes.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Read, S. (2013). Introduction. In *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination in Early Modern England* (Ideas in Context, pp. 1-39). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
doi:10.1017/CBO9781139507073.002

H. Richard Niebuhr's Christ and Culture as Christ in the process of transformation in culture has been picked up within the Protestant academia and faith practice. This concept has made inroads on two important aspects.

First, it moved beyond a narrowly individualistic notion of conversion. The prospect of transforming culture appealed to many who felt that there was more to the relevance of the gospel than simply converting the individual soul. Cultures, not just individuals, were in need of reform and renewal.

Second, it broke with Protestant individualism more broadly. The human self, on Niebuhr's view, was always a social self, not a solitary self. Individuals never existed apart from a complex network of social and cultural conditions by which they were shaped. The integrity of the gospel depended on seeing persons as persons in relation.⁷⁷

⁷⁷Hunsinger, G. (2008). *The Eucharistic transformation of culture. In The Eucharist and Ecumenism: Let Us Keep the Feast* (Current Issues in Theology, pp. 247-278). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511817687.008

This might have led to the Church at different geographical locations to give more ear into the subsequent voice of cultures⁷⁸ and struggles. The transformation of liturgies which resulted in inculturation in the past fifty years is testament to this change. Inculturation was seen as movement within the wider gospel and culture shift which called, especially the congregations in the two thirds world to own their faith practices. In an increasing globalized village we are now able to see how well the Christian faith has adapted in majoritarian non Christian settings.

However there is still a debate that inculturation stops at a full realization of what that culture may offer to our faith. Just like systematic theology in its quest to learn from contextual theology, contextual Christianity might be called to enlarge its horizons. This may sound a break away from what the western models have taught as the 'Christian faith'. Therefore a fuller aspect of religious and cultural truths in a historical melting pot might be found at the end of this quest. For examples like in India the idea of Adivasi, Tribal or Dalit Theology does not necessarily ask Christians to see God in that light, but it

⁷⁸ 'Culture as way of tilling life' See Terry A Veling. *On earth as it is in Heaven*. Orbis. New York, 2005.p 159

also casts light on how God's great love and compassion to all marginalized become realized.

The task of theologizing with culture can become risky in that you are called to put your faith to the test. It might be all too good to have a dialogue but not come out of it changed one iota. Such a dialogue is totally contrary to a 'learning and sharing' journey which we must all undertake. In a way playing it safe, does not bring any consideration into our faith practice but merely becomes a superficial attempt. It is also the same in the event if Christians use culture to promote their agenda. This would not be different from what the west did in their imperial and colonizing conquest. Then the following testimony might not truly fall into inculturation.

the dialogue of culture lies at the center of a proper inculturation of the liturgy, and the process of inculturation will thus bring to light the genius of a particular culture as a living, organize member, of the catholic communion of faith. Inculturation is also part of the process of learning from the popular wisdom in a culture so that the liturgy in that culture reflects that

wisdom and guides the people of God to Christ by means of that wisdom.⁷⁹

Therefore this attempt becomes merely a recognition given at ‘face-value’. It can also be equated with visiting a Kovil with all its splendour and proclaiming its colourful symbolism, but when outside its context, giving scant recognition to the ultra historical standing of the faith and what it means to millions of people. In the same manner, while a Sacramentology with its inculturation makes a congregation to be in awe and admire the culture, unless it picks from why it is of essence to the ongoing discussion on the salvific work of God, the attempt would be futile. Spinks elaborates on this based on the array of liturgies which have made onto the scene of in terms of inculturation,

It is partly, no doubt, that being Western Churches, the inherited tradition has always been more concerned with redemption and a Christological preface. However, it is strange that although the Eastern anaphoras have been used

⁷⁹ Peter J Casarella(2015). Catholic Sacramental Theology in the Twentieth Century in Edit Hans Boersa and Mathew Levering. *Oxford Handbook of Sacramental theology*. Oxford. Oxford press. p 513

as inspiration in many new compositions, their theme of creation should have been ignored⁸⁰

The final observation as we visit the other end of the pole on sacramental theological use will be its liberational aspect. The liturgies on Eucharistic sacraments that have become radical to the traditional Christian faith have made its presence especially in the recent years. Under this we look at efforts around the world which have stood firm on Christian foundations but have hinged firmly on the liberative aspect. Under this it calls for non Christians, non religious, the oppressed, the marginalized and them who are not heard, to be all part of the plan of liberation in the eyes of God. Here the terminology itself shifts into the oriental understanding of liberation on a holistic level rather than the romanticized word of salvation.

Arguably the church as sacrament of the unity of humankind and of human unity with God is best understood in a ‘liberation theology’ context, where the church struggles through its sacramental

⁸⁰Spinks, B. (1991). The Sanctus in some contemporary Eucharistic prayers. In *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer* (pp. 176-193). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
p204doi:10.1017/CBO9780511520242.012 204

life to bring healing, peace and justice to a broken and oppressive world.⁸¹

From the moment we give thanks for the creation of the gifts of wine and bread, we make ourselves aware that we praise God in the midst of this wonderful creation. The stewardship of same is expected. The welfare of the animals and all that helps earth strive are called into adoration. The labour of farmers and labourers who make the elements present on the table are made aware to the faithful. Therefore this celebration does not take place in a vacuum. It is the focused attempt to make sure that we give the respect to the world that sustains us and the labour that nourishes us.

The Eucharist then cannot be a meal that we partake as a ritual. It must be intricately related to our life. The liturgies we find in Sri Lanka for Thai Pongal and the New Year Festival in April are two aspects that bring the creation, thanksgiving and welfare into consideration. While more western oriented churches do not celebrate this, that itself explains the need to understand the holistic understanding of the celebration. The western world at its initiative many years ago, conquered the

⁸¹ Thompson, R (2006). *The Sacraments*. London ;SCM press

earth with the power and might of the idea that ‘you must show fear into the other animals and make use of everything which is made for human survival’. However with the oriental understanding we realize that every time we pray to God we are aware that we do this in the sanctuary that God has provided. We do it in reverence and remembrance that the world itself needs its Sabbath moment and rest and liberation which we must provide through our response.

here is a fluid connection among and a unity of the different mysteries of our redemption that is harmoniously presented in the Eucharistic celebration. The gift of the Eucharist brings to the Church today the graces of the Cross; God expects our active response, as is seen in a common trait of the Roman collects: to pray for an effective response to the graces of the celebration.⁸²

Unless the sacrament calls us for action, then as was mentioned before, it becomes merely a cultic practice

⁸²Cardó, D. (2019). The Cross and the Eucharist in Early Christianity. In *The Cross and the Eucharist in Early Christianity: A Theological and Liturgical Investigation* (pp. I-Ii). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

with limited reception. It is the constant call that as we receive the benefits of the sacraments it will transform us. Rather than the debate of the elements undergoing transformation, which we have understood as the debate merely on Rites, the transformation⁸³ of the self of the receiver becomes the element in the whole exercise. In a similar way in a liberation theology oriented context we also learn and liturgize from the world we live in. Ongoing engagement of God in the life of the world is essential to sacramentality⁸⁴. Unless we find meaning in what we do for our neighbour, the society and the world, once again the ritualistic dimension alone becomes possible.

We inhabit the Eucharistic faith; we do not invent it. The primary characteristic of the Eucharistic faith and theology is transformation and not innovation. As such, themes that have emerged for us have been the priority of the concrete over the abstract, the particular over the generic, participation over producing, potential over possible, contemplation over speculation and the

⁸³Colwell, J. (2011). *Promise and Presence: An Exploration in Sacramental Theology*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.p 21

⁸⁴Larson-Miller, L. (2016). *Sacramentality Renewed: Contemporary Conversations in Sacramental Theology*. Liturgical Press.p viii

present as the arrival of the future rather than a residue of the past.⁸⁵

In conclusion we have now pursued in general the different positions on the Sacrament of the Eucharist both in terms of denominations but then also in terms of intention. In modern churches who take sacramental theology seriously namely the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican denominations have a very strong tradition underlining on what they do and why they do it. One exception here could be the progressive wing of the Anglican faith where we find varied liturgies and theologies emerge. It is sufficient to say that the Anglican church as both a reformed and Roman version with its bridge building formula stretching from high church to the ultra evangelical, its understanding of its sacraments do place hope on many other aspects such as, the anamnesis in relation to the past, present and the future hope⁸⁶.

Our challenge will be then to translate the focus, intention and the movement that made possible these

⁸⁵ Ralph McMichael. (2019). *The Eucharistic Faith*. SCM Press London ,p

⁸⁶Gittoes, J. (2016). *Anamnesis and the Eucharist: Contemporary Anglican Approaches*. Routledge. p5

theologizing and to give it to a more European context in terms that are recognizable. Conceptualization of the Eucharist is universal, the simple act of recreating the words of our Lord at his last meal on this earth. However, this concept of contextualization brings much more potential that is worthy of dismantling and then integrating. The challenge of course here is that to a western audience who would still have an idea of the Eucharist as it came to the two third world as an exclusive practice and one that was to exclude the social realities, is whether the contextualization from other contexts can be methodically input. This is being said in the light that, contextual theologies have learned much from religiosity and social change, which have at times shaken the core of what Christianity stands as well.

Therefore the effort of this translation must be carried out with realization that it might not all work in the best possible manner as two contexts and mindsets separate themselves on a different origin. For an example for the Indian subcontinent who equate the work of Jesus as an Avatar, in its incarnation role, will be an issue that might shake the platforms of western Christianity. It is also the same with regard to aspect of historical and cultural phenomenon that influence each party in their different settings. So while an Anglican with their flexibility of

thinking on the Eucharist, in a western setting might find it difficult to place the idea of how at a May day celebration the Roti becomes offered in a blessed state to non Christians. The more work that can be done to set the context fully and comprehensively will assist this task of translation.

IV. APPROACHING THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Re-searching is both human curiosity and progress of life. The human mind is one which is not in a state of settlement at any time and is always on the lookout for newer aspects and perspectives related to themes of life. Curiosity when coupled with technique, gives into a process of research. On the other hand, research makes life progress. While the first humans inhabited caves or tents, the subject of housing has been developed over centuries. And we find today innovations that are science and technology driven to the level that it was probably not envisioned at this scale a few years back.

Research is one of the two main functions of universities, the first being higher education. We find the words ‘research driven’ as a major contributory factor in their advertisements. With research, universities also work with the world outside, in one way being funded through the finances of same and then contributing through design and innovation into respective fields. Grants and funds dedicated towards the research component are competitive and establish the clout of institutions and their researchers.

Consciously or unconsciously we all engage in research; whether we follow the scientific method of Francis Bacon for the attainment of a degree or the mental evaluation of how best to use daily resources. We all begin with a question, and develop how we try to find the answer to it. Then we follow a methodology and evaluate what our analysis has concluded. However for persons in academia, research is not only an option but must be a way of academic life. It is how they develop their respective fields. This can be done in relation to other fields in interdisciplinary studies, or like in the sciences where pure research is undertaken of the same substance or phenomenon.

Research enables the ‘life’ of the subject be nourished and develops the subject areas so that work done becomes archived and further work is done based on same. Nothing that has been researched will end up in disuse as it will become of witness at least to the attempt.

When we come to theological research which is not a novel or exceptional activity but rather one that has constituted Christian thought and practice from the very beginning⁸⁷, we can also add a further dimension into the

⁸⁷Graham, E., & Walton, H. (2018). *Theological reflection: methods*. scm Press.p1 introduction

list of as to why it is attempted. It is our desire to know God and to respond to God as we understand how God is operating in a context. This is a task of any theological academia as persons of faith are being built up together in fulfilling God's calling in the world⁸⁸. There cannot be any mission attempted unless there is research on why, how and what, the mission must look like. Werner notes that researching as a component of theological education must be present in any sober mission strategy⁸⁹.

Furthermore theological research calls the 'faith community' to test their faith and also to answer the larger questions that are present in faith or non faith contexts. The period of being exclusive in terms of following the religion have come to an end and stand – alone cannot now be used to describe theological study. Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and cross cultural researches are common place terms that are found in theological circles. It is the suggestion to have social

⁸⁸Pazmiñ o, R. W. (2009). *Doing Theological Research: An Introductory Guide for Survival in Theological Education*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

⁸⁹ Werner, D. (2011). Theological Education in the Changing Context of World Christianity—An Unfinished Agenda. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 35(2), 92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/239693931103500206>

sciences as fruitful dialogue partners⁹⁰. In some universities' Science and Religion' thrusts have been accomplished into departments and are now in dialogue, turning on its head, the previous uncomfortable relationship it has maintained earlier. Research can now be conveniently placed among other sciences, arts, humanities etc in secular or religious universities as an area of critique, analysis, evaluation and questioning.

To use a long quote, to emphasis this point

A survey and analysis of four major research paradigms—positivism, postpositivism, critical theory and constructivism—reveal that all have been applied effectively in recent theological inquiry. Although these paradigms might resemble worldviews to some extent, they are not so all-encompassing. Rather, they are essentially matrices of deeply held assumptions or conceptual frameworks that undergird and guide research, in this case, theological method. A three-step approach—one that applauds a willingness to examine and blend research paradigms—is recommended in so far as it may, in some cases, best maintain a commitment to

⁹⁰Swinton, J., & Mowat, H. (2016). *Practical theology and qualitative research*. SCM press.p7

faithful dealing with the biblical record and, hence, to truth-seeking—both in the direct theological endeavour and in theological education, both formal and informal.⁹¹

There could also be a research as to what preceded which, in this discussion on faith and research. It could be that the theological study could not find its own place and prominence leading it to be also another ‘subject’ that was on the areas that can be studied and which needed ‘sponsorship’ to be maintained. On the other hand it could be that religion and faith now came upto a level where it was ready as a ‘discipline’ to be on par with other such subjects. It could also be that theology was becoming a field of interest that was becoming a part of other such disciplines or it could not escape being so. God talk, then, is no longer straightforward—at least in the world, outside the ‘household of faith’⁹²

However, studying the other fields that have put their hands up in readiness to work with theology or vice versa, we can confidently state that religion as a

⁹¹Mittwede, S. K. (2012). Research paradigms and their use and importance in theological inquiry and education. *Journal of Education and Christian Belief*, 16(1), 23-40.

⁹²Cameron, H. (2013). *Talking about God in practice: Theological action research and practical theology*. scm Press.p12

phenomenon that has been present through millennia has also, its own contributions towards other fields. The religious experience of humankind was such an issue that was grappled throughout these centuries that non – religious thinking on varied subjects itself has become an impossible task. In a simpler way the arguing for atheism also involves religious belief, anthropology, psychology, sociology and a mixture of any of these.

