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Toward a Maqasid Al-Sharia Based De-Radicalization Index

KEYWORDS: Maqasid Al-Sharia, De-Radicalization, Index

De-radicalization program is a rehabilitation strategy used by nation states to deal with domestic terrorism and other related issues. Radicalization denotes the process by which an individual or group adopts or exhibits a violent form of action directly linked to an extremist ideology be it; socio-political, or religious, which is not consistent with the conventional value construct. But de-radicalization is an obscure science. Its structure, scope, and implementation strategy still remain largely unsettled. From; France, Britain, Belgium, to Saudi Arabia, various models were developed to deal with this growing trend. But shockingly, reports indicate that while some of these programs have failed and had their structures dismantled: The French Inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention of Delinquency and Radicalization (CIPDR), others are not effective i.e. the British model which a recent Home Office report indicates that 95% of its schemes are ineffective. Since Muslim youths are the most vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism both in Muslim and non-Muslim climes, this paper therefore, articulates a Maqasid based index for measuring the efficiency of de-radicalization models. Through the aid of Chapra's Maqasid framework, the paper presents its findings on the proposed index. Given its disaggregated and composite dimension, the measure will go a long way in providing policy direction at the two levels of aggregation: Risk and exhibition of radical tendencies levels.

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Quranic Interpretation and Language Diplomacy: Instruments of Peace and Stability

KEYWORDS: Language Diplomacy, Quranic Interpretation, National Stability, Jihadist Mentality, Refind Vocabulary

The Holy Quran is the Spiritual Constitution of Islam. In conjunction with Hadiths, the Quran also regulates and shapes the social lives of Muslims. Conventionally, Islamic scholars all over the world hold public interpretations of the Quran in every Month of Ramadan. The idea is for Muslims to strengthen their faith and reaffirm their commitment to service to Allah and humanity. However, in recent times, the quranic interpretation in the sacred month has become a source of threat to peace and stability in Tamale and other parts of Northern Ghana. This Paper examines the symbiosis between language diplomacy and quranic interpretation in the context of peace and stability. The objective is to encourage sound exegesis of the Revealed Text as an instrument of peace and stability in contemporary society. The Paper uses the purposive sampling technique to select, as respondents, four Islamic scholars, two radio stations, and two TV networks, where the quranic interpretations are aired. From an interdisciplinary perspective, the literature reviewed

includes relevant verses of the Quran and theories of Pragmatics and Mass Communication. After qualitative analyses of data, the Paper finds the use of unrefined vocabulary by some quranic interpreters as a major factor of threat to peace and stability. The conclusion is that the interpretations by the scholars, who are driven by sectarian loyalty instead of Islamic unity and national stability, are inconsistent with Quran Chapter 16 Verse 125 in which Allah Instructs Prophet Mohammed to propagate Islam with wisdom and good counseling. Among other recommendations, the Paper calls on Islamic scholars to interpret the Quran in a manner that encourages national stability and discourages jihadist mentality. It also urges Islamic scholars to present, in their quranic interpretations, Islam as a peaceful religion of One Allah for One Ummah.

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Science as Religion "the Religious Foundation of Objectivity"

KEYWORDS: Metaphysics, Logic, Religion

Feyerabend argues that the science of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sidetracked from its main aim of fighting against authoritarianism. It eventually became a religion.

We aim at exploring and discussing two points: -

1- This nature of the science of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is not due to any external impact or any external ideological usage or interpretation, but rather due to its internal structure. Religion and science of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have the same structure in common. Religion and science of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represent a comprehensive metaphysical system that was founded on the most influential self-evident axioms, namely, the principle of excluded middle and the law of non-contradiction. Indeed, these axioms give the comprehensive system the legitimate power to exclude the other systems. However, we will attempt to explore that this is subtle misuse of those principles. Religiously those play their exclusionary role through a concept of god and the play such role within scientific system through a concept of objectivity which in turn is founded upon the concept of god. We aim to explore the relationship between the concepts of god and objectivity and its impact on science.

2- Science and its underlying philosophy have overcome this nature of scientific system through major change. The change of the meaning of axiom from self-evident fact to postulated fact as axiom surpass its divine nature, which in turn leads to overcoming the classic meaning of objectivity.

This in turn leads to multiplicity of parallel scientific systems. Based on this new concept of scientific framework, we will attempt to discuss the relation between science and religion through new perspectives. Then we will attempt to explore if the modern science and its underlying

philosophy have really totally overcome this nature of comprehensive system, and try to answer this question: is it possible for the Essential comprehensive character of religion to be abandoned?

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Hindu Religious Symbolism as a Spiritual Guide to Indian Design Philosophy

KEYWORDS: Religious Symbolism in India, Indian Graphic Design, Grids, Grids in India, Transdisciplinary Study of Indian Grids

Religion in India is intrinsic to life and lifestyle, and design in Hindu religious symbolism is near pervasive. Be it rituals, religious structures, ritualistic artifacts, or the codicology of Indian manuscripts, a strong design philosophy is very much in evidence. Design and its intrinsic religious importance were equally interwoven in all aspects of religion as shown by the auspicious symbol of Swastika, which was not only a symbol to welcome the Gods, but was also a blueprint for auspicious architecture. Another example of design being intrinsic to religious symbolism is the Janampatri - the birth chart that traces the planetary positions of an individual at the time of birth in order to predict the course that the individual's life is likely to pursue - which is made on a very specific design grid. This also throws light on the fact that a cohesive design language can be culled from the symbolism that is very much in evidence in the Indian religious texts and artifacts. This could also be extrapolated into a wider application with regard to the design philosophy of contemporary Indian graphic design education. To further hone the argument that Hindu religious symbolism can be amalgamated into the sphere of graphic design, this research focuses on grids and adopts a transdisciplinary approach encompassing spiritual art, rituals, religion & even martial design evidenced in Hinduism, as shown in the famous example of the Padmavyuh. A martial formation described in the Mahabharat, this was shaped like a lotus, and was meant to be an impenetrable trap for the enemy. This research is a codicological and observational art based research of grid systems, design structure and their philosophy in the cultural and historical context with focus on Jain manuscripts of Rajasthan and Gujarat origin, which possess the rich treasure of ancient visual art form of grid systems in India.

