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Historiography: Perspectives and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

The historical narratives are both informative and educative but not just gathering of facts. The historiography of a specific topic covers how historians have studied that topic using particular sources, techniques and theoretical approaches. Scholars discuss historiography by topic and different approaches and genres, such as political history and social history. The extent to which historians are influenced by their own groups and loyalties remains a debated question. Historiography is more recently means that it is not study of the events of the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians. Understanding the past appears to be a universal human need, and the "telling of history" has emerged independently in civilizations around the world. What constitutes history is a philosophical question.

There is a common misconception that history is simply about the gathering of facts. And history could be studied as a hard science. It is based on the mistaken assumption that an unbiased conclusion could be extracted by simply analyzing what are deemed to be empirical facts. Therefore, story behind the histories is to discover the other side of the coin. There is a simple but very strong assertion that the proper function of the historian was to show the past as 'it really. But the historian is necessarily selective. The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate.

Keywords: *Historiography: Perspectives and Prospects.*

Introduction

Being asked about how her understanding of the past has changed, Kate Cooper writes "My light bulb moments as a historian often occur while travelling. One of the most enlightening took place in Trier, the Rhineland city where Constantine the Great (d. 337) resided during his first years as emperor. During the summer of 2007 three German museums staged a massive exhibition there with over 1,000 objects from the first Christian emperor's lifetime. One comparatively modest case captured my imagination: a gold tray under a skylight bearing perhaps a dozen gold rings collected from excavations across the Roman Empire. Each bore an inscription in capital letters: FIDEM CONSTANTINO: 'Faith to Constantine'. These were gifts given by the emperor to his most faithful generals – 'faith' here clearly meant some combination of unquestioning loyalty and willingness to win or die trying. During the civil wars of the early fourth century Constantine gained fame as an outstanding leader of men, and already during his lifetime historians suggested that the secret of his success was in his Christian faith. But they have been arguing ever since about

his conversion to Christianity. The emperor himself told the story that in October of 312, as he prepared to capture Rome – on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge – a vision told him that he would win under the sign of the cross. Accordingly, he had new standards prepared for the decisive battle, which he resoundingly won. What did ‘faith’ mean to Constantine? I’m fairly sure he would tell us what he told his generals: don’t ask too many questions, **‘Have faith that the answers will come’**.¹

Historiography is the study of the methods of historians in developing history as an academic discipline, and by extension historical work on a particular subject. The historiography of a specific topic covers how historians have studied that topic using particular sources, techniques and theoretical approaches. Scholars discuss historiography by topic and different approaches and genres, such as political history and social history. Beginning in the nineteenth century, with the development of academic history, there developed a body of historiography literature. The extent to which historians are influenced by their own groups and loyalties remains a debated question.

Perspectives: An Overview

In the ancient world, chronological annals were produced in civilizations such as ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, the discipline of historiography was first established in the 5th century BC with the Histories of Herodotus, the founder of Greek historiography. During the middle ages, medieval historiography included the works of chronicles in medieval Europe, Islamic histories by Muslim historians, and the Korean and Japanese historical writings based on the existing Chinese model. During the 18th century Age of Enlightenment, historiography in the Western world was shaped and developed by figures such as Voltaire and David Hume.

Historiography is more recently defined as "the study of the way history has been and is written – the history of historical writing", which means that, "When you study 'historiography' you do not study the events of the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians."² Understanding the past appears to be a universal human need, and the "telling of history" has emerged independently in civilizations around the world. What constitutes history is a philosophical question. The earliest chronologies date back to Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, in the form of chronicles and annals. However, no historical writers in these early civilizations were known by name. By contrast,

¹ <https://www.historytoday.com › shifting-sands-historians-change-their-minds>. Jun 20, 2016, what did 'faith' mean to Constantine?

² The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide, 1988, p. 223

the term "historiography" is taken to refer to written history recorded in a narrative format for the purpose of informing future generations about events.