A rather general but interesting observation can be made that while the phenomenological research of religious experience delivers valid new knowledge and adds to the understanding of subjectivity and human consciousness, the most valuable insights emerge when such experience is approached phenomenologically but within the religious attitude.⁹³

Theological research, as a field that has found footing in the general academia now continues to bring value to the ongoing discussion and the debates. This was probably one of the issues that would have prevented theology entering into mainstream academic disciplines in the first place; namely that there was a debate on how well it

⁹³Louchakova-Schwartz, O. (2018). Phenomenology and Theological Research. *Open Theology*, 4(1), 641

would develop life. Far often it would become a topic of debate rather than a field of research on which ‘building up’ would be impossible. It is quite surprising that such thought would prevent theological research as, religion in its basic form is meant to be of welfare for the human race. Its value for life both on earth and in a life hereafter should comfortably promote its utility, yet its opposition had occurred. However, in the 21st century the theological research drive has found meaning and ticks all the boxes in terms of utility; utility refers to the methodological criteria of empirical research regarding (a) the *object* of research or the problem to be solved, (b) the *needs* of the stakeholders as to the research and its results and, (c) the type of *knowledge* to be produced.⁹⁴

Furthermore with theological research becoming in harmony with social sciences, empirical research is now part and parcel of academia. This is aligned but in difference to pure research where earlier theology was understood as mainly studying ancient texts and philosophizing. The dilution of any sort of these disciplines with any other secular disciplines was

⁹⁴Hermans, C., & Schoeman, W. J. (2015). The utility of practical theology: mapping the domain, goals, strategies and criteria of practical theological research. *Acta Theologica*, 8-25.

anathema. This is possibly the view point of the evangelical wing of the Church today as well. Yet progressiveness and the 'good'⁹⁵ has been achieved to a greater degree everywhere else. Now it is possible to look at faith aspects through empirical study. This leads the discussion where empirical research

form a critical hermeneutical framework, embodying the tension between belonging and distancing, has the potential to contribute positively to the renewal of our Christian traditions by providing insight in the religious imaginations and "identities" of people, and by stimulating the religious imagination towards the innovation of our Christian traditions. Empirical research itself, however, cannot escape from the tension between ideology and utopia.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Graham, E. & Llewellyn, D. (2018). Promoting the Good: Ethical and Methodological Considerations in Practical Theological Research. In Moschella, M. & Willhauck, S. (eds.), *Qualitative Research in Theological Education: Pedagogy in Practice*, (pp. 39-59). SCM Press.

⁹⁶ Dreyer, J. S. (2002). Theological normativity: ideology or utopia? Reflections on the possible contribution of empirical research. *Practical Theology in South Africa = Praktiese Teologie in Suid-Afrika*, 17(2), 1-20.

Then turning to the practice of theological research in modern times, there is evidence of different methodologies that have led theological research in the modern day. Descriptive and Normative studies are part of these methodologies : where the former measures large populations and answers questions on ‘what’ with regard to different aspects and the latter on questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’ as studies are undertaken to evaluate future events. The relationships between these two and empiricism, toward practical theology has become apparent in that Kaufman notes that on more occasions, that on most times empirical research framed as practical theology is discussed without someone mentioning the relationship between the descriptive and the normative.⁹⁷

Case studies have also been an element in qualitative research where single units in some cases, multiples units are studied in depth as so to get a comprehensive view point of a related subject. However, there have been accusations in the that, case studies do happen to give indepth information but generalization or even relating to other cases have become futile in attempt. Case studies of convenience would not be of value in

⁹⁷Kaufman, T. S. (2016). From the outside, within, or in between? Normativity at work in empirical practical theological research. In *Conundrums in practical theology* (pp. 134-162). Brill.

furthering research as it has to answer and deal with several of the issues as mentioned by Campbell-Reed.

A single case study can also mislead or misdirect readers to stereotypes, one-sided assessments, or over simplified analysis. The dangers of a single case study are always present, and thus cases in practical theological scholarship involves and requires greater care in construction.⁹⁸

Approaches which are post – modern and post ‘relational’ in many other aspects, have also been a regular at modern theological circles. This has been challenging, in that most of these new methodologies are aimed at shaking off much of the traditional world views and when we pit a most traditional aspect such as religion with newer approaches, the results can be surprising. However with religion faculties now taking the risk of being in the firing line of secular evaluations, the subjecting of the field into new approaches has also become a way in which the new research culture has been revived. Many modern researchers may use of same to work on their projects and the knowledge of the

⁹⁸Campbell-Reed, E. R. (2016). The power and danger of a single case study in practical theological research. In *Conundrums in practical theology* (pp. 33-59). Brill.

subject itself becomes nurtured and allowing space for expansion. .

As a radical conjecture, we thus propose that an identification of certain similarities between Christian dogma and the grounds for various posthumanist frameworks suggest that posthuman thought may well herald the global dissemination of a far more elusive, authoritarian, and hegemonic system than that which posthumanists typically claim to have abandoned.⁹⁹

Another newer model of research has been action research. Action research has been prevalent in social sciences and in education especially, as a tool in which a remedying action is sought after the study. In terms of many theological concepts, action research may not suffice in bridging these gaps, yet when we think of the sociological phenomenon within faith and religion, the use of this method can be of immense value. Action research has been found to be important in terms of

⁹⁹Botez, A., Hietanen, J., & Tikkanen, H. (2020). Mapping the absence: a theological critique of posthumanist influences in marketing and consumer research. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 1-26.

Church practices and its mission. In terms of empirical studies this method has been pivotal in addressing and accommodating of issues.

Such modern accounts are seen as failing the incarnational theological instincts of Christian theology generally, and the concrete theological concerns of ecclesiology in particular.

Theological Action Research offers a response to these contemporary challenges, envisioning ecclesiology as a discursive practice, which finds its identity in process and pedagogy, rather than in the construction of an ecclesiological ‘product,’ or model.¹⁰⁰

In our search for other models, autoethnography, in which one uses self reflection and experiences in bringing into light the relationships with a wider culture and context has also found meaning in theological circles. This can be a very contextualized form of research not merely on the external environ but on the internal mindset. In terms of faith and its emotional aspect this method can give

¹⁰⁰Watkins, C. (2015). Practising Ecclesiology: From Product to Process: Developing Ecclesiology as a Non-Correlative Process and Practice through the Theological Action Research Framework of Theology in Four Voices. *Ecclesial Practices*, 2(1), 23-39.

richness to personal attitudes, beliefs, anxieties and deliberations. And when this is taken in consideration with a wider culture, the flow of knowledge both ways become a key aspect in research learning.

through the use of such autobiographical narrative, the researcher acknowledges the situated nature of her observations and reveals the connections between herself and the topic under study. In keeping with significant work in the field of anthropology, the author argues that this turn toward autoethnography allows for research that engages scholarly passion, enabling the researcher to effect change¹⁰¹

Among other aspects which may have a unique theological flavour the phenomenological method proposes that lived experience from the crux of the inquiry. It has been found to be particularly effective in terms of social activity in impacted communities, among these, the use of phenomenological research as a methodology that gives voice to how Jews describe their

¹⁰¹ Baker, D. G. (2001). Future homemakers and feminist awakenings: Autoethnography as a method in theological education and research. *Religious Education*, 96(3), 395-407.

own experience¹⁰² has been documented and affirmed. This method is also useful when detailing experiences within certain unique communities where they may tell a different faith story and experience a different faith journey. Andrew Lunn¹⁰³ comments that these institutional and social reflexivities have formed a strong emphasis on current theological research and is also found in the exploration of Graham, Walton and Ward's book *Theological Reflection: Methods*. If theological reflection systematically excludes or ignores a body of Christ it becomes distortion.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand beginning from experiences has also had its critics as due regard for scripture has not been applied.¹⁰⁵

These debates and current discussions all point to the direction of theological reflection becoming a subject that can be comfortably placed in research in terms of methodology and methods. However there is also

¹⁰²Carter, E. C. (2018). Finding the voice of Judaism within practical theological research. *Practical Theology*, 11(1), 67-78.

¹⁰³Andrew Lunn (2007) Theological Reflection and Reflexivity: Theology on the Waves of Social Change, *Contact*, 154:1, 22-31, DOI: [10.1080/13520806.2007.11759083](https://doi.org/10.1080/13520806.2007.11759083)

¹⁰⁴Whitehead, J. D., & Whitehead, E. E. (1995). *Method in ministry: Theological reflection and Christian ministry*. Rowman & Littlefield. P49

¹⁰⁵Collins, H. (2020). *Reordering Theological Reflection: Starting with Scripture*. SCM Press.

opposition that much more than can be done in terms of reviving and renewing this field.

that vast amount of research that has been completed over the past 40 years remains in unpublished dissertations or forgotten journal articles, never synthesized and never followed up. Meanwhile, old topics emerge as PhD projects, dressed up in fancy language of fashionable theory, despite the presence of so much exciting new work to be done by people who are prepared to break new ground, learn new languages, and develop new skills¹⁰⁶

Theological reflection also brings with it many considerations, some regarding faith, where we might question whether this activity can be done by someone who is not founded on a theological platform. For many persons even in Christian academic circles this can be a hard pill to swallow. They may emphasize on revealed and natural sources of theologizing, falling into scripture, tradition, reason, experience and culture which may seem different in terms of the differ faith

¹⁰⁶Walls, A. F. (2011). World Christianity, Theological Education and Scholarship. *Transformation*, 28(4), 235–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378811417514>

expressions springing from different contexts. Most of these critics may explain this activity of theological research as experience correlated with tradition for the sake of praxis.¹⁰⁷ In this regard experience would be what was discussed above as a faith community on a faith journey. Apart from this specific experience someone outside a faith circle also has the same tools for research. And one might argue that they might do a better representation of the research at hand, exactly due to this non attachment. Therefore on the question as to why a person outside the faith circle may not be able to research on matters ‘theological’ might not hold valid in terms of modern academic understanding.

When we consider the process of reflection and research as artful discipline of putting our experience into conversation¹⁰⁸ and into discussion, it deals in exactly how we manage this activity. Therefore the question of theological research is not necessarily resting on the subject or the faith or non faith of the researcher but on the holistic approach of the study. In this, methodology becomes of key and methods and practices of theological

¹⁰⁷ Kinast, R. L. (2000). What are they saying about theological reflection?. Paulist Press.p3

¹⁰⁸ Graham, E. (Ed.). (2013). Theological reflection: sources. SCM Press.

reflection offered in theological education may need to be radically reconsidered¹⁰⁹. This is due, as there are many lessons that the theological academia can learn from the already established academic disciplines. While the Church was the main sponsor of education going back several centuries, and being witness to the many universities that took shape during this time, the secular subjects seem to shun religiosity as a subject that can be equated at this same level. One reason that can be suggested is with regard to this complex; is its methodology. If in the past and we do go back several centuries back, the methodology rested firmly on the teachings of an authoritative Church that determined between the what was true and not, then that anxiety would be cemented firmly in the mindset of future academicians. At best they might reserve this field of study as unique in its own right, but still one which might not be willing in itself to be open to the rigours and vicissitudes of another academic discipline.

In the process of Theology becoming open to methodologies and processes through which results were

¹⁰⁹ Stephen Pattison, Judith Thompson & John Green (2003) Theological Reflection for the Real World: Time to Think Again, *British Journal of Theological Education*, 13:2, 119-131, DOI: 10.1558/jate.v13i2.119

received that could not be subordinated to a superior ecclesiastical power, we find the modernity in theological scholarship shoulder to shoulder with other disciplines. With its usual critics on the admittance, but it stands true that Theology has first to learn and grow the wisdom it seeks to impart.¹¹⁰ The emergence of interdisciplinary studies can be thought of as a certain ‘academic achievement’ landmark, and now the possibility of collaboration with other disciplines is testament to it. In a way the power centres that were the Church earlier, has now been dismantled into theological academies. This power has also been dismantled in terms of finance. One could argue that the earlier scenario was such as it was based on finance. Yet now we find universities, funding and mission agencies, individuals and even churches who are interested in furthering the research concept. Researchers may find likeminded collaborators in these agencies which enable free expression and development of knowledge. Looking forward the growth of the academic culture becomes fixed on re-valuing of research collaboration, especially through academic networks and research centre.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Thompson, Judith. SCM Studyguide: Theological Reflection. Scm Press, 2014. P165

¹¹¹ Darren Cronshaw (2020) Re-valuing research in theological education, Higher Education Research & Development, 39:1, 53-66, DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2019.1669143

In this next section I will develop on how the research areas on Sacramentology touch on theological research. Sacraments are a prevalent practice in Christian faith, whether it be seven or two as essential for liberation. The task of interpreting sacraments can be discussed both under revealed and natural sources. The first task of theological reflection when concerning scripture will be the tracing of how sacraments came into being in the Old Testament and New Testament worlds. While the routing of the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are directed to the time of Jesus some precedents are earmarked by scholars. In 2 Kings 5.17 Naaman's request for earth so that he may use it to worship God alone, is interpreted as a symbol that carried and encapsulated God's grace. The precedent of the Eucharist as the Passover in the Old Testament is another example of related themes. In similar manner there are other events in the Bible, where even the Eucharist can be equated into. In the New Testament other than the depictions of Jesus, the book of Acts and the epistles are vivid of accounts of sacraments. Some of these relate directly to the breaking of bread as in the former case and such as in Ephesians 5.26 where indirect references are made to the sacraments. In this light the scriptural tradition of the Christians is full of examples, some with direct connotation and some with interpreted

understanding. In terms of a scriptural base a new study may not be able to add much to the philosophical idea of these rites but certainly in the sphere of contextualization much promise is on the cards. The next aspect of theologizing falls into the sphere of tradition. Tradition is one of the key foundations in this discussion, as broadly speaking three modes of presence and understanding, in the Eucharist can be found based denomination-wise. These three and even many other interpretations have been founded and nurtured over centuries where these denominations whether they treat of it as a memory meal or a sacrifice at the altar, hold dear and near in their interpretation of same. The absence of variations especially in the Roman and Orthodox denominations; signal that these bases hold the traditional aspect of the Eucharist in high regard. And in the same manner more of the charismatic and evangelical denomination's refusal of the ritualistic foundations are also based heavily on their interpretations, have been nurtured heavily in their own traditions and they have not changed their stance on their interpretation. The Anglican Church could be one exception here, where much theologizing has been adapted especially in the past fifty years or so. While the denomination is traditional, the variations springing up have led to a multitude of liturgies unlike the Roman or

Orthodox branch or even the newer denominations. In that regard new meanings can be given afforded and it will be enrich theological research.