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Reflection on the Question of Human Rights and Dignity Two Decades After Democracy in South Africa

KEYWORDS: Poverty, Inequality, Human Rights and Human Dignity

The dawn of freedom and democracy in South Africa, was interpreted as a liberative act of God, where human rights and dignity would be an integral part of every citizen. However, two decades after attainment of freedom and democracy, the World Bank Report, indicates that South Africa is one of the most unequal country in the world today. The challenges of high levels of poverty,

inequality and unemployment, questions the realisation of human rights and dignity. Therefore, this article argues that, the existence of poverty, inequality and unemployment continues to weaken the fulfilment of such human rights and dignity in the constitution of the republic. While it is very clear that there are policies and programmes in place to alleviate these challenges, they are not sufficient, especially when implementation is overtaken by corruption.

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The Therapeutic Value of Rituals in the Face of Death and Its Painful Reality in the African Context: A Phenomenological Investigation of Death and Associated Rituals

KEYWORDS: Death, Rituals, Therapeutic, Phenomenological, Marikana, African Context

Throughout human existence death and rituals have always been constant phenomena in life. Using a phenomenological approach the article investigates death, mourning and rituals as experienced by Africans in the South African context. In addition to study of relevant literature related to death, mourning, burial rites and other rituals, in-depth interviews will be conducted in a black community in Marikana, South Africa. Furthermore the article attempts to grapple with death and its meaning, mourning as well as associated rituals that help the bereaved to come to terms with the painful reality of death. The rituals are often seen as therapeutic and do not only help the bereaved (the living) to cope with the pain of death but to move on with their lives, as they continue to have a special relationship with "the departed" or the ancestors who are treated with respect. The African understanding of death is that death does not end life but continues life in another realm. Death does not alter or end the life or personality of an individual but only causes a change in its conditions. The departed (living dead), according to many Africans, continue to live in the community and communicate with their families. They continue to be consulted on important occasions and called upon to protect, guide, intervene and even intercede on behalf of the living. Within an African context, the dead are regarded as ancestors and they are treated with great respect and sometimes feared as they are believed to have a special relationship with the living. What happens in an African context happens despite what Western civilisation and Christianity are teaching about death being the end of life and about certain rituals being undesirable and contrary to Christian beliefs.

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Black Religion in Liberal Politics

KEYWORDS: James Cone, John Rawls, Political Liberalism, Religious Language, Public Square

In my paper, I consider the work of John Rawls in his book Political Liberalism. Rawls argues for a view of civility in liberal political discourse that recommends the bracketing of religious language and thinking when entering the public square. I argue that black religious language and thinking

has a unique and appropriate place in the public square and that Rawls is wrong about the role of religion in liberal politics. James Cone's work focused on liberation, blackness, and provided an alternative view of Christology and Theology. His work also dealt with the intersectionality of the black church, black religion, and black radicalism. I use the work of James Cone and Critical Race Theorist to theorize black religion as a social practice embedded in white institutional spaces, like the public square, design to confront oppression and subjugation. John Rawls mischaracterizes black religion and cannot make sense of the language and reasoning of the black religious tradition as not only a critique of the white supremacist social and political order, but also as a source for political policy development grounded in liberating those bound by the intersection of race, gender, and sexual orientation. My paper fits in the area of the political and black theology. It positions black theology as a lens to understand the role of black religion in the public square.

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Mercy for Migrants

With large numbers of displaced persons fleeing from famine, violence, and conditions created by climate change, the earth is in the midst of a new era of human migration. This mass movement of people has overwhelmed capabilities in certain areas, such as the United States, where the government is unable to meet the needs of displaced persons on the U.S.-Mexico border. This paper argues that the approach of the U.S. government must be changed, ethically and humanely, to address this new period of mass human migration. One weakness in American policy as it relates to migration is that it fails to enable the bridging of public and private sectors who are involved in the migration crisis. There are many different organizations - faith-based and civilian organizations, doctors, lawyers, other charities, etc.- that could aid government in its efforts to address the needs of migrants. Unfortunately, such efforts have been curtailed based on the current administration's interpretation of the Anti-Deficiency Act, 18 U.S.C. 1342, which prohibits the donation of goods and services not appropriated by Congress. This paper argues that alternate interpretation of the legislation and the resulting abilities of the U.S. government to accept donations from private and civilian sources are both practically necessary and morally required. Review of the law, media reports, and communications from legislators reveals that the issue is one of logistics, not legality. Therefore, this paper proposes that the historical and contemporary responses of faith-based communities to the needs of migrants can aid in the advancement of more humane practices and policies, and further, that logistical concerns can be met by modeling the government's work after that of faith-based communities, many of whom have been providing such aid for centuries.