The earliest known systematic historical thought emerged in ancient Greece, a development which had an important influence on the writing of history elsewhere around the Mediterranean region. Greek historians greatly contributed to the development of historical methodology. The earliest known critical historical works were the histories composed by Herodotus of Halicarnassus (484–425 BCE) who became known as the "father of history". Herodotus attempted to distinguish between more and less reliable accounts, and personally conducted research by travelling extensively in giving written accounts.

A wealth of historical writing survives from the early church: ecclesiastical histories, memoirs, universal histories and chronicles, biographies, historical fiction, and accounts of the acts of martyrs. The work of Eusebius of Caesarea (260–340) focused on *Ecclesiastical History*. Once Eusebius established the model for the writing of church history, numerous works of the same genre followed in its wake. The *Ecclesiastical History*, not the *Life of Constantine*, is the work that has earned Eusebius the title 'father of Christian history'.³ However, some argue that Christian historiography began early, perhaps as early as Luke-Acts, which is the primary source for the Apostolic Age. The growth of Christianity and its enhanced status in the Roman Empire after Constantine I led to a distinct Christian historiography, influenced by both Christian theology and the Bible encompassing new areas of study and views of history. The central role of the Bible in Christianity is reflected in the preference of Christian historians for written sources, compared to the classical historians' preference for oral sources and is also reflected in the inclusion of politically unimportant people. Christian historians also focused on development of religion and society. This can be seen in the extensive inclusion of written sources in the *Ecclesiastical History* written by Eusebius of Caesarea around 324 and in the subjects it covers. Christian theology considered time as linear, progressing according to divine plan. As God's plan encompassed everyone, Christian histories in this period had a universal approach. For example, Christian writers often included summaries of important historical events prior to the period covered by the work⁴

³ Adler, William. *Early Christian Historians and Historiography* in: *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*,

Edited by *Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter, 2008*

⁴ Warren, John. *The past and its presenters: an introduction to issues in historiography*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1998

French philosopher Voltaire (1694–1778) had an enormous influence on the development of historiography during the age of enlightenment through his demonstration of fresh new ways to look at the past. Guillaume de Syon argues:

Voltaire recast historiography in both factual and analytical terms. Not only did he reject traditional biographies and accounts that claim the work of supernatural forces, but he went so far as to suggest that earlier historiography was rife with falsified evidence and required new investigations at the source. Such an outlook was not unique in that the scientific spirit that 18th-century intellectuals perceived themselves as invested with. A rationalistic approach was key to rewriting history.⁵

Philosopher David Hume had a similar effect on the study of history in Great Britain. In 1754 he published *The History of England*, which extended "From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688". Hume adopted a similar scope to Voltaire in his history; as well as the history of Kings, Parliaments, and armies, he examined the history of culture, including literature and science, as well. His short biographies of leading scientists explored the process of scientific change and he developed new ways of seeing scientists in the context of their times by looking at how they interacted with society and each other – he paid special attention to Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton and William Harvey.⁶

Romila Thapar says that by 1823, the *History of British India* by James Mill was available and widely read in India and had become a standard text of British imperialists. Mill slotted Indian history into three 'periods'—Hindu civilization, Muslim civilization and the British period. This periodization was accepted in India largely without question through the 19th century. The effects of this book lasted on Indian historiography and research for 200 years. Mill had argued in it that 'Hindu civilization' was stagnant and backward, that the 'Muslim' era was only marginally better and that it is the British colonial power that became an agency of progress of India. Thapar in her study of the early history of India says that there were in existence multiple communities based on various identities. In Pre-Islamic India, the religious identity seems to be related more closely to a sect than a dominant Hindu community. Even in normative texts of Brahmanism, the Dharmasastras, it is conceded that there were variety of communities, determined by location, occupation and caste, none of which necessarily bound together by a common religious identity. The community

⁵ Guillaume de Syon, "Voltaire," in Kelly Boyd, ed. (1999), *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, Vol.2, Taylor & Francis, pp1270-72

⁶ S. K. Wertz, "Hume and the Historiography of Science", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1993 pp. 411–36