When we come to natural sources and its components of reason, experience and culture theological research in this area can be livened up through diverse thinking patterns. In 'reason' while we give priority to the rational process of the human being in the operation of God, we also realize that the human being is capable upto some extent of remaking how he or she, should relate to God. In a way theology as the consideration of thoughts and words about God, remain a totally human exercise. While there maybe some Pneumatological element to this as we find in the prophets in the Bible, the attempts of liturgies and liturgical thinking are all in response to God, which have been attempted through the human mind. The human therefore seeks to explain why or how they feel that God is like this or like that and how our worship and praise must also follow a similar pattern. The works of many a liturgical scholar draws heavily from the Bible and from Tradition exactly for this purpose as they remain the primary sources to compose our response. The respect we therefore give to liturgies is also the respect we pay to ourselves and our intellect, how minute it can be. And this happens for the pure

reason that worship, praise and adoration must happen in some way visible. This is quite true in other religions and especially the ones which originated from the Indian subcontinent. The ritualistic basis of all the 'liturgies' in other faiths also draw heavily from their scriptures and traditions. For the same reason, we might not be correct in denouncing the 'reasonable' effort of another religious group to worship the Supreme Being in a different manner. Reasoning and religious reasoning remains the sole right of that particular group and comparison and contrast might not be helpful.

Following from the above as the fourth category, in Sacramentology the element of experience is a vital component. Two types of experiences are described here. The first is the experience of the faith community and what they have gathered from their life journey. In the May Day Mass there is special emphasis on the experience of the workers, farmers, plantation workers and labourers. Being a socialist country and where classism has been 'attempted' to be downplayed with the governmental hold on affairs, the understanding of equality and the labour of the working person has been held in high regard. Yet with modern trends with capitalist and industrialist elements being introduced into Sri Lanka the socialist nature of the enterprise has been

jeopardized. Therefore the attempt to recapture the dignity of labour has become important in this Christian led interfaith liturgy. The second aspect of experience is the feelings of the community who undergoes this worship. In an emotional sense this liturgy gives that respect that is due and brings it in the form of a sacrifice before God. So the sentiments of those who make up the working class are captured in this rite. In the regular Holy Communion mass where people meet the Lord, this emphasis is made thoroughly. It is probably why it has been thought of as the greatest witness even bypassing the ministry of the word. There is emotional attachment that is being made when a service is experienced. For this purpose the usage of language, song, dance, drama, smells and the bells contribute in many striking ways. And finally it also goes onto show the total opposite ends of this topic where denominations stick to one experience or the other. While the Roman church is heavily concentrated on the experience of the tradition the reformed and the freer churches tend to favour the other extreme in this debate. Even with Vatican two the changes to the Eucharistic format has been relatively unchanged from decades, exactly due to the fact that the experiences of the people do not feature in its format. In a similar manner the Eucharist tends to discard the traditional interpretation of the faith community and

linger more on the present experiences of the faith community in evangelical trends. It is also for that same matter that evangelical churches translate this same energy and emotionalism into other forms of sacramentality such as the word, preaching, praise and worship. The intention is not always to bring out the fact that the Anglican church stands between these two extremes but factually with its progression of liturgical worship with humility, flexibility and variance the policy of thinking on the matter has been conclusive. Therefore a theological inquiry into the sacramental theology might bring out more revelations when studied from the angle rather than dwelling on one type of experience centering on one extreme or the other.

The final aspect in this discussion as theological scholarship now venturing into capture the goodness of culture, is the imminent influence it has on worship, liturgy and sacramental theology. Once again while the other denominations may embed their culture into worship, the Anglican stance on inculturation and contextualization is unparalleled. For an example the modern liturgies in England, in comparison with a liturgy in India, Africa and South America can find different elements of culture being inculcated into the liturgies. While in Sri Lanka elephants may head the

procession in the US they might not. While in Africa dance may accompany the Eucharistic celebration in South America it might not. And in this regard we are also watchful of what we mean by 'culture'. It is not strange to find two or three cultures in one small parish in any context. In the Indian subcontinent where different ethnicities and cultures survive side by side the blanketing of culture might not be appropriate. In a similar way the making of liturgies also do not find much space to encapsulate everything a culture possess and certainly not all in a culture would give preference to what has been included. In that light while in Anglicanism we do encourage culture to be part of the realization of theological reflection, it is a hotly debated topic. The debate also extends as to if the Christian faith can learn from the culture. While we may proclaim the faith in a particular culture that can merely be adaptation. For an example if liturgies contain unique cultural words for sacramental practices, while it is of value it seems more like being aware of the context. It might be helpful in the task of proclamation where people of other faiths may come to know what Christian faith looks and feels like. The pluralist approach would be whether the theology emanating from the liturgies can learn from the culture. As a culture means the societal practices, historicity, psychology, beliefs, customs, attitudes and a

whole lot more of other components there is certainly much to be studied and learned. If learning has taken place, then according to the traditional definition of education the behaviour must also change. Then the worship aspect would be enriched through a cultural collision. In the event such a total commixture cannot be experienced, the basic inculturation would take place. This would also be a step forward and would explain, and would aim to be everything for every person. Another avenue for culture to seep into theological reflection would be how another faithful might take part in a sacramental service. Currently one may feel totally out of place with the terminology and practices that are present within a church context. This challenge can be taken to the next level by Christians if they would be as bold to accept cultural and religious practices of the 'other'. In certain terms this would be frowned upon as the subordination of faith into another culture. Yet if we do continue to talk theologically and we believe that God is one and is present in every culture and religion the task of assimilation might not be a task too unhealthy. However this initiative is one that tests our resolve as Christians to question the mindsets that have been implanted in us through our faith cultures. It might also include rethinking mission, scripture and even reasoning. This would go beyond the basic understanding of

winning souls through our Christian draw. It might envisage a more moderate approach to understanding the electedness of people based on faith. It would be a challenge to the popular evangelical objectives and policies that have shaped our thinking over centuries.

Then the task of research into contextualized Christian liturgical thoughts and practices would avail to be theologically significant. It brings together both the faith and culture of the context as well as it sharpens the already established plethora of work done on the subject. It furthers the contribution and in this case unique contributions from inculturation into faith practice.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology forms the crux of any research, in the sense that it explains to the reader/s the specific philosophy underlying the mechanism or processes that will be followed to arrive at whatever finding from a study. It includes the overall system through which a researcher/s will subject their inquiry into and subsequently it justifies why a particular system was utilized over another. Methodology comprises in general the 1. Methodological approach where the researcher/s describes the nature of the study as qualitative, quantitative or mixed method. In this section the researcher/s also work with the theories that underline each approach and how best they were convinced on this particular line of thinking as the most effective to search for a finding in this specific case. Methodology also comprises the 2. Actual methods through which the information that will be transformed into data, will be collected. Based on the approach different collection methods have found advantage and some methods have found new forms with persistent use and critique. The third aspect under Methodology will be the 3. Data presentation and analysis. This is one aspect of any study that forms the framework on how the researcher/s has gone about answering the questions that were listed in

the beginning. The Methodology can also start at the beginning at the literature review stage itself as under this we work out exactly what, why and how whichever question needs to be researched.

Therefore the methodology forms a large part of the research and excelling in carving and sharpening this aspect will inevitably lead into a better research study. At some point, research design is substituted for methodology in the sense that it covers the entire research work starting from the literature review towards the other elements of the actual research and concluding with the results of the study. Based on the Research methodology a similar study can yield different results under two different systems of investigation. While in pure research the avenues for research methodology aren't as creative as in the social sciences, due to the science based acceptance for some systems, the latter presents a multitude of ways in which researchers can investigate a similar topic. It is also a reason why the methodology becomes a vital part of the story the researcher/s aim to relate at the end of the journey. The more comprehensive the methodology is, the more effective will be its conclusions and discussion for further research.

Theological studies as was discussed in an earlier essay, has now found place among other humanities and social sciences in terms of being recognized as a field in its own right. The theological academia has itself worked in such a direction that has made this possible. It means now that theological studies can be attempted by anyone and regardless of any pre existing conditions regarding faith of that person. Further on theological studies has at its reach the same methodological approaches, methods and tactics of evaluation. There can be situations where theological study seems to say more about a field of research that normally other studies would not say, for an example a theological reflection may accompany a study which might not be for other efforts. This is the stark difference in theological research that the study follows an aspect stemming from revelation and the effort seeks to ‘know more of’ or ‘develop more of ‘ the relationship with the supreme being.

Therefore, apart from this the dilemma of demarcating theological study and research becomes a worthy question. The focus of the study alone may not be sufficient for this to be understood in that manner. It must then be the focus, approach and the ethos that runs through the entire research project. In a similar way, now theological research communities cannot be ignorant to

methodology as the way in which their researches must take place and becomes presentable towards a wider audience. Therefore it is essential that the researcher/s are able to

formulate questions and systems of investigation which becomes later accessible to an academic community which speak the language of modern research. Not only does this enable us to re-frame questions about the distinctions between philosophy and theology, but it also frees theologians from the problematic requirement of assuming a methodological atheism, particularly as they undertake practical theological research.¹¹² With this let us look at a few methodologies that are available theological researchers.

The first is also one that came to be synonymous with theological research in the days gone by. This was the study of texts, analysis of same and reflection on the textual principles. Especially in Biblical and Philosophical theology this stands to be true. In that particular time, when reaching out to social sciences as a component of theological research was anathema and the only way possible of thinking about God was to study

¹¹² Horner, R. (2018). Towards a Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Methodology for Theology. *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 22(2), 153-173.

about the words that have been already written about God. However the older model of practical theology as the application of the fruits of biblical and systematic theology is now something that has been challenged significantly.¹¹³

In almost all studies in the modern day a component of same appears as a literature review. The literature survey which earlier became an end in itself is now positioned as a means to an end. This is where a researcher/s follows up on all studies that have been done in respect to his or her field of study in the hope that it opens up gaps and leads into further studies. In the following we find several literature reviews that have been found to be effective in the current day and setting. Systematic, semi systematic and integrative approaches have come down to this day as tools which are available for researchers. Each approach has its main elements which makes contribution to specific areas in the research circle.

¹¹³ Cartledge, M. J. (2012). Practical theology: Charismatic and empirical perspectives. Wipf and Stock Publishers.p 17

Approach	Systematic	Semi-systematic	Integrative
Typical purpose	Synthesize and compare evidence	Overview research area and track development over time	Critique and synthesize
Research questions	Specific	Broad	Narrow or broad
Search strategy	Systematic	May or may not be systematic	Usually not systematic
Sample characteristics	Quantitative articles	Research articles	Research articles, books, and other published texts
Analysis and evaluation	Quantitative	Qualitative/quantitative	Qualitative
Examples of contribution	Evidence of effect Inform policy and practice	State of knowledge Themes in literature Historical overview Research agenda Theoretical model	Taxonomy or classification Theoretical model or framework ¹¹⁴

Leaning to the other end of the spectrum with regard to methodology we discuss in the following paragraph the idea of workshops as a possible methodology. This

¹¹⁴ Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333-339.

methodological approach bears all the marks of practical theology in the sense that it allows a ‘feet on the ground’ process in how a research will take place. While the focus of this approach may not be used for all areas of theological studies, it is certainly possible for the areas in which interrelation is of utmost important. It also allows the participants to know the subject area of the research and hence formulate a holistic and grounded response. As such, these collaborative and immersive aspects frame workshops as a research approach that has the potential to advance meaning, negotiation between researchers and participants.¹¹⁵

Next we look at another practical theological tool which is relatively leaning towards contextual studies. In contextual studies we give impetus and importance to the elements of that context and from the context we reflect on faith and faith practice. In the following section we look at cross sectional studies as a methodology that has ability to contribute towards theological studies. The idea here is that a ‘same’ concept or phenomenon is analyzed across different contexts or with a twist, studied at different intervals in the same context. In the end the idea is to have data from contexts that are totally

¹¹⁵Ørngreen, R., & Levinsen, K. (2017). Workshops as a Research Methodology. *Electronic Journal of E-learning*, 15(1), 70-81.

independent from each other. Thus, cross-sectional studies are very useful in descriptive scholarship when used in studies that are proposed to be analytical, the results must be interpreted by researchers with good experience in that specific field of knowledge, using a lot of caution and common sense¹¹⁶

The attempt at least strikes a chord with multiple case study method where a deep analysis is made of multiple cases. The idea is to bring into light the differences if any and then to ask the question of ‘why and how’ this differs from other contexts. Speaking of contexts, another relevant methodology that has come into modern acceptance is ethnography. In this the researcher gives validity to the experiences of the subjects of the study. So while a theory maybe present to whatever phenomenon has become the study, rather than the theoretical view point been poured over the context, the practical view point/s of the context is being given due respect. Therefore a rather ‘bottom to top’ approach is envisaged in this methodology. However in theological circles there is also some skepticism towards the use of the same. The newfound enthusiasm for ethnography

¹¹⁶Zangirolami-Raimundo, J., Echeimberg, J. D. O., & Leone, C. (2018). Research methodology topics: Cross-sectional studies. *Journal of Human Growth and Development*, 28(3), 356-360.

among theologians may not yet adequately recognize the hazards involved in the use of qualitative research methods for generating valid empirical observations¹¹⁷

Closely related to ethnography, auto ethnography has also found its way into theological scholarship. Auto-ethnography is a methodology where the researcher uses him/herself as a canvass on which reflection is made in respect to one's experience and then as a second step he or she projects it on the wider context in a search for comparisons and contrasts. The use of autoethnography may seem more of a biased system but in the research itself the investigator gives acclaim to what one has experienced. Therefore the root of reflection unlike in other forms where it is directed to external actors, in this case becomes spotlighted on oneself. These studies are increasingly becoming popular and regular when studying issues which were closed down to research as they were not 'general' enough. In a way research concentrated more on what was popular and in play rather than on issues which were not deemed suitable for discussion and was confined to minor populations or contexts. Personal expressions have been given the lease

¹¹⁷ Marti, G. (2016). Found theologies versus imposed theologies: Remarks on theology and ethnography from a sociological perspective. *Ecclesial practices*, 3(2), 157-172.

in these studies and then this expression must be studied in relation to the wider context. Therefore while there can be elements vice –versa that have impacted self and society, the researcher might be able to bring into focus areas that would not be possible from a generalized study.