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Convergence between Artifact and Text: A Model for the Reconstruction of Indigenous Israel in Iron Age Canaan

KEYWORDS: Convergence Between Artifact And Text; Indigenous Israel; Iron Age Canaan

The thesis of this paper is that a study of the convergence of the material culture of Iron Age I Canaan with the Book of Judges and allied texts provides a model of indigenous Israel. The acceptance of this consensus view requires a new reading and re-assessment of the nature of early Israel as well as the texts involved. The 13th Century BCE was a time of tremendous change and conflict resulting in the breakdown and collapse of the Bronze Age culture. The ensuing Iron Age I was a period of dramatic social and religious transformation. A major breakthrough in the history of Near Eastern Archaeology and in tracing this transformation came when young Israeli archaeologists were able to do surface surveys in the West Bank after the Six Day War. This led to a new proposal of an indigenous theory of Israelite origins in which early Israel was seen as an amalgam of divergent indigenous groups. The new information from the surface surveys led to a new convergence between the material culture of 13th to 11th century Canaan and the Book of Judges, as well as a new emphasis on the archaeology of the family/village. The 250 villages identified in the Highland Survey became known as the first Israelites (Finkelstein) The convergence between the artifact/material culture of Iron I Canaan and Judges yields a model for indigenous Israel. (1) This model is characterized by a dialectic of continuity versus change. The old Canaanite belief system continued among the first Israelites (Dever). (2) This means that there was a pluralistic/polytheistic religion in early Israel. (3) But while there was continuity with the old Canaanite civilization, divergent tendencies began to emerge as reflected in the convergence between the egalitarian hilltop settlements and the "low literature" of Judges and allied texts. When read as an indigenous myth of origin, the Exodus narrative encouraged liberation and alternative ways of living among the indigenous Canaanites. The mixed multitude seems to have treasured memories of a deity from the south who was superior to the pharaoh and other colonial/royalist rulers. The deeds of Yahweh generated counter-memories to oppression. (4) Socially and politically, early Israel searches for a new future in the texts of this convergence. Myths and sagas were told and retold that were anti-royalist and egalitarian in nature and celebrated the hope for freedom in a world of conflict and change. In time tension grew between the traditions of continuity and change. Eventually (with the rise of the monarchy), the themes of egalitarianism and anti-royalism faded into the background, but were picked up by Israel's writing prophets and perpetuated in written form.

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A Qualitative Enquiry Concerning Transcendental and Religious Identities - Bringing Them Together and Setting Them Apart

KEYWORDS: Identity, Transcendental Identity, Religious Identity, Identity Formation, Identity Maturity, Identity Exploration

The relationship between identity formation and religious commitment has been connected theoretically since Erikson's work in the mid-20th century. Specific interactions within the constructs such as spiritual maturity through identity exploration and commitment have been in discussion. Being conceptually different, the terms transcendental identities and religious identities in general are often overlapped. Although it is a topic that has often been probed into, the matter of whether the phenomena of religion, and transcendence are the same or not is still highly ambiguous in nature, particularly when it comes to identities centering around them.

Having its bearings in Phenomenology, the purpose of this study was to assess the phenomena of transcendental and religious identities and whether there are any similarities, differences or inter-relationships between the two. The Paper zooms into identity formation and identity maturity across three religious strands that are off-shoots of the Bhakti Movement: Jainism, Krishna Consciousness, and Sikhism. This Paper aims to distinguish the specific relationship between identity and identity maturity, with the hypothesized expectation that both transcendental and religious identities are reached through a similar adoption and informational process.

With purposive sampling, three in-depth interviews led to the formulation of findings that point out the commonalities and also set the three apart from each other in terms of identity formation, identity maturity, and identity exploration. Participants were self-identified prominent members of major religious bodies of the three cited religious strands. A qualitative approach was adopted for the study that is hailed for its subjective nature, taking into account the human aspect of research with an aim to understand issues from the perspective of the participants.

Given the clear interrelated nature of transcendental and religious identities, the study delves into the specific facets of identity formation; dress; values and beliefs; association; self-awareness and self-management. The findings elucidate the similarities and stark differences between the two identity types, thereby focusing on the articulated hypothesis.

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How Vitalism has Become A/The Paradigm Of/In African Philosophy and Theology?

KEYWORDS: Vitalism, African Philosophy & Theology, Discursivity

The apparent heterogeneity of African culture, the difficulty of transmission of thought and ideas have led to a certain opacity in African studies, especially in a certain moment of African history. Contemporary Africa inherits an Africa that is both better told, but even more opaque because of the growing complexity of its reality after a history at the crossroads of peoples and civilizations. It is therefore difficult to talk about Africa. Some even think that we should talk about Africas.

Anthropological, philosophical and theological writings, however, have seen vitalism or vital force as one of the characteristic elements of African thought. Our reflection will therefore aim to see how vitalism came/grew to be considered as one of the determinations of African thought, and also how the mutations of the postmodern African world are problematizing a conception of existence based on life promotion. In this context, what would be the main principles of an African philosophy of religion? This is the main issue I would like to point from Vitalism. First because there is a specific connection between vitalism in African philosophy and African theology. The second argument is because African spirituality is like a holistic metaphysics of "being-with." The African life does not separate the way you are thinking and the way you are. Think is Being, and being-with. The order of knowledge is also the order of all the representations. The "African tropism of being and representation" as a method is for us to identify the structure of African thought has, to build a world where what you have to say and how you articulate what you are saying is a topos of how to be as a thinker and a believer.

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Grasping the Unknowable God: The Role of Tactile Language in Augustine's Christology

KEYWORDS: Augustine; Christology, Theological Epistemology, Incarnation, Religious Language, Embodiment, Touch, Confessions, Homilies On The First Letter Of John

In *De Trinitate*, Augustine wonders: "For with what understanding does a human being grasp God, who does not yet grasp his or her own understanding itself, through which one desires to grasp him?" This essay meets Augustine at this breaking-point of epistemic limit and frustration, to trace how humanity might "grasp" the mystery of God, without ceding either to despair before inaccessible mystery or to presumption before an idol. Arguably, one significant and under-appreciated rhetorical means by which Augustine meets the challenge of knowing the unknowable God is via tactile language. As he reveals in Book VII of the *Confessions*, the only true mediator of God and man is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh and offered to our loving embrace. This paper, accordingly, considers the theological significance of the sense of touch for Augustine's Christology. Firstly, it shows how Christ has "transformed our hope" for eternal life by transforming the sense of touch itself as a primary mode of contacting, embracing, and communicating love. Second, it argues that the embrace of Christ can be seen as the fulfillment of the disordered and imperfect forms of grasping in Augustine's past life, manifested morally in unbridled sexual desire—of seizing and being seized by others—and intellectually in his Neoplatonist aspirations to grasp an incorporeal God. Thirdly, it offers that Augustine's consistent emphasis upon the sense of touch in knowing God in Christ ultimately inspires his innovative phrase "spiritual touch" [*contactus spiritalis*], by which Augustine exhorts the believer not to "grasp" divinity possessively or pridefully, but rather via the incarnation to enter into deepening love and reverence for the mystery of Jesus Christ as Son of God, co-equal with the Father.