⁷ Thapar, Romila. *Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and Modern Search for a Hindu Identity*. *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.23, May, 1989, p220

had one of its roots in location.⁷ The tradition of historical writing in ancient India began in the time of Vedavyasa and continued until the end of twelfth century AD. The oldest Indian historical tradition is preserved in the Rgveda. ⁷ The Rgveda hymns about the Aryan people speak of the sense of history of those who composed them. These hymns constitute the earliest evidence of the historical sense in India. Moreover, the composition of the original Bharata Itihasa or Bharata Samhita and the Purana Samhita or Itihasa Samhita by Vyasa in the Dvapara age (Krita, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali), marked the beginning of Indian historiography. The two main tradition of historiography in its early phase were the epic and Puranic. Ancient Indian historiography anterior to the seventh century AD was largely based on Itihasa-Purana tradition.

One of the positive results of the British conquest was the recovery of ancient Indian history on modern lines of historiography. It was to this task of reconstructing the history of India that the Orientalists or the Indologists addressed themselves. The work of reconstruction had to rely almost entirely on information obtainable from literature and different kinds of archaeological findings like inscriptions, coins, monuments and sculptures. The Orientalists subscribed to the enlightenment view that differences between Europeans and Asians, are not to be explained by their nature which is constant and universal, but by their custom and culture which bear diverse fruits. Such a position tended towards unity of all human history. This historical and cultural relativism bore fruit not only a tolerance and intellectual regard for non-European peoples, but in a positive appreciation of their histories and cultures.

The Nationalist historians advanced the understanding and interpretation of the past. They contributed to the cultural defense against colonization of culture. Simultaneously, most of them contributed to the positive aspects of the modernization of society. They raised new questions, produced controversies and initiated active debates. They also inculcated the notion that historical research and writing should have relevance for the present. They accepted and promoted the notion that the role that the common people play in history should be a major component of history writing. The Nationalist historical writing contributed to the self-confidence, self-assertion and a certain national pride which enabled Indian people to struggle against colonialism. Marxist historiography was influenced by the chief tenets of Marxism, including the centrality of social class and economic constraints. Friedrich Engels wrote the Peasant War in Germany, which analyzed social warfare in early Protestant Germany in terms of emerging capitalist classes. Karl Marx introduced the concept of historical materialism into the study of world historical development. He identified five successive stages of which the first stage was primitive communism where property was shared and there was no concept of

⁸ Indian Historiography, Dr. Binod Bihari Satpathy

"leadership". This progressed to a slave society where the idea of class emerged and the State developed. Feudalism was characterized by an aristocracy working in partnership with a theocracy and the emergence of the Nation-state. Capitalism appeared after the bourgeois revolution when the capitalists overthrew the feudal system and established a market economy, with private property and Parliamentary democracy. Marx then predicted the eventual proletarian revolution that would result in the attainment of socialism, followed by Communism, where property would be communally owned.

The Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society edited by Ranjit Guha, is the title given to a series of volumes dealing with a wide range of themes covering vast section of Indian Society. The Subaltern approach to religion was inspired by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. He varied the classical Marxist approach to religion and proposed that religion of the proletarian (subaltern class, as he termed it) could not be always understood as having been imposed by the ruling class. Sometimes subaltern religion will mirror the religion of the ruling class but sometimes it will develop its own form of religion in opposition to the wishes of ruling class as a way of maintain cultural identity.⁸ Right from the beginning the Subaltern Studies took the position that the entire tradition of Indian historiography before had elitist bias. The historians associated with the Subaltern Studies declared that they would set the position right by writing the history from the point of view of the common people.