Grounded theory has been another approach that has gained popularity in modern theological research. Under this theory a question or problem is made to arise from a data set or information pool. The research carries on to collect further information on the same subject and when the pool of such data increases that itself becomes or leads into the framework of a theory. Unlike in scientific research where the first point of impact becomes an already existing theory and then the research initiates, in grounded theory the researcher looks for already existing data which have been ‘coded’ as hypotheses. And when more information is reviewed it becomes possible to take these hypotheses into another zone in which credibility is given for these to become theories or at least ‘lead ups’ in their own right. This approach can be beneficial in areas that have had less research conducted or in contexts where more research is expected. It can also be the case that these researches aim to build further on

common aspects and which seeks recognition as newer emerging fields of study.

In community studies this suggests a community of practice approach to developing the potential of grounded theory to lead to what might be called grounded theology.¹¹⁸

Descriptive research is a valuable ministry tool for developing an accurate portrait of a present reality to lay a platform for diagnosing causes and prescribing cures¹¹⁹. In this approach we find as its namesake the description taking place across the pool or population that is being researched. This methodology is useful in determining as to what constitutes the population ideology, and how they have experienced a phenomenon. As it enables the researcher to know the mindset of a population it becomes possible to formulate problems as well as conduct the actual research. One of the main variants of this methodology is survey research.

¹¹⁸ Stevens, B. A. (2017). Grounded Theology? A Call for a Community of Practice. *Practical Theology*, 10(2), 201-206.

¹¹⁹ Smith, K. G., Woodbridge, N. B., & Pretorius, M. (2008). *Academic writing and theological research: a guide for students*. Johannesburg: South African Theological Seminary Press. p247

Surveys make a valuable contribution to congregational studies, as they provide a quantitative perspective on congregational life and its context. National and local demographics are an important part of the positioning and ecology of a congregation¹²⁰

Surveys usually make entrance, when advertisers need to position their product lines and to make it more appealing or make promotion. Surveys are also important in policy decisions and may take the form of unofficial referendums if administered to large populations. In this regard the more opinions received on a subject, it becomes convenient to know the mind of a certain context. In the above quote we see the same that can be done in relation to congregations of the Christian faith. In actuality in most congregation driven churches this takes place in unofficial capacities. In research this is essential as it will allow a holistic view point of the attitudes, anxieties, hopes etc of a community or congregation.

¹²⁰Hermans, C., & Schoeman, W. J. (2015). Survey research in practical theology and congregational studies. *Acta Theologica*, 45-63.

Also an approach that is necessary of mention in the discussion of methodologies is Design Research. This is where in consumer based situations, new products or systems are produced. This building of prototypes or inventions becomes models to be presented to a wider audience in the hope of simulating a different experience. In a way it is a focus shifting approach where emphasis is give towards a different line of thinking. In terms of action research which also aims to make changes in a context the design research approach is appealing and effective. It makes real a situation that is in need of restoration. Unlike a major portion of studies done in theological circles, which may not necessarily garner change from authorities or policy makers, design research can assist in the process of providing motivation. One such is described below.

Design research is focused on developing a material artifact that helps to create the desired situation, such as a protocol of short-term counseling in spiritual guidance for non-believers or a prototype of an impossible act of forgiveness in a traumatic situation of ethnic conflict, which

makes it impossible for communities to build a new future together¹²¹

Apart from these, creative methodologies are being received into theological scholarship with every passing year, thus cementing the idea of theology becoming a field of study that can be safely accommodated within other streams of study. Quantitative studies which may not be very many, apart from the above survey-type researches become utilized for larger populations and for issues which are managed on a macro scale. On the other end, approaches within Qualitative research such as ethnography, hermeneutics, phenomenology, theological reflection, action research and participatory research.¹²² Qualitative studies in theology have become the major share under scholarship as faith itself is a quality that must be looked into with a research lens. Under this the above approaches have made headway in establishing a place within theological academia. While methodologies such as phenomenology and hermeneutics have found favour with approaches that are extensively used by

¹²¹Hermans, C. A. (2014). From practical theology to practice-oriented theology: The study of lived spirituality and lived religion in late modernity. *International journal of practical theology*, 18(1), 113-126.

¹²²Swinton, J., & Mowat, H. (2016). *Practical theology and qualitative research*. SCM press. p15

theological scholars, ethnography and action research are outcomes of newer approaches which can be coupled fairly under interdisciplinary studies.

We discussed above how theological studies came to be impacted through mechanisms in scientific research in the social sciences. This led into what is described now as the full fledged arena of theological research. While theological study as was agreed upon for centuries as the study of the word of God and the words about God which itself built a tradition of literary analysis, continues to this day in its prestige and glory, the aspect that was mostly influenced by the seeping of social sciences and the methodological thinking was practical theology.

In terms of the broad categorization theology which was systematic, historical, exegetical and practical theology, the first three mainly concentrated on a being researched upon with a methodology which had almost no alternative. This was probably so, due to the non introduction of empirical data into studies. However in the latter, practical theology as we come to know today of the theological reflections on the faith practices, has gained much effect from the social sciences and scientific method. In fact most of the researches that

attain publicity or which usually gets circulated among even non faith oriented groups is practical theology and its studies. Practical theology now intertwines with the basic faith practices such as worship to its most complex, into sociological and even scientific juxtapositions. Practical theology has now even received the title of empirical theology where theologizing is done in the context with data and facts received from the community and other sources, thus developing the concept of ‘field of research’ in the visible world.

The history of practical theology as empirical theology is closely connected with the emergence of the social sciences, including the social scientific study of religion. The main aims are of an academic nature: the description and analysis of the (broadly conceived) praxis of lived religion¹²³

The next matter of undertaking will be to see how much the ‘original’ world of research has been moulded by theological research. While a deeper study encompassing all areas must be done in order to accomplish this, a few

¹²³Ganzevoort, R. R., & Roeland, J. (2014). Lived religion: The praxis of practical theology. *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 18(1), 91-101.

suggestions on its reception among other sciences can be detailed as below. Here we can look at the discussion under two themes. The first must be how well the social sciences can learn from a specific methodology which has been harnessed by theological studies, has been able to contribute to same. The second will be how well theology and Christian faith, if we must demarcate it, has influenced other fields. The second impact is mentioned for the reason that a field does not necessarily come with its methodology but also with its nature. Studying religion presupposes an affective section of interpretation and this then becomes embroiled in the study of other subjects related in an interdisciplinary manner.

We believe a Christian theological research methodology has the potential to complement existing critical and interpretive approaches, and thereby to assist Christian researchers to locate themselves politically, ethically, conceptually, and historically.¹²⁴

The notion of theological studies with its historical standing and its importance in the early years which affected social, political, ethical life of audiences across

¹²⁴ Holmes, C., & Lindsay, D. (2018). In Search of Christian Theological Research Methodology. SAGE Open. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018809214>

the world has been pivotal in this, the perceived contributions from such a field into other selected areas of study. Even with its most harshest critics while Christianity's title may be kept elusive from academic departmental name boards at secular universities, the topic of religion and then religion on society has forever impacted life as we know it in whichever way we are comfortable in looking at the scenario. Therefore the use of religion and hence theology as stemming from religion according to what religions believe and are convinced that a supreme power ordains for all life in earth, is still an aspect that mesmerizes us and makes us curious.

In fact it is difficult for any sociological study or a study with sociological features to ignore religion as a major component of the makeup of the context.

On the side of theological studies, the attempt must then be to optimize this leverage in the hope that the field of studies emanates dialogue and discussion on issues both short and long term which are valuable to life. In terms of a methodology that is purely theological the above discussion has brought a few conclusions which may not wholesale be applicable for other fields of studies as process. Yet in qualitative studies in any context has theological underpinnings which make and affect a large

portion of the affective domain that relates to our behaviour and thinking. Therefore theological studies will continue to benefit even in the pursuit of other popular methodologies in search of findings of varied phenomena. Out of the four theological forms that were mentioned practical theology makes this case more significant than the other forms. As it is based on practices, attitudes, behaviour these components of human activity finds its place on common ground even when discussing the consumerist world with economics, business management and the like in an interesting mix. There have been findings from different studies and one is mentioned below where practical theology has made contribution towards organizational behaviour which on another day and age would have been proposed as something that may not be compatible with each other. Yet this new paradigm shift of accommodating between both theological and Leadership ¹²⁵ healing of memories¹²⁶ other fields have made a promising start in terms of collaborative efforts.

¹²⁵ Dingemans, G. D. (1996). Practical theology in the academy: A contemporary overview. *The journal of religion*, 76(1), p82

¹²⁶ Nell, I. A. (2011). Practical theology as 'healing of memories': Critical reflections on a specific methodology. *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 67(2).

Research done as practical theology can contribute to advancing organization theory and management practice by promoting awareness of theological assumptions operating in research and organizations and by motivating constructive and critical proposals that are unreachable from a secular perspective.¹²⁷

Therefore methodologies in qualitative studies have reaped benefits in other diverse streams as well. Once qualitative studies are undertaken diverse possibilities¹²⁸ are present in terms of the tools that can be used for the task and the outcomes that can be made through these approaches. A newer approach into the systematizing of research has been made through puzzles¹²⁹ and at least six types are mentioned which leads the discussion on a particular topic. With triangulation of theories, data sets and methods the extension of the possibilities of discovery¹³⁰ are multiplied. The important issue of

¹²⁷ Miller, K. D. (2015). Organizational Research as Practical Theology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(2), 276–299. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114559216>

¹²⁸ Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. Pearson. One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458.

¹²⁹ Mason, J. (2017). *Qualitative researching*. Sage p11

¹³⁰ Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., & Steinke, I. (Eds.). (2004). *A companion to qualitative research*. Sage. P180

analysis has become known as evaluation research ¹³¹and through this many interesting results are received and further discussed. The interpretation of qualitative research is done in accordance with the research questions yet the journey taken towards the study may reap results that could be different than what one set out to accomplish. In this regard the researcher/s must be prepared for surprises and twists in what will be compose the findings and even with large studies undertaken the economy of knowledge can only be impacted to a slight degree when comparing to the extent of knowledge in any one field of expertise.

With that let us look at how the subject of Sacramentology can come to be researched. Here we look at several possibilities that can be used to ascertain how the study of sacraments can be accomplished within a research atmosphere. It is understood that Sacramentology must be studied in connection with the following four main aspects. These are liturgies as the main document and living witness Christian faith practice. While liturgies itself differ from denomination to denomination all sectors have a ground map for doing or not doing whatever element that comprises liturgy.

¹³¹ Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

The second aspect will be the thoughts of theologians and thinkers. This is a heavy area of literature and rationale if we might add the term to decorate the contributions of many persons who have in time understood the best way of dialogue with the Supreme Being. The third aspect can be discussed as the historical insights on the celebration of sacraments. This is what we term as tradition but it also engages in the thinking of many persons who shape the thinking of a denomination's understanding of how they dialogue with God. Historical evidences can also be found in artifacts, documents, resources, instruments, audio –video substances and any other element that comprise of worship and practice of Christian faith. The final aspect of sacramental theology will be the views of the faithful, who continue to worship and praise God in the celebration of sacraments whether it be many or very few. Here we do not look at scholarly statements , but we become aware of same, instead we attempt to see the real change of heart and mind of people who take part in these age old traditions. Inevitably the thinking of a large population of persons can have many interpretations and in a qualitative study we might encounter far and wide understandings on the same.

Owing to the nature of the subject of sacramentality it proposes that the researcher/s to look at an array of possible methodologies that can develop an audience's reception to the study.

The elusive nature of the term 'sacramentality; is its strength, in that it can lure Christians beyond the narrowness of ecclesial sacramental terminology into a broad context in which the other terms can find a home, both contextualized and relational and capable of development.¹³²

The fact that sacramentality, maybe not in its Christian interpretation, but maybe also of its same, can prevail in other religions makes this task as wide arraying as possible. In some related schools of thought, sacramentality is now described even in terms of Non theistic purposes¹³³ and simply implies that God speaks through everything; this notion itself becomes a such a large canvass on which to work out a methodology. Therefore the primary objective of the researcher must

¹³² Larson-Miller, L. (2016). *Sacramentality Renewed: Contemporary Conversations in Saramental Theology*. Liturgical Press. p9

¹³³ Brown, D. (2013). *Sacramentality*. In *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought*.

be to determine on a specific aspect of the sacramental universe in determining its affectivity.

Some approaches for sacramentality have been outlined broadly as mentioned below. In terms of determining the nature of same as Christological and Phenomenological¹³⁴ methodology has been recommended which must taken integrated. This will refer mainly to literary studies and the working found in and around liturgy. In the modern day an interdisciplinary¹³⁵ approach has been promoted, and in this case it was based on the sacramentality of sound, which made it possible for effective engagement with a wide array of determinants. Also researching on the sacramentality of sound a more practice based method¹³⁶ has also found favour with the academic community and one example as cited formerly here. Here the study was focused on empirical data based on people' view

¹³⁴ Osborne, K. B. (1988). *Sacramental theology: A general introduction*. Paulist Press. p34

¹³⁵ Andrews, E. S. (2019). *Exploring Evangelical Sacramentality: Modern Worship Music and the Possibility of Divine-human Encounter* (Doctoral dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, Center for Advanced Theological Study). P7

¹³⁶ O'Keeffe, S., & O'Brien, C. (2020). *In-School Initiatives in Sacramental Preparation and Faith Formation—Educators' Perspectives*.

points and this description was made in its entirety a methodology.

When investigating the potential methodology for a sacramentality of Sri Lanka liturgies, three broad areas become necessary in the qualitative approach one may use for same. The first will be the study of liturgies and the element of sacramentality that is embedded in it. In this the researcher/s will study in depth the liturgical celebration that takes place through and as mentioned in the worship documents. While all documents may not have with it accompaniments as to why some sacramental devices are present in liturgies the rationale for same can be found in relation to the context. For an example if a dance is receptive as sacramentality the prologue for same can be found in the subject of arts in the context that will make relation with other faith or cultures where dances make way for the ongoing dialogical process between humanity and the supreme being.

The next step will be the study of persons who have written on the subject exclusively from a Lankan point of view. In the case there is a dearth of same, which can be expected as theological strains in Sri Lanka have found quite few publishing spaces, the study of similar

and comparative other cultures can be undertaken. For an example if the elements of the Eucharist do not comprise of wafers and wine in a context and that has not been documented scholarly such can be found maybe in another Asian or African context that might be able to shed some more light on as to why this substitution takes place and what its significance can be for this particular context. The view points of liturgists and scholars are essential to this study as it proposes a contextual theological study of the subject in question. And under this probe we would be able to theologically construct how a particular sacramentality has been influenced from the context around.