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From Habitus to Signum: Preliminary Evidence of a Paradigm Shift in Jewish-Christian Relations in the XIIIth Century

For historians of the medieval Jewry, the pontificate of Pope Innocent III is regarded as a pivotal point for interfaith relations in the Middle Ages. He passed legislation which in theory set the Jews apart from Christians in dress, nurtured an increasingly negative perception of them across Christendom, and limited their economic rights. But, can it be said that Innocent's policies had a direct negative effect on the daily life of the Jews or primarily on the Christian perception of Jews and Judaism? And how can we gauge this difference? This paper will serve as a case study and explore the efficacy of canon 68, *In nonnullis ecclesie*, promulgated during the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 by Pope Innocent III and track its transmission, dispersal, repetition, and application through canon law to the local level in Christendom from Lateran IV to the end of the XIVth century. Canon 68 was an innovative bull which served as the first instance of canonized Church initiative to visibly separate Jews and Saracens from Christians by the nature of their clothes (*habitus*). This law was commented on by canonists, defended and retracted by popes, codified in the *Liber Extra*, caused strife between members of the Church hierarchy, and was used by secular governments for pious reasons and as an excuse for economic exploitation. Moreover, this paper will also show how the interchanging of the word 'habitus' with 'signum' by various secular and Church authorities altered the tenor of the bull over time. The absence of these regulations before Lateran IV and the heightened interest of both ecclesiastical and secular authorities in visible distinction following Innocent's pontificate demonstrate that his pontificate was a crucial turning point in Jewish-Christian relations which had a direct effect on the daily life of the Jews in the Middle Ages.

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A Demon, Human and God: Ravana and the Indian Problem of Evil

KEYWORDS: Indian Religions, Philosophy, Problem of Evil, Mythology, Ramayana, Ravana, Human Condition

There is no concern for Problem of Evil in major Indian philosophies, or so is believed by many Indian and western philosophers alike. The problem, or lack of it, is as much a religious and mythological mystery as it is philosophical. This is due to the intricate, enmeshed, and dynamic interdependence between most non-Semitic Indian religions, and their respective inherent philosophies and mythologies. Religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism neither subscribe to a singular definition of God, nor that of evil. "Evil," in the Indian context, instead emerges as a varying concept and not an absolute category.

Unlike most Semitic religions, there is no equivalent of a solitary repository of evil (a figure like Satan or Shaytan) in most Indian religious philosophies. In other words, there is no specified being specially imagined to represent evil. The processes of distinguishing the "Other" from the self, or the concepts of "good" and "evil", are then often arbitrated with the help of stories, or myths. This phenomena is, perhaps, best exemplified by the ironically sacred and versatile "mytho-epic" Ramayana and its highly ambiguous and abstract antagonist Ravana.

While Ravana comes closest to symbolizing "evil" across Hinduism, its literature and practices, he is also respected (and even worshipped in Hindu temples) as a devotee of Shiva, the Hindu God. Within certain Buddhist texts and traditions, Ravana is a religious learner, a revolutionary leader and a king. Moreover, he is believed to be the future Tirthankara or omniscient leader, which is a god-like stature, within Jainism. This paper will study how these diverse representations of this character not only embody contradictory Indian philosophies and religious beliefs, but also how exploring his human condition helps one articulate the ambiguous nature of "evil." By understanding Ravana, perhaps, one can attempt to answer the Indian Problem of Evil.

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Women and Religious Experience: With Special Reference to Buddhism

KEYWORDS: Women, Religious Experience, Buddhism

In the contemporary scenario, materialistic and intellectual changes have given multifarious concepts to human beings. It has given individualism, freedom, formal equality, rejection of traditions, faith in new scientific and technological progress, human perfectibility and so on. These changes have been called with the term 'Modernity' and these changes have also given birth to feminist thought; even feminism has known as the daughter of modernization. Under the influence of modernization, women have been aware towards their rights. As such women had started struggling to attain equality between the sexes. Before the birth of the word 'Feminism', this thought has based on the movements like women's rights, women's freedom, and women's movements. All these groups have concerned with the issues of gender difference as well as advocates equality for women and campaigns for women's rights.

It can be said that feminist movement tried to reject old faiths and give new interpretation to individuals, but when we are trying to understand these concepts with religion, then religions given different ways to get freedom. Actually feminism talked about world level freedom which is concerned with equality. Sometimes feminist approaches have given the meaning of equality as dependency. According to religions, freedom is entirely related with intellect and inner/personal views.

Religion, being a powerful source plays a central role in human civilization. Every religion has different faith and worship which generates the sense of sacredness and provides the basic

teachings to the society. Even religions manifests in the society through its system of beliefs and practices. Religion is primarily concerned with people and society and hence naturally plays important role in the human life and thought. There is fact to understand human history and human life it is necessary to understand religion. The manifestations of religious behavior are intricately related to various aspects of human life. In fact, it is woven into the fabric of social life even in the modern world. If we discuss about Buddhism, Buddha preached that the path of Dhamma could be practiced by anyone, male or female, and the supreme enlightenment. As per philosophy of Buddhism to experience Nirvana, one should be free from all distractions. However, to obtain freedom from distractions one needs to do personal efforts which comes from within self. So there was no discrimination between sexes, castes and so on. Moreover, this research paper will uncover Buddhist women's experience, whose are present in time of Buddha and present time's women who are great achievers in Buddhist religious experience. Through this research, experience of life of some renowned Buddhist women will be discussed.