A Mission Historiography

Modern missions arose from a 'Christendom' situation in the West, which started with the reign of Constantine when Christianity became the official religion of the state. With the present recognition that Christendom as such has passed away, there has been multifaceted study to reassess the case for mission. D.J. Bosch investigated the philosophy of paradigm changes and came to the conclusion that mission has to be seen within a new paradigm as having an ecumenical nature. This approach supplied him with a new and more inclusive paradigm for modern mission. He clarifies his wide scope of mission "We do need a more radical and comprehensive hermeneutic of mission. In attempting to do this we may perhaps move close to viewing everything as mission, but this is a risk we will have to take. Mission is a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualization, and much more".⁹ In mission narratives, there is a term "mission drift" that has a bad connotation. It is often used to describe a confusing or inauthentic shift from

⁹ See Schreier, Robert, J. *Constructing Local Theologies*, SCM, London, 1985, p136

¹⁰ Bosch, David, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis Books, 1997, p512

foundational focus, or diverging from its core values. Mission drift can occur among all types of organizations including secular and Christian organizations. The term has been used pejoratively in connection with lending at microfinance firms whose loans become larger and thus redirected away from the people who might need them most. The Face book may have been formed with a social mission to make the world more “open and connected,” but deals it has struck with device makers- Samsung, Apple, BlackBerry, Amazon.com, Microsoft, have led to privacy concerns and public criticism. The Big banks caught up in the financial crisis published mission statements that focused on integrity, competence, and building trusting relationships with customers, and yet high-risk behaviors ensued, contributing to the crisis and leading to mistrust. The phrase mission drift can thus ring alarm bells among investors.

Peter Greer and Christ Horst in the book, *Mission Drift*¹¹ raise basic questions: why is “mission drift” common among Christian ministries? How does it happen, and how can it be prevented? And by what metric do we determine whether an organization has remained resolutely—and likely counter culturally— “mission true”? He cites examples. “A group of New England pastors sensed Harvard had drifted too far for their liking only after 80years of its founding. Harvard had begun as a school to equip ministers to share the good news. The Pastors approached a wealthy philanthropist Elihu Yale who financed their efforts in 1718. They named the college after him, the institution today known as Yale University. Yale’s motto not just ‘VERITAS’ (truth) like Harvard but ‘LUX ET VERITAS’ (light and truth). But today neither Harvard nor Yale resembles the Universities their founders envisioned. At the 350th anniversary celebration of Harvard, Steven Muller, former President of John Hopkins University did not mince words: “The bad news is the university has become godless”. Larry Summers, the President of Harvard confirmed Muller’s assessment, acknowledging, ‘things divine has been central neither to my professional nor to my personal life’¹². The mission drift is a pressing challenge for every faith-based organization. The zeal and beliefs of the founders are insufficient safeguards. There is no immunity, no matter how concrete mission statement is or how passionate leaders are or how much one may believe it could never happen. But David Bosch says that mission is both something, which transforms and effective mission is itself something that is constantly transforming. His argument throughout the three major sections of the book: *New Testament Models of Mission*; *Historical Paradigms of Mission*; and *Toward a Relevant Missiology* is that there is no one meta-paradigm for missions, it is a constantly transforming paradigm.

Prospects

Historians for centuries have focused on the theological developments of religious heritage. Social scientists in the 19th century took interest in "primitive" and

comparative religion. In the 20th century the field shifted mostly on theology. Since the 1970s the social history approach to religious behavior and belief has become important. The traditional approach to church history is to divide it into four periods: Early Church, Medieval Period, Reformation and Modern period and to describe the main events and personalities of a certain period. Margaret Jacob argues that there has been a dramatic shift in the historiography of the Reformation. Until the 1960s, historians focused their attention largely on the great leaders and theologians of the sixteenth century, especially Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Their ideas were studied in depth. However, the rise of the social history in the 1960s look at history from the bottom up, not from the top down.¹⁰ Greer, Peter & Hortst, *Mission Drift* Bethany House, 2014¹² Ibid, p18. Historians began to concentrate on the values, beliefs and behavior of the people at large. She finds, "in contemporary scholarship, the Reformation is now seen as a vast cultural upheaval, a social and popular movement, textured and rich because of its diversity."¹⁰