The third aspect will be a practical study of liturgical participants and how their view points on the subject can either develop or oppose what has been built so far. This can either be taken cross sectional as surveys or interviews but in this study it is felt that something like focus groups can be of essence to the study as it enables people to come out with their interpretations and the person conducting can share interpretations a well. The methodological approach which is still continued as qualitative would then reflect rather on the quality of the discussion rather than the mere numbers who may view something as it is or not. Even in the case there can be

widespread ignorance from congregations this can be constructively dealt with training or a workshop mechanism.

The other important aspect in this study will be the philosophy that underlies the entire methodology is contextual theology. Thereby avenues are open to view all these discussions and date through the study of the context and how the Christian ethos has been influenced by same. Contextual theology of Bevan for an example cites six perspectives and for an example one or two of these can be studied in full in relation to the context in the Lankan scenario. This will be a departure from a mere scriptural or a philosophical study and rather focus the spotlight on the context, the researched congregations and the experiences of the church holistically. There would be variable relationships between dominant religions and cultures which have affected liturgists to propose what they have proposed and what we as the Church have followed for decades. As always there would also be opposing viewpoints which can become a barrier to a positive spirit in the study. The more cross cultural the sample is, the deeper the reflections can be immersed in this search.

In proposing a methodology which comprises of these four aspects of inquiry; namely a contextual theological approach, sources, voices, opinions the study aims to become holistic in nature and assumes three hundred and sixty degree overlook. Limitations in every methodology can be expected and this case will not be immune towards this probe in anyway. Therefore the questions can be sharpened to the level that the research seeks only to find answers specifically to the subject or theme which also might be an exhaustive but nevertheless a damage minimizing task. Pursuing similar studies would enable either a paradigm shift in approach or a consolidation to continue with the already established process.

VI. RESEARCH METHODS

After outlining the overall framework in the form of methodology in a research, the next step in the research process will be to select the research methods, collection of data, evaluation and then its presentation. As vital as the methodology if for the research, so are the methods that are deployed to collect information. Any research will inevitably have many ways in which data can be collected for analysis. Therefore the outcome could be different based on the methods that are used in this regard.

The approach comes on the heels of setting out Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology – the way we view, how we understand and how we do ¹³⁷. This itself assists the researcher/s to select the tools in which one may conduct a research. An effective research design will also have a justification of as to why some methods are used and some may not. In a theological atmosphere where we deal with more than what many meet the eye, we are called to reflect

¹³⁷ McNiff, Jean. (2002) *Action Research: From Practice to Writing in an International Action Research Development Program*. London: Routledge

among other aspects religious identities, meaning, rituals, communities and experiences.¹³⁸

In terms of Theological study, there are a few more methods that are considered apart from the methods used in social sciences. We might even go to say that these methods actually preceded social science methods in scientific research, owing to the historicity of same. And in theological studies these other methods come under the branch of Biblical studies. In the following long quote we discuss a few of these.

You may need to use several of these tools when engaging the biblical text. ● Textual criticism: reconstructing the original text by weighting variant readings. ● Historical criticism: reconstructing the history of the text or the history in the text. ● Lexical analysis: conducting word studies on key words. ● Syntax analysis: analysing the grammar of the text. ● Discourse analysis: analysing the discourse features showing the flow and coherence of a pericope. ●

¹³⁸ Lynch, Edited By Gordon (2008) *Between sacred and profane: researching religion and popular culture*. New York. I. B. Tauris

Structural analysis: examining the literary and semantic structure of a text. • Source criticism: analysing and/or reconstructing the sources an author used. • Form criticism: examining the literary forms and the life-settings in which they were used. • Redaction criticism: exploring the theological message of a text. • Rhetorical criticism: studying the literary artistry or rational argument of a text.¹³⁹

As can be observed there are quite a few ‘newer’ methods that do not make an entry in social sciences but may be present in language or philosophical studies.

In terms of theological studies we as a theological community also make use of the above said techniques in data collection. The multitude of methods which exist signal to the first part of this essay that there are many avenues that makes it possible to do data collection and that based on these there is a degree of change that can occur in findings. These can be content analysis, conversation, discourse document, analysis, Experiments, facet theory, factor analysis, field

¹³⁹Smith, K. G., Woodbridge, N. B., & Pretorius, M. (2008). *Academic writing and theological research: a guide for students*. Johannesburg: South African Theological Seminary Press.

observation, free listing, grounded theory, hermeneutics, history, interviewing, network analysis, phenomenology, philology, semiotics, structuralism, surveys and questionnaires, videography, translation etc.

The traditional social scientific research tools for quantitative methods use surveys, polls and questionnaires to generate data that is usually presented in figures or graphs – they quantify trends and patterns in religious life.

For example, based on quite small samples – sometimes fewer than 1,000 responses – a researcher can generalise about patterns in church attendance and, by comparing the latest results with earlier data, can generalise about changes in practice. These methods produce lots of interesting and valuable material, but fieldwork usually draws more heavily on qualitative methods. These qualitative approaches, which we shall be concerned with in this chapter, explore the particular details of a specific religious individual or group. This provides lots of rich descriptive detail, and enables the researcher to explore the meanings of religious belief and practice for that person or community. In other

words, qualitative research can help us to understand how people make sense of their religion and their world; we get the perspectives of insiders.¹⁴⁰

And on the other side of the spectrum the qualitative forms of research can make use of another arraignment of methods in its quest. Qualitative studies seek to answer and offer in-depth explanations of a social behaviour are sought after¹⁴¹ and seeks to offer explanations that are in essence quality based.

The use of methods can change from the initiation of a project yet the determination of same will be greatly beneficial in a research. The use of more methods can definitely enhance the research and provide the researcher/s with more material to work with. Then on the other hand it may also call on the person to be credible and reliable with regard to the knowledge and the practice of each method.

¹⁴⁰ Stephen E. Gregg. (2015) *Research methods in religious studies, Engaging with Living Religion*. Routledge, New York. p72,

¹⁴¹ Zainal, Z. (2007). Case study as a research method. *Jurnal kemanusiaan*, 5(1).

The next step in the research process is equally important and that is how we use the data in analysis. The analysis of data becomes the penultimate step in the research as the interpretation and discussion completes the process.

There are two fundamental approaches to analysing qualitative data: the deductive approach and the inductive approach. Deductive approaches involve using a structure or predetermined framework to analyse data. Essentially, the researcher imposes their own structure or theories on the data and then uses these to analyse the interview transcripts.

This approach is useful in studies where researchers are already aware of probable participant responses. For example, if a study explored patients' reasons for complaining about their dentist, the interview may explore common reasons for patients' complaints, such as trauma following treatment and communication problems. The data analysis would then consist of examining each interview to determine how many patients had complaints of each type and the extent to which complaints of each type co-occur. However, while this approach is relatively

quick and easy, it is inflexible and can potentially bias the whole analysis process as the coding framework has been decided in advance, which can severely limit theme and theory development.¹⁴²

The inductive approach involves analyzing data with little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework and uses the actual data itself to derive the structure of analysis. This approach is comprehensive and therefore time-consuming and is most suitable where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon. Inductive analysis is the most common approach used to analyze qualitative data.

Whilst a variety of inductive approaches to analyzing qualitative data are available, the method of analysis is that of *thematic content analysis*, and is, perhaps, the most common method of data analysis used in qualitative work. This method arose out of the approach known as grounded theory, although the method can be used in a range of other types of

¹⁴²Burnard, P., Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Analysing and presenting qualitative data. *British dental journal*, 204(8), 429-432.

qualitative work, including ethnography and phenomenology. Indeed, the process of thematic content analysis is often very similar in all types of qualitative research, in that the process involves analyzing transcripts, identifying themes within those data and gathering together examples of those themes from the text.¹⁴³

However with the use of the Inductive approach the researcher/s will be able to (a) condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data¹⁴⁴

We will look at a few methods and its analysis techniques. A popular and effective method and an offset of interviews is focus groups. In Focus groups data

¹⁴³ Burnard, P., Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Analysing and presenting qualitative data. *British dental journal*, 204(8), 429-432.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas, D. R. (2006). A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>

collection happens at different levels. First, they identify types of data that can be collected during focus groups. Second, they identify the qualitative data analysis techniques best suited for analyzing these data. Third, they introduce what they term as a micro-interlocutor analysis, wherein meticulous information about which participant responds to each question, the order in which each participant responds, response characteristics, the nonverbal communication used, and the like is collected, analyzed, and interpreted¹⁴⁵

Another very popular method of data analysis when referring to documentary or historical analysis is the content analysis. This leads the researcher/s to delve into an indepth study of each phenomenon and it employs coding and summaries with comparisons.

In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text data. With a directed approach, analysis starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes. A summative content analysis

¹⁴⁵Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Dickinson, W. B., Leech, N. L., & Zoran, A. G. (2009). A Qualitative Framework for Collecting and Analyzing Data in Focus Group Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800301>

involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context.¹⁴⁶

This overview examines ways of enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis by dealing with three distinct but related inquiry concerns: rigorous techniques and methods for gathering and analyzing qualitative data, including attention to validity, reliability, and triangulation; the credibility, competence, and perceived trustworthiness of the qualitative researcher; and the philosophical beliefs of evaluation users about such paradigm-based preferences as objectivity versus subjectivity, truth versus perspective, and generalizations versus extrapolations.¹⁴⁷

Into newer and developing forms of data analysis, audio and video usage has found meaning as innovative techniques. The use of video involves recording and playing back visual and audio components of events, contexts, and interviews, which are the staples of any qualitative study. Because video can transfer this

¹⁴⁶Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277–1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>

¹⁴⁷Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health services research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1189.

information in a fairly direct manner for later study and analysis, the quality and detail of virtually any research study can potentially be improved by the use of video.¹⁴⁸

In case study methods and in Grounded theory led researches where the attempt focuses on giving meaning to their world¹⁴⁹ several techniques are used by researcher/s in their quest.

The history of GTM establishes a foundation for the interpretation, whereas recognition of the dialectic between induction and deduction underscores the importance of incorporating constructivism in GTM thinking¹⁵⁰. In such cases practical suggestions for beginning analysis include getting a sense of the whole, extracting the facts, identifying key topics or major storylines and dimensionalizing their informational content, and using frameworks to reduce data.¹⁵¹

In terms of interdisciplinarity as it has come to be known in current academia the linking of several fields into

¹⁴⁸Ratcliff, D. (2003). *Video methods in qualitative research*.

¹⁴⁹Ritchie, J., Spencer, L., & O'Connor, W. (2003). Carrying out qualitative analysis. *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, 2003, 219-62.

¹⁵⁰LaRossa, R. (2005). Grounded theory methods and qualitative family research. *Journal of marriage and Family*, 67(4), 837-857.

¹⁵¹Sandelowski, M. (1995). Qualitative analysis: What it is and how to begin. *Research in nursing & health*, 18(4), 371-375.

research; the results have signaled a pivotal shift from the traditional. This has come to be known as Epistemological pluralism¹⁵² where there is recognition to what can be known even by using several fields in the pursuit. To simply develop this further

Qualitative empirical social research concentrates on the experiences of others between the poles of academic research and society where, on the one hand, social aspects become the objects of academic research and, on the other hand, the knowledge of social science carries the potential of changing society and thereby contains a political or ethic dimension, respectively¹⁵³

Interdisciplinary studies was seen as a challenge to the previous western model and it called on the recognition of this new form in the quest for new knowledge. Western science and predicts that future interdisciplinary approaches to epistemological writing will take into

¹⁵²Miller, T. R., Baird, T. D., Littlefield, C. M., Kofinas, G., Chapin III, F. S., & Redman, C. L. (2008). Epistemological pluralism: reorganizing interdisciplinary research. *Ecology and Society*, 13(2).

¹⁵³Bohnsack, R., Pfaff, N., & Weller, W. (2010). *Qualitative analysis and documentary method: In international educational research* (p. 369). Verlag Barbara Budrich. 355

account divergent thinking patterns and thereby end the domination by western intellectual imperialism¹⁵⁴

As the quote explains the form of dominancy that was exerted to that point in social sciences was given a shake-up when interdisciplinary studies made its breakthrough. The main accusations against same was the lack of rigorous thinking and method¹⁵⁵ yet this field proved that the pre existing norm in research promoting the liinear view of intellectual history would be erroneous¹⁵⁶.

Yet as we can see from the bloom of same in many academia we are confident that this has been an effective addition to the armour of research. It also calls on the community to develop expertise, links and networks in their work. This promotes the emerging field of inter or multi disciplinary studies. This in the same way makes connections and contributions towards all fields and makes research wholesome.

¹⁵⁴Gusdorf, G. (1977). Past, Present and Future in Interdisciplinary Research. *International Social Science Journal*.

¹⁵⁵Lattuca, L. R. (2001). *Creating interdisciplinarity: Interdisciplinary research and teaching among college and university faculty*. Vanderbilt university press.

¹⁵⁶Krohn, W. (2010). Interdisciplinary cases and disciplinary knowledge. *The Oxford handbook of interdisciplinarity*, 31-49.

As the interdisciplinary approach continues to synthesize the characteristics and methods of multiple disciplines while developing lifelong learning skills, they will have met the goals that Newell has laid out. Interdisciplinary curricula is time consuming and takes collaborative team work to create.¹⁵⁷

In considering the field of a sacramental theology the many methods of linkage are challenging. It is challenging with regard to the effects of many method that can be used but yet must be foregone. With Sacramental theology taking the shape of 'receiving' its source from thinkers and their thoughts, documentary data collection becomes a crucial aspect in the work ahead. The study of liturgies which also takes form in the sense of documentary data collection will lead the researcher/s to look at primary sources and also its justifications for same.

The next set of data collection will be more practice based and will have elements from observation,

¹⁵⁷Jones, C. (2010). Interdisciplinary approach-advantages, disadvantages, and the future benefits of interdisciplinary studies. *Essai*, 7(1), 26.

interviews and surveys. In an observational front the work that undergoes into collecting data can be from liturgical rites into how the congregations conceive and practice based on same. This will open up realistic behaviour and add value to the study. In interviews and also focus group a rather indepth understanding can be received through the interpersonal contact made with each participant. This develops depth in the research as researcher/s would be able to clarify their doubts and also receive a wide range of answers. In terms of liturgy there is quite a free range in interpretations even within the same denominations. This sometimes may cloud group studies and intentions yet it also explains to the academic community the need of different methods of data collection or at least different combinations. The final under this method would be surveys and wide ranging questionnaires. In terms of large samples this can prove to be effective.