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Catholicism, Just war, and Pacifism

KEYWORDS: Catholicism, Pope, Papal Encyclicals, Aquinas, Augustine, Liberalism, Just War, Pacifism, Pacem et Terris, Mater et Magistra

Regarding just war theory, modern Catholic teaching has progressively strayed from the teachings of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The recent teachings of the Catholic Church have gradually merged with pacifist views that are greatly influenced by modern political theory, most specifically liberalism. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate whether the modern teachings of the Catholic Church are consistent with foundational Catholic doctrine, or whether they rely on presuppositions that are incompatible with the traditional teachings of the church. First, I will examine the traditional just war theory as it germinated in Augustine and Aquinas, including discussions of the nature of the state (and the right ordering of society), and the relationship between nature and grace. Then, relying on the writings of Dorothy Day, George Weigel, Matthew Shadle, and Jacques Maritain, I will examine the origins of pacifism in the Catholic Worker movement and show how it was influenced by modern political theory, international relations, and liberalism. Next, I will show how the modern teachings of the Catholic church have gradually and increasingly tried to incorporate elements of pacifist views by citing examples from the Papal Encyclicals *Pacem et Terris* (1963) and *Mater et Magistra* (1961). Finally, I will explain the political and ethical problems that arise from the inconsistencies between pacifist views and the basic tenets of traditional Catholic doctrine. In conclusion, it is important to note that the two competing views share some common ground. Both agree that the nature of war has changed, especially with the advent of nuclear weapons, and therefore, the role of the state in evaluating the stakes of war has changed. They agree that war is

atrocious and should be avoided. And they find agreement in their view that the Christian should not be passive if it means accepting evil.

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What is Known from Existing Literature About the Hinduism Perspective on Sex Education: A Scoping Review

KEYWORDS: Hindu, Sex Education, Scoping Review, Values and Conflicts

Background: Globally, young people's relationship behaviours, sexual and reproductive health and are shaped by cultural, religious, political and economic factors¹ and any good quality sex education programme must take these into account. Religion, like the other factors creates both challenges and opportunities for the design and delivery of sex education. And when religious attitudes and beliefs are identified, respected and evidence is presented most religious leaders are open to the idea that specific areas of development will improve the health and well-being of their congregation. As the first step, in this scoping review we aimed to identify existing literature specifically on the Hinduism perspective of sex education.

Methods: Based on the framework by Arksey and O'Malley, a systematic search was conducted through ten bibliographic databases. Additional articles were identified through secondary searches of reference list, POPLINE and Google scholar.

Results: The search yielded a total of 366 articles of which five papers met the inclusion criteria, focusing on the Hinduism perspective and sex education. Findings are presented as two analyses: what is known from the existing literature and key knowledge gaps. Two key gaps were identified: (1) the paucity of research on the Hinduism perspective on sex education, and (2) the need for a broader focus on the range of the sexual health, reproductive health and relationship issues. Nevertheless, the included articles demonstrated a range of views from rejection to one of acceptance of a comprehensive and accurate sex education.

Conclusion: This scoping review has identified and summarized existing knowledge about the Hinduism perspective on sex education. The review has also identified gaps in knowledge and limitations of the existing research. Further in-depth qualitative research to fully explore the Hinduism perspective can aid in informing and shaping culturally sensitive sex education in terms of policy and program design and delivery.

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*What if Abraham Knew it Was a Test? Interpreting the Akedah in Light of Geerhardus Vos's
Philosophy of Revelation in the Book of Hebrews*

KEYWORDS: the Nature of Akedah, Geerhardus Vos, Philosophy of Revelation, Rational Knowledge, Abraham

In the interpretation of the Akedah (the binding of Isaac), it seems that no argument has been made yet for the possibility of Abraham's rational knowledge of the nature of the Akedah. Based on Abraham's journey with God before the event of Akedah, to what extent might we argue that Abraham probably knew more about the nature of the Akedah than we generally think he did? Could Markus Bockmuehl's claim that "sight is matched by rationality and deliberateness in judgment" open another door of interpretation? To address these questions, this paper adopts Geerhardus Vos's philosophy of revelation in the book of Hebrews, which could offer an architectonic structure for a philosophy of revelation, within which Abraham's rational knowledge of the Akedah could be interpreted from an entirely new perspective. Given Vos's philosophy of revelation, Abraham's rational knowledge of the nature of the Akedah could be argued by having recourse to Vos's progressive understanding of the berith scenes in Gen 15 and 17, which are not pure shadow but contain a salvific core within them. The single focused question that this project will seek to answer is, to what extent might Vos's philosophy of revelation contribute to a new interpretation of the Akedah that Abraham could possess rational knowledge of the nature of the Akedah.

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Ritual, Ritual Change, and Development of Early Mormon Liturgy

KEYWORDS: Endowment, Ritual, Ritual Change, Liturgy, Deleuze, Simulacrum, Mormon, Joseph Smith, Religious Experience

This paper is based on a decade of archival research and historical analysis on the rise of Mormonism and Joseph Smith in antebellum America. Methodologically it is framed within ritual studies and a particular interest in Gilles Deleuze and Catherine Bell. It advances this field by pairing these theorists together in order to examine the early development of Mormon liturgy and ritual practices. Gilles Deleuze's work explains that the nature of simulacrum is problematic because it contests the notion of a model and a copy. He writes, "By simulacrum we should not understand a simple imitation but rather the act by which the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned." Thinking of enthusiastic experience (like Joseph Smith's Vision), in these terms allows ritual to be seen as a kind of realization of new experience instead of a poor representation of someone else's experience. The simulacrum, or changing rituals, reveal religious experience, rather than an infinitely regressing copy of those experiences, intended to return to Joseph Smith's original experience in Mormon ritual and their "endowment". This relationship inevitably requires ritual change to maintain itself and its vibrancy.