The structure and content of historical theology is not determined by only one aspect such as period or a particular content but consists of diverse elements: pedagogical principles, context, recognized fields of research, ecclesial tradition. It is important to understand history and humanity in its historicity. To this extent, a sound knowledge of the philosophy of history is important. Questions regarding time and eternity, the meaning and purpose of history, the method of historical enquiry and the relationship between subject and object need attention. To simply study history as past events has no bearing on the present or shaping of the future. The latter elements are crucial to the studying of history. The history as event is absolute, occurring only once in time and space; but history as information, inquiry, and interpretation is relative and subject to change. If the church as part of the 'Missio Dei' and also apostolic, history of missions is simultaneously a history of the church. The history-of-mission's movements in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and other parts of the world are at the same time a history of the church. A study of the history of missions shows how the church has been involved in the world throughout the ages. This is often reflected, sometimes controversially, in the writings and records of missionaries.

Ross puts it succinctly¹¹. "One of the great religious changes of the twentieth century has been the accession of large parts of sub-Saharan Africa to the Christian faith. Yet, both the church and the academy in the West have been slow to appreciate this phenomenon. When this point registers, however, it can quickly be developed in a more or less triumphalism manner as the great success story of the modern missionary movement. "Africa the Christian Continent" has become a concept to conjure with, both in academic missiology and in popular church life. Yet, at the

¹¹ Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and politics in eighteenth-century Europe*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p 215

same time, the image of Africa with widest currency in the rest of the world is that of a political and economic disaster area: the continent of dictator-ships, corruption, oppression, civil wars, coups, refugees, ethnic strife, barbarity, and genocide. These “two Africas” rarely meet. The two stories are told with little attempt at integration, However, whatever approach other critics may take, to the Christian theologian it is intolerable to understand reality in terms of two histories. Taking account of the empirical reality of Christian faith in Africa must be a "one history" enterprise fit is to have theological integrity.

There is much variety in the way in which theologians approach history. Alister McGrath is of the opinion that the relationship between faith and history could be regarded as the central theological question of the 20th century as it influenced many aspects of theology. He had a major influence on the content, structure, methodology and teaching of historical theology. He describes historical theology as follows:

“The branch of theological inquiry which aims to explore the historical development of Christian doctrines, and identify the factors which were influential in their formulation and adoption. Historical theology therefore has direct and close links with the disciplines of church history and systematic theology.¹¹

Adolf von Harnack and Ernst Troeltsch exerted a significant influence on historical sciences and theology. It took a new turn by Martin Heidegger to place the question of human existence and historicity in the center of the theological debate. Heidegger says historical documents do not only convey historical facts but articulate human existence. Vice versa, understanding human existence is one of the important requirements for the proper understanding of historical texts. Later in his life, Heidegger placed more emphasis on the interpretation of texts and language as the space of human existence. Our understanding of human existence and historicity can never be divorced from language because language reveals the essence of human existence. Language transcends the individual subject and existence. Rudolf Bultmann followed Heidegger and developed a very specific understanding of history. In his Gifford Lectures, Bultmann (1955) developed his understanding of history and eschatology, and two fundamental questions were put on the agenda, 'How should we understand historical documents as it developed within a specific tradition' and 'what is the nature of historical knowledge'.

Karl Barth was not a church historian but probably one of the most scholarly church historians of the 20th century and wrote major works on Anselm, Calvin, history of

¹² McGrath, A.E., 2013, Historical theology, 2nd edn., Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, p8

doctrine and the history of Protestant theology. The publication of a commentary on the apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans. (1919), known as 'Römerbrief', Barth placed much emphasis on the dialectical tension between time and eternity or between man and God¹². He describes history as a conversation between past and present wisdom. He had a major influence on many younger theologians such as Ebeling, Bromiley and McGrath. In 1932, the first part of Barth's Church All theology should be of service to the church and the proclamation of the gospel. McGrath places more emphasis on the history of doctrine in his approach to historical theology. One is struck by a strong sense of history, a clear understanding of the context within which certain doctrines developed. This underlines McGrath's view that the interface between church history and systematic theology is quite distinct.