The study of a sacramental theology and a derivative theme depends on whether it is based more philosophically or in a more practice based scenario. Even in Sacramental theology we find this under conceptual work and the actual performance of same. This can be seen as the systematic and the practical divide within the subject area. Therefore the need to

focus on which stream that needs to be addressed is important in this quest.

Further on, which experts or which streams will further need to be involved in this discussion also forms a vital point in the discussion. What will be the fields that will enrich this study? In a sacramental sense, the ritual and rites with a concentration of tradition will be one of these areas. The psychology of congregations and how they perceive these events will also be of importance. Next with regard to cultural sensitivity the question of culture will be a field which is inescapable. The work on sacred texts and liturgies will also entail a close work with canon law and related constitutions as these also govern much of the essence that we find in sacramental theology. Related to this is possibly the subjects are anthropology and sociology. The dialogue between these varied fields will be interesting and will lead into further study.

VII. DECOLONIZING THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Theology is one of the many fields of study that have felt the pressure of colonialism. Yet theology can be regarded as one of the very few in which the colonial interpretations have obstructed any creative or original thinking for the same reason as it is God's operation that we look for in theology. It can even be said the operation of God itself became a captive of western colonialism and projected God in a particular manner that was probably the opposite of what God is.

To elaborate on this the colonial theology was used to enslave people signifying that the white or foreign race was destined to rule over the other races. For the keen Bible reader race relations in the Bible will appear to be very complicated yet it will never specify this based on a race, culture or a colour. Yet as history records the foreigner and in this case the west had a monopoly over thought and thinking patterns in all fields and also in faith. It was a call to insist on their way alone as being the way for all the follow¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁸Lartey, E. Y. (2013). *Postcolonializing God: New perspectives on pastoral and practical theology*. Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.

The precedence on this imposition of will was the result of either war and diplomacy ¹⁵⁹. Naturally to say that Asian, Latin and African countries were swept off their feet by the western look, manner and model is quite true. Some countries would have felt even more painful repercussions in the form of slavery at the hands of westerners. The colonial spirit infiltrated all aspects of life in the countries that came under them. Religion was absolutely no exception in the sense that it was primarily a weapon. The humble Jesus became a symbol of power and oppression. The attempt to preach to the soul while it neglects the environment ¹⁶⁰ made a long lasting gap with indigenous culture, religion and history.

As postcolonial studies have made the pivot in respect of what was lost as mentioned above, the post colonial turn can be understood as the removal of a colonial lens into interpretations. On the other hand Post Colonial interpretation marked a departure from a particular way of seeing the world¹⁶¹. The task of a practical post colonial turn can be attributed to post modern

¹⁵⁹Rivera-Pagán, L. N. (2007). Doing pastoral theology in a post-colonial context: Some observations from the Caribbean. *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, 17(2), 1-27.

¹⁶⁰Williams, L. (2002). *Caribbean theology* (Vol. 2). Peter Lang.pix

¹⁶¹Westhelle, V. (2010). *After heresy: Colonial practices and post-colonial theologies*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

deconstruction¹⁶² a concept that spreads even beyond the theological academia. With gratitude towards this model it is now possible to envision the the operation of God in these diverse contexts. And this is achieved when diversity in the production of knowledge in the classroom using coloniality as an analytical lens¹⁶³. It has made it possible for project such as one that has been described in length to come into academia.

What is distinctive about this project is that I bring together world systems theory, postcolonial theory and theological political perspectives under a decolonial approach in order to highlight the importance of epistemology in the establishment of a global hierarchical system that produces and locates Western knowledge, cosmology and spirituality over non-Western forms. This dissertation, therefore, outlines a methodological trajectory that does not instrumentalize the theological to a materialist rendition of capitalist accumulation, colonial

¹⁶²Heaney, R. S. (2015). *From historical to critical post-colonial theology: the contribution of John S. Mbiti and Jesse NK Mugambi* (Vol. 9). Wipf and Stock Publishers.

¹⁶³Andraos, M. E. (2012). Engaging Diversity in Teaching Religion and Theology: An Intercultural, De- colonial Epistemic Perspective. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, 15(1), 3-15.

expansion and conquest. Rather, I will seek to characterize how capital, colonialism and theology were entwined, negotiated and expressed in often contradictory ways through the writings of John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Charles Darwin. In doing so, I examine the material inscriptions and historical particularity regarding the entangled secular and theological forms of reasoning, knowledge traditions, and temporalities that emerged in relation to the contingencies of coloniality.¹⁶⁴

In terms of theological thinking the roots of coloniality has posed a tangle that has been difficult to shake off in some countries. The deep infiltration of colonial interpretation is experienced through this and it has then affected the practical part of theological studies. This grows into liturgy, worship, law, Episcopal oversight, interfaith relations nation building etc. For a country like Sri Lanka, even though the academia claims a total break off from western roots, it is impossible for the outside world to recognize this as they themselves have been subject into this sort of

¹⁶⁴Kolia, Z. Y. (2015). Colonial Theology: John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Charles Darwin and the Emergence of the Colonial-Capitalist World System, 1500-1900.

thinking. One main area is human rights; where the Church always stands in favour of same yet this comes off as a 'western influence' depicted positively through the church. In that way, the claim of the church to become a voice for the voiceless, meets with difficulty and struggle. Rieger explains that thinking on mission today, does not always see the subtle connection between mission and neocolonialism, even though it has recognized and renounced the former colonialism. While mission as "outreach" and "relationship" have some positive aspects, they can easily be tainted with neocolonial attitudes¹⁶⁵

This is the challenge that can be seen in the following statement as well. Here it furthers this idea by even hijacking the Christian truths as western truths, as opposed to Eastern truths which can be found in Hinduism and Buddhism but in tenure are almost similar in ethical manner to Christian morals.

Despite the recent proliferation of “postcolonial theology,” theology itself has had little traction in the broader field of postcolonial studies for a number of reasons: the relationship between

¹⁶⁵Rieger, J. (2004). Theology and mission between neocolonialism and postcolonialism. *Mission Studies*, 21(2), 201-227.

colonialism and Christian mission stereotyped Christianity as an agent of the civilizing mission of imperialism; the explosive consequences of the relation between religion and politics has produced prejudice against the inclusion of religion in cultural studies; and the influential doctrine of “secular criticism” espoused by Edward Said has given a strongly humanist complexion to postcolonial studies. The problem with Said’s secularism, wedded, it would seem, to an anachronistic, medieval view of the sacred, is that his stereotyping of religion works against his own definition of a multicultural, multinational inclusive humanism.¹⁶⁶

Therefore the need to overcome this by decolonizing the theological framework and indeed our interpretation framework Scholars show that there is a newer model of hybridization of mixing colonial authority with culture¹⁶⁷ which has also proven to be detrimental in this journey towards colonization. An original approach has become

¹⁶⁶ Ashcroft, B. (2014). Threshold Theology. In *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies* (pp. 3-20). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

¹⁶⁷ Heaney, R. S. (2019). *Post-colonial Theology: Finding God and Each Other Amidst the Hate*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

a challenge as the lingering sense of colonial foundations remain.

Let us look at a few examples on how this decolonization can take place, by citing a few relevant examples. Given the role of Canadian mainline Christianity and the churches in this history, the work of unmasking the colonial theology that sustained the “evangelizing and civilizing” foundational projects of the state and the violence they produced becomes an urgent theological task that is yet to be tackled seriously¹⁶⁸

The first step towards this would this be to unmask the agenda from the faith. As the agenda accompanied the faith, the difference even if detected was a hard demarcation. The policies of civilizing of the western powers themselves had the brainwashing effect on themselves as well. Since there is more evidence than not, of the direct involvement of the church in this task. The work of mission societies can be debated whether they followed in this exact path, yet overall the church which played a major political part in these western countries empowered this ideology.

¹⁶⁸ Andraos, M. (2017). Doing Theology after the TRC. *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 32(3), 295-301.

However, just as Christian theology in Africa and beyond Africa begins to experience the transformative potential of disturbance and disruption brought by post-colonial theologizing, there lurk old dangers at the dawn of a purported new theological movement. For in a desire to unveil colonialisms and imperialisms, earlier theological works emerging from historic situations of colonialism can be marginalized¹⁶⁹

The second aspect in this journey, will be to seek original thinking patterns. As mentioned above, the framework posed more issues than the actual teaching in the colonizing spirit.

Therefore even in theological circles, the rules must first be decided in the task. Therefore referring to the mission documents or church magisterium on faith, ends up a calamity with newer theological models that keep coming up which are mixtures. These do not add new flavour but stagnates even novel thinking.

African decoloniality theology (ADT) for a contemporary praxis of Christian faith. Observing the praxis of faith in post-colonial states among the "new"

¹⁶⁹Rowland, C. From Historical to Critical Post-Colonial Theology.

religious movements, I argue that there is a need for theologians to rethink theology in the context of religious mafiarisation, extortion, abuse, constitutional delinquency, political oppression and coloniality of God. I use decoloniality theory to articulate and suggest the need for ADT. I answer the question: What are the trajectories of mutual zombification and how will ADT involve¹⁷⁰

In a way following the Christian spirit, the hate of anything for that matter is not aligned with faith, yet in this regard the ‘sin’ that accompanied the strife caused by colonialism must be disregarded. This will need theologians to have a hermeneutic of suspicion in tracing various starting point on their journey of seeking who God is and how God works in a context.

Then the spotlight turns on the aspect of power that stems in interpretation of the above aspect. While earlier power politics played this in favour of the westerners, now this power must be wrestled away from them for the current theological task. From a South African perspective, in the event the power struggle fails in terms

¹⁷⁰Dube, B. (2019). Trajectories of mutual zombification in the praxis of post-colonial faith in South Africa: a need for African decoloniality theology. *Acta Theologica*, 39(1), 55-73.

of contextualization and indigenization it contends that public theology is trapped in an attempt to universalize concepts, similar to earlier forms of theology, and does not take developing world theologies seriously. It is post-coloniality, rather than postmodernity, that this article claims is of importance to South African society.¹⁷¹

The issue of power has also been identified in later theological thinking, making these into models that favour colonialists in the end anyway. The opposing faction take coloniality to be that "invisible" power structure that sustains colonial relations of exploitation and domination long after the end of direct colonialism¹⁷² Therefore the danger of a return back into the normal models is itself mere camouflage to what may lie in wait for the eager scholar.

By far and large, post colonial thinking when deemed separate from the invisible arms has proving that social

¹⁷¹Maluleke, T. S. (2011). Reflections and resources: The elusive public of public theology: A response to William Storrar. *International Journal of Public Theology*, 5(1), 79-89.

¹⁷²Sakupapa, T. C. (2018). The Decolonising content of African Theology and the Decolonisation of African Theology-Reflections on a Decolonial future for African Theology. *Missionalia*, 46(3), 406-424.

cohesion is enhanced by a post-colonial theology of religions based on the current context.¹⁷³ The current contextual thinking is further enhanced by one's own history, manner, attitude, politics etc making the foundation for theologizing 'local' as possible.

On the other end we have found post colonial thinking to be accused of accused of preoccupied with existential ontological navel gazing¹⁷⁴ and that different perspectives from various disciplines on the phenomenon of multiple religious belonging shows that it has been increasingly difficult to interpret this phenomenon in a univocal way. In theology of religions we see that particularists and pluralists understand religious diversity in terms of bounded traditions, while feminist, post-colonial, and intercultural theologians draw a much more open and hybrid picture of religious diversity and belonging¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³Beyers, J. (2016). Beyond denial and exclusion: The history of relations between Christians and Muslims in the Cape Colony during the 17th–18th centuries with lessons for a post-colonial theology of religions. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 72(1).

¹⁷⁴Joh, W. A. (2006). *Heart of the cross: A postcolonial Christology*. Presbyterian Publishing Corp. p4

¹⁷⁵Oostveen, D. F. (2017). Multiple Religious Belonging: Hermeneutical Challenges for Theology of Religions. *Open Theology*, 3(1), 38-47.

This calls for newer methods in finding how humanity can receive liberation, in juxtaposition with the Christian faith. For the local Christian this beckons another challenge. As when it was a colonial mindset the terms of salvation was defined clearly, yet now with local theologizing and with other faiths playing a major role in this task the, attempt itself is unimaginable as it makes clash with the faith and the spirit. Therefore as scholars innovate with what is given in the following quote, the impasse between a simple and a complex pattern of the same phenomenon, must now be expected.

Indigenous Christian theologians are justified in expanding their canonical resources to include the ancestral “Testaments” of their own people groups, and scripture itself provides a precedent. The book of Genesis reveals a pattern of respect for the distinctive religion of the ancestors. And contrary to a reading of Paul which has Galatians erase distinctive cultures, the body of Christ is as much Greek as Jew, as much Pitjantjatjara as Anglo-Celtic.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Brett, M. G. (2003). *Canto Ergo Sum: Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Theology*. *Pacifica*, 16(3), 247–256.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1030570X0301600301>

Therefore in summation to this point, we must now ask what is actually a post colonial theology? How does already existing theology be decolonized? And what is the power equation that can make it possible. The following statement holds some of these concerns in its description of this concept.

Postcolonial theology is an academic discipline within religious thought whereby structures of power, dominant systems, and embedded ideologies are examined, critiqued, and negotiated in order to make social transformations that recognize and validate the perspectives of marginalized peoples, cultures, and identities. Secular studies in postcolonial theory have played a significant role in giving rise to this genre of theological reflection. The traditional advent of postcolonial studies came in 1978 with the publication of Edward Said's book *Orientalism*, which unmasked Eurocentric assumptions ascribed to Oriental life, thus generating a misrepresentative reality in the

Western imagination that was imposed upon
Eastern people.¹⁷⁷

For a Sri Lankan Sacramentology, the decolonizing effect is a must. This is said with regard to both the theory and practice of it. For an example the first local liturgies in Sri Lanka appeared about ninety years back. This can be thought of as substantial, yet when we think of the number of liturgies that have come into existence the paucity of the intention can be witnessed. In a similar manner when a westerner attends service in Sri Lanka, they find themselves to transformed in time to services that they had engaged in, but late by maybe twenty years. This further shows that worship, the most vital aspect of Christian witness, itself is either stagnant or it is still very late in blossoming.