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A Comparative Introduction to the Ruhi System in Baha'i Faith and the Liberation Theory

KEYWORDS: Ruhi System, Liberation Theology, Practicality, Poverty, Prosperity

This study seeks to understand the similarities and differences between the Liberation Theology (Boff & Boff, 1987; Turner, 1994) and the Baha'is current system that is called Ruhi System. There are some undeniable similarities between the key principles as well as elements of these two systems; they both had been revealed during the 60s and the 70s in Colombia in particular, and Latin America in general. They both suggest that religion is a social construction (O'Saughnessy, 2016; Mehrgani, 2016). Following the feature of constructionism, both suggest that religious activities and the nomos towards their cosmic frame of reference should be based on local and even neighbourhood activities (Arbab, et al., 1988; Moerman, 2006; Nadeau, 2002). They both criticise academic theology (Boff & Boff, 1987; UHJ, 2011) and praise grassroots theology based on regular believers interpretations of the scriptures that happens in the basic churches for liberation theology and Study circles for the Ruhi system (Gill, 2002; Arbab, et al., 1988; UHJ, 2005; UHJ, 2008; UHJ, 2015; UHJ, 2016). Both of them are making efforts for justice, and both suggest that prosperity of humanity is the key principle and goal of religion (BIC, 2018; BIC, 1995; BIC, 1999; BIC, 1999; ITC, 2013; Rowe, 2007; Berryman, 1987; BIC, 2012). Regarding seeking for justice in the society, both believe that every individual is responsible for their freedom from the poverty as well as oppression in their communities (BIC, 1999; Rowe, 2007; ITC, 2013). Their approaches to freedom along with justice are also similar; they suggest that the followers should start taking actions to reduce poverty and make efforts for the betterment of the world through action, consultation, and interpretations of the scripture within the Basic Churches (Liberation Theology) or the Study Circles (Ruhi) then they will act through this loop until they gain their goal. (BIC, 2018; BITC, 1996; Rowe, 2007). They both suggest that there is no dualism between sacred and profane (Boff & Boff, 1987; UHJ, 2005). Therefore, they prioritise praxis over knowledge and cognition (BIC, 2012; UHJ, 2016; Boff & Boff, 1987). Accordingly, for them, the definition of faith is taking action towards the prosperity of humanity (Starting from their neighbourhood) (BIC, 1995; BIC, 1999; BIC, 2018; Boff & Boff, 1987). Both criticise Western liberalism and following that, the contest culture, which is the crucial principle of Western liberalism (Boff & Boff, 1987; Karlberg, 2004).

In my presentation, I will explain some of the above features and how they are significantly similar to each other. My point is that Ruhi System could have been inspired by the Liberation Theology that was very popular at the time in Latin America when Ruhi was formed. However, Liberation Theology suggests that it cannot be applied everywhere in the world and every locality should develop their own relevant theology. Whilst the Ruhi system is applied by Baha'is all around the world in the same manner.

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Women Clergy in a Modern Religious Context: Cultivating Opportunity to Overcome Barriers, Bias and Patriarchal Norms

KEYWORDS: Women Clergy, Women In Religious Contexts, Women In Patriarchal Contexts, Senior Leadership, Leadership Equality, Leadership Norms & Patriarchal Bias

The experience of women clergy is undergoing a widespread modern awakening that is reestablishing cultural and organizational leadership norms in the religious context. While churches and religious organizations have long held that women hold a valued place of service to congregations, communities, and humanity as a whole, there have also been widespread patriarchal limits that have held women leaders in perpetual abeyance. The invitation for women in modern religious roles to embrace more advanced leadership roles is met with varied responses depending on the cultural sub-context which is oftentimes incongruent with the expectations of a society in the professional leadership sphere. In this regard, and in contrast to the past, the modern awakening towards women clergy is creating unparalleled leadership opportunities for women. Both the rewards and challenges occurring in this shift are apparent.

This presentation provides the insights gathered from the experiences from women clergy serving in senior leadership roles and discusses their advancement, cultivation, and development. It also delineates the distinction between what their cultures perceive as equality versus the limitations they encounter when it comes to experiencing true equality in religious contexts.

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Examining The Role Of Ar-Riqab Rehabilitation In Assisting Muslim LGBTQ Community: The Case Study Of Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) In Malaysia

Since 1957, Malaysia has been progressed with its way of development as Islam is considered as an official constitutional religion. Therefore, Islamic dogma and practice are internalised in various aspects of individual Muslim life that somehow hindered with the international stand of freedom in human rights, especially in dealing with the notion of LGBTQ. However, there is a growing awareness among Muslim in tackling this issue, especially in helping this vulnerable group through religious bodies. This paper attempts to scrutinise the role of ar-Riqab rehabilitation among Muslim MSM in Malaysia. It also seeks to explore the experiences of MSM in participating with the ar-Riqab rehabilitation program. To obtain significant data, ten (N = 10) MSM participants have been recruited using purposive sampling. They are from various age groups (25-50 years old) and working as professionals in many fields. In terms of ethnicities, the participants are mostly from the ethnicities of Malay and Sarawak indigenous. The paper suggested that the ar-Riqab rehabilitation

program is not meant to change their sexual orientation (from gay to straight) but to re-instil the teaching of Islam to the participant, especially about human nature. The study also discovered that this rehabilitation program is a single platform to support and guide LGBTQ in various means apart from to empower this community with a standard code of conduct as a Muslim in Malaysia. This study has a more significant practical implication and potential contribution to the well-being of LGBTQ in Malaysia that has always demystified them as a problematic group. It will eventually assist stakeholders, Muslim NGOs, and Ministries to further improve the existing program. From the epistemological perspective, this paper will bring an added value to the literature, especially in the area of health communication and education, sociology and anthropology, and Islamic studies.