Theology is by nature not only contextual but also historical. It means that Christian traditions and canonical Scripture form the core concern of Christian theology. "Theology is an enterprise engaged primarily in the 'retrieval of wisdom' by which we mean the critical reading, interpretation, and study of patterns of appropriation of wisdom (and the sources of such wisdom) that over the centuries have been central to the lives of the believers".¹³ Duncan Forrester concisely defines public theology as a theology which attends to the Bible and the tradition of faith at the same time as it attempts to discern the signs of the times and understand what is going on in the light of the gospel.¹⁴ Gerard Mannion describes various definitions and approaches to public theology¹⁵. He points out that, throughout the history of the Christian church, there had always been public theology or 'theology in the public square'. Jesus Christ preached in public places and confronted the authorities both civil and religious with their moral bankruptcy, explaining the values of the kingdom of God. This was continued during the early development of the Christian church, the best-known example is the Apostle Paul's discussion of a Christian's relation to the government and emperor in Romans 13. Augustine's City of God is a classic text, written in the context of a Roman Empire which was in decline, facing major political, social and moral collapse. During the Medieval and Reformation eras, there was a continuous stream of theologians who struggled with questions of how faith should relate to evolving patterns of social and political change. These included theologians such as Thomas Aquinas (1225-1275), William of Ockham (1288-

¹³ Ibid, p107

¹⁴ Galgalo, Joseph D, Place and Significance of Theology in the Contemporary University in: Vocation of theology, Gregg, T, Muers, R & Zahl, S, eds, Cascade books, 2013, p 310

¹⁵ W.F. Storrar & A.R. Morton, eds., Public Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Essays in Honour of Duncan B. Forrester, London 2004, p. 1.

¹⁶ Mannion, G, A Brief Genealogy of Public Theology, or, Doing Theology when it Seems Nobody, 2009, p.121154.

1348), Ignatius de Loyola (1491-1556) and Luther and Calvin during the Reformation.

The relationship between the church and society during reformation was dynamic and changing, resulting in a particular ecclesial identity. No church or religion ever functions or exists in isolation. Society influences the identity of the church and the shape of faith, and religion equally influences the identity of society. Consequently, there is a close connection between sacred and secular history. They constitute a polarity: They are interdependent concepts -not opposites, not contradictory but existing in a tension. Both sacred and secular are constellations of meaning denoting significance for human life in society. The best public theology involves theological hermeneutics in the service of moral, social and political praxis. In public theology, questions of ethics, ecclesiology and being church with integrity is of constant importance. This was illustrated in the 20th century in Nazi Germany, especially by theologians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth as well as the Barmen Declaration which became a classic text of public theology. Public theology requires sound knowledge of social and ecclesial history.

Conclusion

Theological Faculties all over the world are in a process of fundamental transformation and restructuring. Many theological faculties are closed or restructured to form part of faculties of Arts in some of the Universities in the west. The Seminaries in India are struggling for survival either depending on funding overseas or raising the fees to such a level that theological education is becoming a luxury that few can afford. Theology in India is low on the list of priorities of the churches, especially in terms of funding by the churches. The challenge to the Church history or 'History of Christianity' as part of theological education not only by external factors such as the restructuring of universities but also by internal factors such as a tendency to function in isolation from other related disciplines, in particular secular history, theology & missiology.

Rowan Williams the former Archbishop of Canterbury and Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge quotes Margolis "A History is the intentionally unified or coherent diachronic career of (or assignable to) a text"; and "texts exist, are found, are recognized, and are understood only in the societies to be apt for producing and understanding themselves and their texts."¹⁷ He proposes that what the humanities in general can do for the academic community, theology itself can do for the humanities by offering a possible ground or context for sustaining the vision of dialogical encounter.

He explains that theology is a discipline of reading. In the 'Abrahamic' religious traditions the religious practices and reflection are textually based: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They

all work with a sacred text believed to be given by God-though the exact nature of givenness is a matter of debate within and between traditions. The text is always reread in Abrahamic tradition.