This calls us in a way to determine the power equation. While much effort can be done to take examples from other similar developing countries, the task at hand must be a local attempt. Otherwise there is a danger that we embed another colonized tradition with our own. Therefore while keep the vitals at bay, the task of a sacramental theologian must be to discuss the important

¹⁷⁷Bradnick, D. (2012). Postcolonial theology. *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*.

of same in a local culture. History, culture, faiths, customs, rituals emotions are all important in this arrangement. There might be a tendency to rush back into following renowned scholars but from western traditions in gapping several mysteries we find in this regard. The solution will be the flooding of the academia with more and research from a local thinking perspective in the hope that the 'field' of expertise is built firmly on a local platform.

The more this takes place, there can be citations that are both accepted and yet leading upto more research. The local Sacramentology must then be renewed and actually made anew. This will entail that we depend upon the Holy Scriptures in full but read in context and to a certain extent the tradition of the great scholar in our minds. Yet the other two pillars of reason and experience must be wrought entirely on a eastern platform. This will enable more dialogue, liturgies, models of worship and even doctrines to emerge, which will enlighten and develop the already existing study of sacraments. The casual look at the plethora of information available for this, makes us expectant that the end result will be much rewarding.

VIII. PERSPECTIVES FROM ELSEWHERE

Ethnography is a research method that is defined in a number of ways. While there is not a single definition for ethnography it can be understood as one methodology that makes people behaviours' studied in everyday contexts, data collected from a range of sources, data collected is 'unstructured', focus is usually a small group. And interpretation aimed towards the meaning of functions of this community. ¹⁷⁸It differs from other methods in the fact that a significant time in the field¹⁷⁹ is spent and in a way a really in depth study is made of a group. Unlike a case study which itself is specific, ethnography directs the 'case' at a selected 'group' and gives prominence to the features of that particular group.

The use of different angles to study the same group can also be set apart as being part and parcel of this system. While multiple methods can be used in almost any methodology the

¹⁷⁸Hammersley, M. (2016). *Reading ethnographic research*. Routledge.p2

¹⁷⁹Myers, M. D. (1999). Investigating information systems with ethnographic research. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 2(1), 23.p3

multiple sources of data, multiple methods of analysis and for multiple sites and time frames¹⁸⁰

in this system sets it apart as the researcher/s journeys with the unit for a much longer time and leaves no possible angle unattended. Ethnography has become a popular method of research exactly for the reason that, uniqueness in whatever unit can be studied with relevance to their details and it brings out ethnic, religious, cultural etc elements in the quest.

We will look at three examples in which ethnographic research has been conducted and in three different settings. The first example comes in the form of writers within an organization. The research explains the varied methods that were used in this quest and also how the relationships were made.

Research methods used included participant/observations, open-ended interviews, and Discourse-Based Interviews. A detailed analysis of the executive collaborative process posits a model that describes the reciprocal relationship between writing and the organizational context. The study shows the

¹⁸⁰Koskinen, K. (2014). *Translating institutions: An ethnographic study of EU translation*. Routledge.

following: (1) how the organizational context influences (a) writers' conceptions of their rhetorical situations, and (b) their collaborative writing behavior; and (2) how the rhetorical activities influence the structure of the organization.¹⁸¹

To come up with such direct analysis, an indepth data collection range must be employed. And as was mentioned above, the uniqueness of this system features the prominence the researcher/s give to the unit as a whole and with their own differences.

The next examples comes in a more modern form and identifies trends with software development. The result of this research is that response to more rigorous and traditional approaches to software development which are perceived to have failed both customers and software development practitioners¹⁸². The study has followed this unit developers to ascertain more fully entire issues that make them act as to how they have chosen. The conclusion is reached that owing to several reasons,

¹⁸¹Doheny-Farina, S. (1986). Writing in an emerging organization: An ethnographic study. *Written communication*, 3(2), 158-185.

¹⁸²Sharp, H., & Robinson, H. (2004). An ethnographic study of XP practice. *Empirical Software Engineering*, 9(4), 353-375.

there is a direct relationship that this group has not lived upto the expectations of the organization.

While the limits of any group is determined to be small for the sake of indepth study, there have also been researches that have taken larger sample sizes for an example the ethnographic study in three sub-Saharan African countries¹⁸³ researching the notion of success in relation to the socio-cultural features that encapsulate the communities.

The last example comes from a study in England and is quoted at length, so as to explain the process and discussion on the conclusions received through same.

Using findings from an ethnographic study of international postgraduate students at a university in the south of England, this article offers a model of adjustment that is informed by the duration of the sojourn, from the initial stage to the month of students' departure from England. This study found that stress was at its height in

¹⁸³Ware, N. C., Idoko, J., Kaaya, S., Biraro, I. A., Wyatt, M. A., Agbaji, O., ... & Bangsberg, D. R. (2009). Explaining adherence success in sub-Saharan Africa: an ethnographic study. *PLoS Med*, 6(1), e1000011.

the initial stage of the academic sojourn; this was caused by the struggle to cope with the challenges of foreign language use and an unfamiliar academic and sociocultural environment at a time when students were beset with homesickness and loneliness. An association was made between the passage of time and a gradual decrease in acculturative stress. However, this was not a generalizable process; there was fluctuation not only in experience across the student body but also in the individual's subjective sense of success across different aspects of life in the new country. This led to the conceptualization of the adjustment journey as an unpredictable and dynamic process, which is experienced differently among sojourners, and fluctuates throughout the sojourn as a result of a host of individual, cultural and external factors¹⁸⁴

The sample in this case is an international group of post graduate students. While there are certain differences

¹⁸⁴Brown, L., & Holloway, I. (2008). The adjustment journey of international postgraduate students at an English university: An ethnographic study. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(2), 232-249.

even amidst this group it can be clearly seen that the research was focused on varied lines of inquiry in the hope of bringing into light the key issues of the target group.

While ethnography itself seems like an idea that is very much disconnected with the researcher/s in their ultimate quest for truth, it is unlikely that this method being loosely fitted into a vacuum within the academic research criteria. The idea of theory in ethnography is vital in the sense that the researcher/s keep aligned their interest to an already existing framework. What we take from this exchange is that good ethnography is theory driven, and is likely to be much more reflective of inductive theoretical insights than those that are purely deductive. Moreover, we show that in some ethnographic studies the theoretical insights are neither strictly deductive nor inductive, but represent a combination of both¹⁸⁵

On the other hand, and related to the above, ethnography must undergo checks to make sure that it is presentable to a field of academic inquiry and critique.

¹⁸⁵Wilson, W. J., & Chaddha, A. (2009). The role of theory in ethnographic research. *Ethnography*, 10(4), 549-564.

Although problems of reliability and validity have been explored thoroughly by experimenters and other quantitative researchers, their treatment by ethnographers has been sporadic and haphazard. This article analyzes these constructs as defined and addressed by ethnographers. Issues of reliability and validity in ethnographic design are compared to their counterparts in experimental design. Threats to the credibility of ethnographic research are summarized and categorized from field study methodology. Strategies intended to enhance credibility are incorporated throughout the investigative process: study design, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings. Common approaches to resolving various categories of contamination are illustrated from the current literature in educational ethnography.¹⁸⁶

The hold of ethnography in the modern academic circles have become such that it brings in -depth culture, but also studies it so well when related to peoples and cultures so that the answers to all questions are done

¹⁸⁶LeCompte, M. D., & Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of educational research*, 52(1), 31-60.

with relative ease. One phrase that has been used to discuss is from the following researcher who has carved out a very unique term in the pursuit of same and brings in much to promote the very special effort made in ethnography. James Clifford (1997: 56) has, in a much cited locution borrowed from Renato Rosaldo, theorized the methodology of ethnographic research – my craft – as ‘deep hanging out.’ This perverse phrase captures nicely the improvisational quality of fieldwork, the confusing overlap between informal streetcorner conversation and the serious inquiry embodied in ethnographic fieldwork, and the profound level of understanding of the other for which ethnography aims through apparently casual methods.¹⁸⁷

We now turn to the next theme of question on general understanding of studies on religion and culture. The importance of studying religion and culture in the modern day is making a comeback due to several reasons. The first is naturally that these two elements have been so deep rooted in our spirit that it is impossible to rationalize without referring to them.

¹⁸⁷ Gusterson, H. (2008). Ethnographic research. In *Qualitative methods in international relations* (pp. 93-113). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Secondly we see the these two elements have in their own have contributed in history through to modernity by their own interpretative networks. Thirdly rather than remaining static culture wise, religions and cultures have found foot in almost every new sphere of activity present in the modern world.

The modern, scientific, rationalist, industrial culture which is rooted in the secularizing presuppositions of the Enlightenment is, after a little over two centuries, collapsing. There is a cultural shift taking place, a shift which has been identified by many as the shift from modernity to post-, late- or perhaps high-modernity. Not only has there been a rapid evolution of communication technologies, consumerism, and all that these developments entail, but also, more particularly, there has been a celebration of religious plurality, an encouragement to experiment, and a consequent increase in the attraction of personally tailored spiritualities. Increasingly, people are unwilling to respect traditional authorities¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Partridge, C. (2002). The disenchantment and reenchancement of the West: The religio-cultural context of contemporary Western Christianity. *Evangelical Quarterly*, 74(3), 235-256. P235

Once again to study a few related examples we find the following context which has had much to say in terms of life and death. The issue of interpretation going to this distance shows how vital such contexts are to research. The study identified a strong belief in religio-cultural determinants of perinatal death, which demonstrates that medical interventions alone are not sufficient to prevent these deaths and that broader social determinants which are highly significant in local life must be considered in policy making and programming.¹⁸⁹

On a similar theme of withdrawing therapy, we see that a religious and cultural context can also determine on discontinuing life sustaining interventions.

Towards the end of life, physicians face dilemmas of discontinuing life-sustaining treatments or interventions. In some circumstances, these treatments are no longer of benefit, while in others the patient or family no longer want them. The physician plays an

¹⁸⁹ Paudel, M., Javanparast, S., Dasvarma, G., & Newman, L. (2018). Religio-cultural factors contributing to perinatal mortality and morbidity in mountain villages of Nepal: Implications for future healthcare provision. *PloS one*, 13(3), e0194328.

essential role in clarifying the goals of medical treatment, defining the care plan, initiating discussions about life-sustaining therapy, educating patients and families, helping them deliberate, making recommendations, and implementing the treatment plan¹⁹⁰

The next example comes from Ireland and how women have constructed their own worlds within the larger context. Using qualitative evidence from a study of young Muslim women in Ireland, we identify how religio-cultural dimensions are central within young women's social lives and personal worlds. Our analysis of these young women's narratives draws on structuration theory to examine what can be described as their *circumscribed* choices and freedoms. Focusing on the gendered norms, meanings and sanctions that circulate within family and community, we suggest that their social and personal worlds reflect a gendered

¹⁹⁰ Manalo, M. F. C. (2013). End-of-life decisions about withholding or withdrawing therapy: medical, ethical, and religio-cultural considerations. *Palliative Care: Research and Treatment*, 7, PCRT-S10796.

responsibility and agency, as structured through their religio-cultural system.¹⁹¹

From issues of life and death to experience and even to how we interpret the world, the context of religio-culturalism have been pivotal in the understanding of many issue related to the modern conversations. Another example is presented in the following where in Thailand Buddhists are motivated in their decision making.

How do religiously committed Thai Protestant Christians and Thai Buddhists perceive their motivation for making moral decisions? Data for this grounded theory study were obtained through personal interviews with 24 participants willing to share their thoughts and experiences of moral motivation. Participants were adult Thai individuals who self-identify as religiously committed to Theravada Buddhism or Protestant Christianity.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ McGrath, B., & McGarry, O. (2014). The religio-cultural dimensions of life for young Muslim women in a small Irish town. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(7), 948-964.

¹⁹² Hilderbrand, K. M. (2020). Religio-cultural factors as moral motivation among religiously committed Thai people: a grounded theory study. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 41(1), 5-19.

While we study this research we also realize that if we were studying some other group the outcome would be much different. Hence the religio-cultural angle is of importance to even secular ideas. This also leads us into the third theme and relation between theological study and other disciplines. In one way having a religious centered focus is spiritual motivation ¹⁹³. This is said in the light that religion and spiritually drawn from it brings the will and drive to further in research. In one study it was determined that students are able to concentrate more on a range of study disciplines and open to other studies possibilities when they were related into a faith background.¹⁹⁴

The study of theology is not empiricist or historical ¹⁹⁵ alone. It brings another dimension into the discussion

¹⁹³ Hirsto, L., & Tirri, K. (2009). Motivational approaches to the study of theology in relation to spirituality. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 22(1), 88-102.

¹⁹⁴ Rowland, C., Sabri, D., Wyatt, J., Stavrakopoulou, F., Cargas, S., & Hartley, H. (2005). 'Like a good brisk walk': The Relationship between Faith Stance and Academic Study in the Experience of First Year Theology Students at the University of Oxford. *Discourse: Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies*, 4(2), 43-82.

¹⁹⁵ Wood, W. (2021). *Analytic Theology and the Academic Study of Religion*. Oxford University Press, USA.

table. Therefore it is not necessary and advisable to keep theology within safe 'interpretative communities'¹⁹⁶ that does not engage in risk taking and progressive study.

To complete this section it is important, that we look at one more study in length where the church of Sweden had to relate to academic disciplines in many ways. Their recommendations have been documented clearly that the work with other disciplines is of great importance and the academic freedom must be given even with the Church framework for better understanding of faith in dialogue with other disciplines.

When the Church of Sweden ceased to be a state church in the year 2000, the parameters for a change in the relation between academic theology and religious studies (religionsvetenskap) at the state universities in Sweden was in place. My article, which is intended as a contribution to the sometimes unnecessarily agonistic discussion following the sharp critique levelled by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket)

¹⁹⁶ Barton, J. (Ed.). (1998). *The Cambridge companion to biblical interpretation*. Cambridge University Press.p18

in 2008, focuses on two basic oppositions underlying the present discourse, namely the tension between the expectation of economic utility and the ideal of a free search for knowledge; and that between, on the one hand, confessional neutrality and, on the other hand, the education of priests and pastors. As a conclusion, I suggest a way forward in three points: 1. The education of priests for the Church of Sweden must change as a result of the abandonment of the state church system. 2. At the same time, the state system should nurture a more positive attitude toward theological reflections developed at nongovernmental university colleges. 3. Thirdly, the interrelationship between secular religious studies at state universities and the tradition specific theologies developed at private university colleges could be essential for the balancing of the demand of economic utility and the principle of academic freedom as it concerns religious studies.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Cavallin, C. (2011). After the State Church. A Reflection on the Relation between Theology and Religious Studies in Contemporary Sweden. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10(29), 43-63.