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A Second Front: Canon Garland, Chaplain Maitland Woods and Anglo-Catholicism in the Australian Imperial Force

KEYWORDS: Anglo-Catholicism, Australian Imperial Force, World War One, Canon David Garland Rev William Maitland Woods

Objective: to explore the Anglo-Catholic response in the Australian Imperial Force to the Great War. Methodology: this research is based on reading the wartime correspondence of key Anglo-Catholics involved in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), especially Canon David Garland, Chaplain William Maitland Woods and selected soldiers, as held in various Australian archives. Findings: The research shows that Anglo-Catholics were very supportive of the war effort, and saw it as an opportunity to promote their distinctive views in an ongoing campaign against low-church Anglicanism in Australia as well as various Protestant groups, who they regarded as a danger to their beliefs. It identifies the key players involved in combatting the views and influence of other Anglicans and Protestants, and the methods that they used. Conclusions: High profile and effective Anglo-Catholic chaplains were able to leverage the war to promote Anglo-Catholicism within the broader Anglican church in Australia, combatting what they perceived to be the errors of Non Anglo-Catholic Anglicanism and the various Protestant groups. They promoted an exclusive Anglo-Catholicism in the face of considerable pressure to find common ground not only with Evangelical Anglicanism but also Non-Conformist Protestantism, which they considered to have left the apostolic faith.

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Arabic Poetry of Southwest Nigeria: On Religious Tolerance and Prejudice

KEYWORDS: Yoruba, Arabic, Poetry, Religion, Tolerance, Prejudice, Conflict, Peace and Co-existence

Civil unrest, community clashes, and uprisings in private and public spheres around the globe at different times have periodically been traced to religious strife emanating from religious intolerance and prejudice among peoples of opposing faiths. Such was the case in Macedonia in 2011 when the natives (Macedonians and Albanians) differed and clashed over the idea of erecting a Church and a Mosque in a public space of worship. Yet, intermittent civil crises of Jos, Nigeria since 2001, community conflicts of Aceh, Indonesia in 2015 and many other public disputes across the world were brewed by religious intolerance. This paper therefore examines religious tolerance and prejudice as themes in Arabic poetry produced by the Yoruba tribe of southwest Nigeria. It analyzes the contents of selected poetry which signals tolerance/intolerance of religions of the Other, and explores the potential consequences of the poetry on religious communities and the general human populace. Although the Yoruba poetry in Arabic is not free from vestiges of religious intolerance, the study concludes that the poetry in which the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria patronize religion as a theme, often hints at the poets' tolerance and respect for the religions of the Other. The poetry also reveals campaign for religious tolerance with adherents of other faiths, in order that the various religious communities across the globe may co-exist for peace to reign supreme.

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Hildegard of Bingen: Theologian, Pastor, and Spiritual Guide

KEYWORDS: Hildegard of Bingen, Medieval Monasticism, Christian Spirituality, Medieval Women, Medieval Epistolary Genre

The nearly 400 surviving letters of Saint Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179) provide a unique and remarkable trove of information on the life and ministry of this famous Benedictine nun and abbess. A 12th-century mystic who achieved wide renown in her own day as a theologian, preacher, composer, poet, physician, and artist, Hildegard has been lauded in the 21st century as a Doctor of the Church who has gathered an audience of devotees who find in her a brilliant thinker and model of feminine Christian leadership. In this paper I examine Hildegard's correspondence with princes, abbots, nuns, and ordinary people with an aim to exploring how this woman assumed roles of leadership and mentorship that were truly rare for women in this era of medieval European history. Many people in her day requested advice – on all sorts of topics – from this charismatic nun who, as Barbara Newman has written, endured a “constant stream of messengers and pilgrims who honored and sometimes plagued her with these requests.” [Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* 29] Hildegard was popular because she was seen by so many of her contemporaries as an authority whose thought was simultaneously true to tradition and refreshingly creative in its application to contemporary issues. Referred to as the “Sibyl of the Rhine” in her own day, Hildegard was an educated and orthodox theologian whose letters demonstrate her ability to converse effectively with people from various walks of life. Hers is

the language of a woman steeped in mystical experience and yet also intimately conversant with the day-to-day challenges of her contemporaries, whether inside or outside of the cloister. In her letters we catch a glimpse into the life of this remarkable and popular theologian, pastor, and spiritual guide.

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God Among the Nations: An Analogous Study of Christology in the New Testament and Ela in Yoruba Tradition

KEYWORDS: Christology, Ela, God, Nations, Tolerance, Traditions.

Religious exclusives' has been a problem in the religious circle worldwide. The concept of the revelation of God has been thought or claimed by some religious bodies to be the exclusiveness of their religion. This paper deals with finding God among the Nations: an analogous study of Christology in the New Testament and Ela in the Yoruba tradition. The redemptive work of Christ; that is, his person, incarnation, names, Passion Week, death, resurrection and ascension have its resemblance in Ela worship among the Yoruba. In Yoruba religion or mythology, the divinity called Ela has close relationship with the New Testament Christology. This study is expected to answer such questions in the mind of readers as: can the superiority of Christ still be proclaimed in the pluralistic society without generating religious violence and disunity? What is the significance of Ela in Yoruba traditional religion? What are the similarities and differences between Jesus Christ and Ela? What are the implications of the concept of Ela to the Yoruba people? The research method employed is analogous. The reason is that analogous method clearly presents each religious position. It reveals that the reality of God among the nations cannot be denied. It is clear that God has made Himself known in many ways and through many religious traditions.

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Pukepuke 'a Fufula: Transformations of Pacific LGBTI+ Communities - Are they transformations or not?

KEYWORDS: Spirituality and Religion, Christianity, Indigenous Religions, Pacific Island Studies, LGBTIQA+ Studies

Recently, Queer Theology has made waves in the way Theology is conceived as an academic discipline. Queer Theology challenges the Biblical rhetoric that revolves around heteronormativity (belief that heterosexuality is the ideal sexual orientation) and cisnormativity (ideology that biological gender matches gender identity). Furthermore, Queer Theology articulates how "Queer" people (members of the LGBTIQA+ community) view religion and spirituality in their lives (Breagan and Hattie, 2015; Taylor, 2016).