“Hebrew Scripture in its broader definition, the Tanakh as a whole, includes major acts of rereading and reconceiving narratives, from the doubled narrative in Genesis of the creation of the human, to the Chronicler’s reworking of Samuel and Kings and less obvious but hard to deny, the author of Ruth’s rereading of a history widely assumed to be one of essential ethnic purity. For the Christian, the Four Gospels themselves represent a sequence new readings and new configuring of received material, a sequence whose details are notoriously resistant to decisive mapping.”²¹

A Narrative by Vishal Mangalwadi is quite amusing as well as educative.¹⁶ He narrates that how economic value is added to something like milk supremely in a Christianized culture where people’s morality has been shaped by the awareness of a personal, loving, omniscient God.¹⁷ Williams, Rowan, *Theology among the humanities*, In: *Vocation of theology*, Gregg, T, Muers, R & Zahl, S, Eds, Cascade books, 2013, p179. Corruption will only dissolve if people’s hearts are changed. He tells the story of visiting Christians friends in Holland. His Dutch host took him to a neighboring dairy farm. The farmer was not in the barn, but Vishal’s friend helped himself to the needed milk, and then paid for the milk on the honor system as he deposited cash in the basket next to the milk tank and fished around in the basket for the appropriate change. Vishal was stunned by what he saw, knowing that in most Indians would have walked out with the ‘milk and the cash’ since no one was looking. Then, he explains the cost of corruption succinctly:

If this was India and I walked out with the money and the milk, the dairy owner would need to hire a cashier. Who would pay for the cashier? I, the consumer, would; and the price of milk would go up. But if the consumer were corrupt, why should the dairy owner be honest? He would add water to the milk to make more money. I would then be paying more for adulterated milk. I would complain, "The milk is adulterated; the government must appoint inspectors." Who would pay for the inspectors? I, the taxpayer, would. But if the consumer, producer, and the supplier were corrupt, why should the inspectors be honest? They would extract bribes from the supplier. If he did not bribe them, the inspectors would delay the supply and ensure that the milk curdled before it got to me. Who would pay for the bribe? Again, I, the consumer, would pay the additional cost. By the time I paid for the milk, cashier, the water, inspector, and the bribe, I would have a little money left to buy

¹⁷Vishal Mangalwadi [The Book That Made Your World; How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization](#)” Thomas Nelson, 2011, p250 ,

¹⁸ Ibid, p 184

chocolate for the milk – so my children would not drink the milk and would be weaker than the Dutch children. Having spent extra money on the milk, I would not be able to take my children out for ice cream. The cashier, water, bribe, and inspector add no value to the milk. The ice cream industry does. My corruption keeps me from patronizing a value adding business. That reduces our economy's capacity to create jobs. The historical narratives are both informative and educative but not just gathering of facts. Amartya Sen narrates that “about two and half months before the storming of the Bastille in Paris, which was effectively the beginning of the French Revolution, the Political philosopher and orator, Edmund Burke, said in Parliament in London: ‘An event has happened, upon which it is difficult to speak, impossible to be silent’. This was on 5th May 1789. Burke’s speech had nothing much to do with the developing storm in France. The occasion, rather, was the impeachment of Warren Hastings, who was then commanding the British East India Company.

¹⁷ Edward Carr states there is a common misconception that history is simply about the gathering of facts. And history could be studied as a hard science. It is based on the mistaken assumption that an unbiased conclusion could be extracted by simply analyzing what are deemed to be empirical facts.¹⁸ Therefore, story behind the histories is to discover the other side of the coin. According to him the reduction of historiography arose because mainstream historians combined, a simple but very strong assertion that the proper function of the historian was to show the past as ‘it really. It is the historian who has decided for his own reasons that Caesar’s crossing of that petty stream, the Rubicon, is a fact of history, whereas the crossings of the Rubicon by millions of other people...interests nobody at all...The historian is [therefore] necessarily selective. The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate.

¹⁹ Sen, Amartya, *The Idea of Justice*, Penguin Books, 2009, p1

²⁰ Edward Hallett Carr, “The Historian and His Facts,” in *What is History?* ed. R. W. Davies, Second ed. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1987, 9.

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