When talking of a Sri Lanka Sacramentology, it is important to realize that ethnography will inspire a range of discussions on the subject area. This is possible as we find most congregations are embedded in their faith through culture and the understanding of religion through that lens. Therefore even in Sri Lanka a research conducted in a plantation sector and a rural village and an urban setting will certainly have different aspects relating towards the subject. The fact that an inbuilt mechanism within each congregation member determines the spirit of the sacrament is nothing to be understood negatively yet in a spirit of diversity. In that sense the religio-cultural context does play a crucial role. In a country like Sri Lanka which is heavily religious conscious, the discussion of any topic even one that is secular is immediately sent through the above orientation and analyzed. In one way this is an advantage that makes researcher/s also be inspired at the length religious consciousness takes the dialogue into certain depths. On the other hand the 'over centreness' on the contextual psyche can make congregations unable to go beyond a certain understanding and acknowledge that a secular world is also present and fruitful dialogue must transpire with both worlds. In terms of describing the sacraments that have its root in an Israeli context and within the

Jewish faith, the relation of same into a different realm can bring with it certain elements of surprise when research can be conducted in an Asian context among oriental faiths.

IX. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research is a systematic study of a certain aspect through we the researcher/s hope to impart some sort of valid knowledge to the existing field in that subject area. As vague as that interpretation remains, it does bring into some light as to why research happens. Closely related to why research happens is also how research happens. When one phenomenon can be studied in different ways and different outcome can be reached through these modes, then the question probes us as to how research can be accurate in one sense and how much of an impact can it make when the entire process can change together with the results.

In this regard, the term research design becomes a valid talking point. It has been discussed as a Strategic framework ¹⁹⁸ through which the researchers hope to investigate. The better or conclusive the strategy the more effective the results it might bring for discussion. The strategy of how the research is being conducted is key to how well it captures the intent, collects information, analyzes and presents for further discussion. As mentioned above there is always a point of departure

¹⁹⁸ Durrheim, K. (2006). Research design. *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*, 2, 33-59. 34

to conclusions on the same research but through different research designs.

Let us therefore inquire into the nature of research design so as to grasp the holistic perspective it has on the intention. Define goals before design ¹⁹⁹ is a common view point where the design becomes apparent when the goals of a study are finalized. The word goals in this context are the objectives which lead the study. Therefore research design starts from the objectives itself. Based on what needs to be found the researcher/s take leeway in making the design adaptable for same.

Theory is also an important part of research design and it will clear the doubts on the varied results that was discussed earlier. A large theoretical perspective guides the research²⁰⁰ through which we are able to understand the principles of the study. IN some researches the theory gets moulded as the research takes place yet in many other cases a strong foundation is needed for the

¹⁹⁹ Vogt, W. P., Gardner, D. C., & Haeffele, L. M. (2012). *When to use what research design*. Guilford Press.p 1

²⁰⁰ Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design* (pp. 155-179). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.209

study to be pursued upon. Therefore the design is also based on the theory.

Theories are many yet the wheel of science has two theories, inductive and the deductive²⁰¹. These are two facets of how a research can be structured.

Closely aligned with the objectives and theory are the mechanism of how the research will go ahead. Set of procedures which enable your aims²⁰² is a necessity in this regard as the entire section on research methodology, method and analysis fall into this section. The procedure here also explains to the audience and the reader of the approach one has taken and also the approach with its shortcomings. Research is done usually on a specific area within another specific area which may fall under a much larger subject area and discipline. In this regard there is always a limitation to what can be researched and what can be attained through any given research.

Design deals with primarily aims, uses, purpose, intentions and plan within the practical constraints of

²⁰¹ Abbott, M. L., & McKinney, J. (2013). *Understanding and applying research design*. John Wiley & Sons.24

²⁰² Bechhofer, F., & Paterson, L. (2000). *Principles of research design in the social sciences*. Psychology Press.p1

time, money, location and availability of staff.²⁰³ The latter of this statement also brings to mind the many issues that ‘limit’ the result of any approach. When we discuss research that takes place over many years the probability of it covering a major section can be expected. Yet when it is short term research, comparatively the outcome can be reduced in terms of the larger discipline.

Adding to the research design is also the concept of bias and ease. When the researcher/s are faced with the dilemma of different aspects, choice becomes inevitable in the process. The researcher/s will then argue for as to why a certain design, methodology etc was arrived at. A in most cases this justification will be propelled by the person/s based on many reasons. While bias and ease are not terms we entertain with research there is always the pitfall of the same happening. Therefore the more apart the design process is from personal attachment, the more effective it can become. In the same manner research is not to borrow substantially but to construct and reconstruct²⁰⁴ on the existing theme of study. Therefore

²⁰³ Hakim, C. (2000). *Research design: Successful designs for social and economic research*. Psychology Press. p 2

²⁰⁴ Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41). Sage publications.p 3

the emphasis that must be on a research is original and contribution made towards the field of study.

Closely related to the above point research design must fundamentally affect the internal validity of research, that is the ability to draw sound conclusions about actually what any observed differences in a dependent measure.²⁰⁵ The validity of the design must not necessarily be a hurdle to pass by an evaluator board but rather on the genuine attempt made in the case to further the interest of the question in hand. Therefore the validity –design component must be in line with the benchmarks and standards of the profession. And it calls into consideration of the design has done its part to match up to the conclusion drawn in terms of validity.

Without going into detail here, examples of research designs and their possible research functions are: Survey to describe, to compare, to evaluate; Case studies to describe, to compare, to explain ; Experiments to explain, to compare ; Action research to design/develop a solution to a practical problem ;Ethnography to describe, to explain ; Correlation research to describe, to

²⁰⁵ Brewer, M. B., & Crano, W. D. (2000). Research design and issues of validity. *Handbook of research methods in social and personality psychology*, 3-16. 27

compare ; Evaluation research to determine the effectiveness of a program.²⁰⁶ These are sample designs which are heavily used in social sciences and also in other disciplines. Each carries with it , its own strengths and shortcomings. Yet the researcher/s have this choice and it must be considered an advantage up to a greater deal. It enables seeing viewpoints from varied angles and also supposes fruitful discussion between researches.

The testing of a research design is also a vital aspect before the study actually takes place. As the crux of the study will be based on the design it is imperative that it is tested for reliability, validity and accuracy. As always a research design being influenced by previous designs²⁰⁷ or the availability of previous studies can reap much rewards in terms of the academic achievement. This is said so that the study will navigate new seas yet following the findings of similar researches. To look at the few of these points on how the testing of validity can be done, we look at some examples.

²⁰⁶ Plomp, T. (2013). Educational design research: An introduction. *Educational design research*, 11-50.

²⁰⁷ Dulock, H. L. (1993). Research design: Descriptive research. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, 10(4), 154-157.

A research is valid when a conclusion is accurate or true and research design is the conceptual blueprint within which research is conducted. A scholar for his research, prepare an action plan, it constitutes the outline of collection, measurement and analysis of data. Research design is not associated to any particular technique of data collection or any particular type of data. When designing research it is necessary that we recognize the type of evidence required to answer the research question in a reasonable way. This chapter has sketched the purpose, its importance and types of research design.²⁰⁸

Even the minor details of the research bear on its validity at great length. In this case the Heckman's estimator which is used to remove bias from statistics is under the scanner for certain issues it might pose in social sciences.

Because censored sampling is often unavoidable in much sociological data analysis,

²⁰⁸ Akhtar, Dr. Md Inaam, Research Design (February 1, 2016).

Available at

SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2862445> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2862445>

*computationally simple corrections of censoring bias would be useful. Heckman's correction is simple to compute, widely used, and proven asymptotically correct under certain assumptions, but its limitations in practical situations are not well known in sociology. Here, we overview prior criticisms of Heckman's estimator, and we consider the case in which its normality assumptions are satisfied, censoring rates are high, and sample sizes are small. Results of 14,400 analyses of computer-generated simulation data suggest that Heckman's method performs well under certain circumstances, but that it very frequently worsens estimates, especially under conditions that are likely to be present in sociological data. Thus, the technique is probably not a general cure for censoring bias in sociology, except perhaps where strong theory permits certain strong assumptions. We reconsider censored sampling correction strategies in the context of statistical analysis as a theory-building tool, with emphasis on research strategy in the presence of irremediable censoring bias.*²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Stolzenberg, R. M., & Relles, D. A. (1990). Theory testing in a

The main elements for a research design framework can include theoretical purpose, development of theory and theory testing; methodological purpose, prioritizing of generalizability control and measurement, and authenticity of context. These elements each need to be validated in the pursuit of a valid research design.

From this foundation, we consider how the multiple methodologies are linked together to accomplish the theoretical purpose, focusing on three types of linking processes: convergent triangulation, holistic triangulation, and convergent and holistic triangulation. We then consider the implications of these linking processes for the theory at hand, taking into account the following theoretical attributes: generality/specificity, simplicity/complexity, and accuracy/inaccuracy. Based on this research design framework, we develop a roadmap that can serve as a design guide for organizational

scholars conducting mixed methods research studies.²¹⁰

In the following we see the absence of detailed protocols and poor documentation has contributed to shortcomings in design. This goes on to show that it is not only the main areas of the design that are made necessary in the study but also the component part; and the mismanagement of same would lead into a faulty design.

Correctable weaknesses in the design, conduct, and analysis of biomedical and public health research studies can produce misleading results and waste valuable resources. Small effects can be difficult to distinguish from bias introduced by study design and analyses. An absence of detailed written protocols and poor documentation of research is common. Information obtained might not be useful or important, and statistical precision or power is often too low or used in a misleading way.

²¹⁰ Turner, S. F., Cardinal, L. B., & Burton, R. M. (2017). Research design for mixed methods: A triangulation-based framework and roadmap. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20(2), 243-267.

Insufficient consideration might be given to both previous and continuing studies.²¹¹

Whether internal validity or external validity is more important has been a controversial topic in the research community. Yet internal scrutinizing is called into question more as the study progresses.

Campbell and Stanley (1963) stated that although ideally speaking a good study should be strong in both types of validity, internal validity is indispensable and essential while the question of external validity is never completely answerable. External validity is concerned with whether the same result of a given study can be observed in other situations. Like inductive inference, this question will never be conclusive.²¹²

It is also essential to discuss the topic of primary and secondary validity criteria in a research design. A distinction between primary and secondary validity

²¹¹ Ioannidis, J. P., Greenland, S., Hlatky, M. A., Khoury, M. J., Macleod, M. R., Moher, D., ... & Tibshirani, R. (2014). Increasing value and reducing waste in research design, conduct, and analysis. *The Lancet*, 383(9912), 166-175.

²¹² Yu, C. H., & Ohlund, B. (2010). Threats to validity of research design. Retrieved January, 12, 2012.

criteria in qualitative research is made with credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity identified as primary validity criteria and explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity identified as secondary validity criteria.²¹³

The issue of contributing and subsidiary questions are also a valid point in the research design. This is so a there is a need for any research to permeate into related grounds and to make interests in the field in relation to one study. It is necessary to make questions raised is theoretical and policy debates are converted in feasible projects.²¹⁴

The originality can be regardless of the topic even if a new methodology is employed; it is original ²¹⁵. Even in terms of one aspect of change in the design the project is renewed. Rigour and relevance ²¹⁶ are the important

²¹³ Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 522–537. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973201129119299>

²¹⁴ Hakim, C. (2000). *Research design: Successful designs for social and economic research*. Psychology Press.p xi

²¹⁵ White, P. (2017). *Developing research questions*. Macmillan International Higher Education.p 14

²¹⁶ Martensson, A., & Martensson, P. (2007). Extending rigor and relevance: towards credible, contributory and communicable research.p1331

component of the study the questions it undertakes to research. It is also necessary to have the key results of same to be used for as application for studies and theory building ²¹⁷ and this depends on the contributory nature of questions as to broaden the present topic.

Sacramentology according to Chavet is the principal expression of our moral relation to God. And liturgies and our worship is based and directed toward the content of what a Sacramentology may hold. In terms of decoding the influences on a Sacramentology from a cultural perspective it is necessary to have a research design which captures as much as possible the overall landscape of the field in study.

In a study of Sacramentology in s Sri Lankan context the avenues of going forward are broad and diverse. The different research designs can bring in different results but also its structuring can be interesting. In terms of a liturgical study, where the actual words are in study and in relation to the cultural phenomenon, the essential research design would be mostly descriptive. This would

²¹⁷ Lewis, J., Ritchie, J., Ormston, R., & Morrell, G. (2003). Generalising from qualitative research. *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, 2, 347-362.p 264

enable the researcher/s to study in depth on selected liturgies and views of scholars. Then to mix this with the data that is available from the local context would be lead into a fruitful dialogue.

The comparative study which is also an interesting research design, makes way or the entire study to be used in comparison and contrast settings and to bring out insights that will further the field of study. In this way the qualitative studies are managed in different settings and all methods of data collection maybe in play to collect as much information as possible. Then the cross sectional analysis will be used to bring a deeper meaning to the study. This will include case studies at most levels, and in doing so the study will entertain services, liturgies, discussion, interviews and even the video/audio studies.

Experimental study which is used heavily and natural sciences but also in the social sphere, is a study where the phenomenon that is used for study and the object is experimented with relation to other matter. In this case the researcher/s will have the best possible option at getting information that is direct and unbiased. It will also include worship sessions, workshops and reflections. This will bring in a different flavour to the

study at hand in that it comprises the congregations and audiences to be part of the experiment.

Surveys can also be used as a general research design, which will enable to capture a larger section of the audience. In this regard the survey itself will be the data collection method in total. However prior to this more work will have to be done with regard to the settings in culture, and this will entail more work in sociology, anthropology and the humanities where the culture, music, drama etc will be used to clarify points of discussion.

In the pursuit of a suitable research design to adequately do justice to the subject at hand, four such methodologies have been outlined above. These have its own advantages and disadvantages but also brings in much richness to the study. In this case, the cultural study must be done in accordance with a chosen design separately and in relation to it the liturgical/sacramental study must then be conducted. It maybe possible to have two designs within the full study as well, yet as to the limitations the ability to garner more of the voice with regard to both fields will inevitably allow a comprehensive study.