The paper will explore how Pacific LGBTIQ+ communities view gender and sexuality and understand how they intersect with culture and religion; while also probing how recent events in the diaspora have an impact in their daily lives (Lightsey, 2015; Thompson, 2016). By examining the lesbian rule established by Jantzen (2001), the findings aim to be an eventual kaliloa (Toetu 'u-Tamihere, 2014) to pass onto the next generation of Pacific LGBTIQ+ communities to remain resilient in themselves culturally, religiously and sexually.

Overall, leitis in the diaspora are subjugated by severe discrimination among our own people. Tongans, like many Pacific peoples, have purposefully internalised the binary constructs on gender, faith and sexuality and coined these as Pacific "moral" values. Although many of our leitis see the importance in the conversations we have around faith, gender and sexuality being intersected together, the nuclearisation of Pacific families and the romanticising of our homelands have seemingly made being sexually, culturally and religiously resilient impossible. However, as leitis ourselves, we are finding ways to be able to achieve a balance between our various identities either by carving our own space, as indigenous theology has given us an impetus to create this niche or remain strongly Christian despite the backlash by family members. We are more than one identity of the Pacific, and thus more than one version of a leiti.

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"It's So Cold in the D.: Black Community Survival of Utility Shutoffs in Detroit"

KEYWORDS: Race, Religion, Black Church, Social Welfare, Critical Race Theory, Sociology, Social Work, Poverty

Purpose and Background

"Nothing Stops Detroit" is employed in popular neoliberal culture to characterize Detroit as a city experiencing urban renewal. However, the Detroit Metro Area Communities Study (DMAC), published in 2017, revealed that many Detroit residents feel renewal is not benefiting them. Instead they feel decline where they are in a struggle for survival. In this study, first I investigate the quality of life in black families in Detroit that experience power shutoffs. I then examine the Black Baptist church's procedures for supporting residents in maintaining service. Lastly, I analyze historical data mixed with ethnographic interviews within the framework of critical race theory to assess the capacity of the Black Baptist church as a strong resource that subverts dominant agendas.

Methods

This project is comprised of 20 interviews of Detroit residents: the first set is from Black head-of-households and a second set from Black pastors serving small congregations. The interview questions are designed to capture, in detail, the actions that participants took to combat shutoffs. Two example questions are listed below.

Pastor question

Why do you believe that your church should help individuals with utility bills?

Resident question

Why did you turn to the church for help with your utility bill?

Results and Implications

This study makes three significant contributions to the existing literature. First, it discloses the agency and ingenuity of residents that meet these challenges with very little external resources. Secondly, it clarifies the role that the Black Baptist church plays in negotiating adversity, and lastly, it exposes the inadequacies of the white racial frame that only selects and highlights 'successful' renewal, masking and silencing those who suffer from the renewal.

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Herman Bavinck on the Dialectic Catholicity of Reformed Theology

KEYWORDS: Herman Bavinck, Reformed Catholicity, Neo-Calvinism, Reformed Confessions

Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), the leading neo-Calvinist theologian, underscores the catholicity of Reformed theology. It is worth noting that he defines the catholicity more than in the sense of universality. Rather, his view of Reformed catholicity should be characterized as dialectic. On the one hand, Reformed theology should be undertaken by one who is in relation to a particular visible church and thus in relevance to a specific tradition. On the other hand, Reformed theology is always moving outside, and should engage not only with other theological traditions but also with the other sciences. The twofold aspect of Bavinck's Reformed catholicity can be formulated as follows: Bavinck's standing in the Reformed tradition is standing in the background, whereas his moving towards the outside is present in the foreground. The dialectics can be understood by a centrifugal movement. His own Reformed tradition is the centre, from which theology is moving towards and going beyond the borders of Christianity to reach the ends of the world. "The Gospel is a joyful tidings, not only for the individual person but also for humanity, for the family, for society, for the state, for art and science, for the entire cosmos, for the whole groaning creation." In such doing, theology glorifies God within the dogmatician's own tradition, in the territories of Christianity, and more importantly, around the world.

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A Religious Reading on the Historical Development of John Rawls's Understanding of Reason in Morality

KEYWORDS: John Rawls, Religion, Moral Reason

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The idea of moral reason is a fundamental assumption of John Rawls's theory of social justice. It is usually understood as totally independent from any religious origin. However, my article aims to reflect this common understanding from its historical development. It involves not only Rawls's published philosophical works—*A Theory of Justice*, *Political Liberalism* and *The Law of Peoples*, and religious writings—his senior thesis and "On my Religion," but also unpublished writings on religion in Rawls's archives at Harvard library, such as his teaching materials of a course named *Christian Ethics* which he taught at Cornell University in 1954. Firstly, my article will briefly interpret the historical development of Rawls's understanding of reason in morality from his senior thesis to *The Law of Peoples*. Through this interpretation, I will show an outline of young Rawls's understanding of reason in morality that I call finite reason in which there are two aspects: reason as intellectual ability and religious experience. In realizing morality, religious experience should guide our ability to be rational. Meanwhile, I will also describe mature Rawls's idea of moral reason in which there are also two aspects: to be rational (rationality) and to be reasonable (reasonableness). In realizing social justice, moral reason should be self-reflective and self-constrained by the way of to be reasonable restricting to be rational. In addition, I will speculate and highlight mature Rawls's comprehensive religious belief behind his idea of moral reason—a kind of fideism on a moral God—based on his published and unpublished writings. Finally, I will try to argue that Christian finite reason was the religious cradle of mature Rawls's idea of moral reason and the later was a reconstruction of the former with a progressive evolution.