



**“... not hurrying on to a receding future,
nor hankering after an imagined past”¹:
Edinburgh 1910, T. S. Eliot,
Postcolonial Missiology, and Our Mission to God**

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¹ These phrases are from the poem, “The Bright Field” by the Welsh poet and pastor, R. S. Thomas (1913 – 2000), found in R. S. Thomas, *Poems*, selected by Anthony Thwaite (London: Phoenix Poetry, 2002), p. 91.

Introduction – Locating the Subject

As someone encapsulating within his ecclesiastical and ministerial identity the hybridity, diversity, promise and potential of the great movements toward the unity of the church in the twentieth century – wait, let me explain: I’m an ordained minister of the united Church of South India, with deep family roots in the coming to India in 1834 of missionaries from the Basel Mission (who themselves, depending on whether they came from South Germany or North Switzerland, were Lutheran or Reformed), having been shaped by my home congregation, St. Mark’s Cathedral in Bangalore, built in 1808 as an Anglican church which became the cathedral of the undivided Mysore Diocese of the Church of South India in 1947 and later of the Karnataka Central Diocese; having studied at the United Theological College in Bangalore (itself a pioneer of inter-denominational, ecumenical theological education since 1910, founded because of the vision of a galaxy of eminent church leaders to start an interdenominational institution to offer high quality theological education so that leaders with a broader outlook and a deeper commitment to ecumenism could be produced for the churches in India, and supported in the early period by the London Missionary Society, the American Arcot Mission, the United Free Church of Scotland Mission, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society); having served as my first parish five village congregations formerly belonging to the congregational London Missionary Society, and then an urban congregation formerly belonging to the Wesleyan Methodist Mission, and then serving as an associate presbyter in various congregations including a former Scottish Kirk; having done my master’s at the Orthodox Theological Seminary

(founded in 1815 as the first Orthodox school of theology in Asia, an initiative supported by Colonel John Munroe, the British Resident in the kingdom of Travancore; the seminary leadership having had, at the beginning, a cordial and strong link with the Church Missionary Society missionaries who had just come to the state of Kerala); and after having taught for a number of years at the United Theological College in Bangalore, now find myself teaching at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and to complicate matters just a little more, being the son of a Hindu convert who loved the organ music of J. S. Bach (but that's a story for another time, including two of my names, Johann and Sebastian!) – as someone encapsulating these realities in my life and ministry, it's indeed a privilege to be part of this group exploring and interrogating missiological issues and themes together at this time.

Remembering Edinburgh 1910

All of us are conscious of the enduring legacy of the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910, and for me personally, as Brian Stanley puts it: “The road which eventually led to the formation of the Church of South India in 1947, and of the Church of North India in 1970, began at Edinburgh” (Stanley 2009: 310–311). In the centenary year, the celebrations around this event have been rich and varied and the range of contributions and the impact of all the commemoration events are being felt in various ways all over the world. It's good to recollect that there were eighteen non-Western participants at the conference, of whom “eight were Indians, four were Japanese, three were Chinese, one was Korean, one Burmese ... and one was of Turkish origin”

(Stanley 2009: 92). With a touch of irony and humor, not usual in a serious historical study, Stanley writes: “Whether delegates’ orientalist fascination with the exotic hindered or assisted their attentiveness to what the Asians had to say is a moot point, but there is some evidence in favour of the latter interpretation” (Stanley 2009: 96).

One of these delegates who left an indelible mark on the conference through his “Give us friends” speech was V. S. Azariah, who two years later would become the first India to be consecrated an Anglican bishop in India. He went on to play a major role in the moves toward bringing different denominations together, although he died before the inauguration of the Church of South India. “The unity movement was one of the primary means by which Azariah became a world-renowned churchman ... and he fearlessly upbraided western churches for not taking denominational divisions seriously enough” (Harper 2000: 238).

Impulses Fostering the Unity of the Church and Serious Opposition

Something that I have returned to in my reflections is an observation made by Cohn who writes:

The Bible and the medieval patristic literature offered another interpretation of the culture and religions of India for the European travelers: this was the home of the traditional enemies of Christianity, Satan and his devils. ... To have found the devil and Satan in India was not strange and unusual to the Europeans, as they knew they were there all along... When traveling in a strange land, even meeting an old enemy, the devil, is something of a comfort (Cohn 2002: 78).

India and things Indian played a major role in the European imagination, not just during the colonial period, but even from the time of Alexander the Great and the Romans, especially in terms of fulfilling “imperial desires” (Parker 2008: 318). As far as various mission enterprises to India were concerned, “they share the desire to change and domesticate India: to turn strange, menacing pagans into safe, familiar Christians. . . . Missionary writing demonstrates how the alien other can be controlled, suggesting how India itself can be tamed and re-formed in the European image” (Teltscher 1995: 105).

Within the literary context, one of the giants of the twentieth century was a person who in his creative life was deeply indebted to and fascinated by India, especially Indian philosophy. This was someone whose poetry had dared to question the way things had been and accepted and whose ‘The Waste Land’ still is looked upon as a seminal moment in world literature, not to say anything of the role it has played in the shaping of the curriculum of literary studies in India. The literary critic, Terry Eagleton, in discussing T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, describes his ‘social situation’ as that of “an ‘aristocratic’ American expatriate who became a glorified City clerk and yet identified deeply with the conservative-traditionalist, rather than bourgeois-commercialist, elements of English ideology” (Eagleton 2002: 13). It is indeed fascinating that Eliot was deeply influenced by his study of Indian philosophy and of the *Bhagavad Gita*, something that he acknowledged and something that permeated not only *The Waste Land*, but also other writings. (Rao 1963) Among many other references and allusions, Eliot “specifically recalls the Buddha’s Fire Sermon in the third section of *The Waste Land* and consciously brings the Buddha and St. Augustine together at the very core of the poem; he makes an

equally incontrovertible appeal to the thunder of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in the final portion of *The Waste Land*...” (Sri 2008: 34). A scholar who analyzed his writings in various genres states that “Eliot perceived tradition as a unity in diversity. When he wrote of the ancient Indian philosophers that ‘their subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys,’ he was expressing awe at the Indian appreciation for the complexity of tradition” (Perl and Tuck 1985: 125).

The key word here seems to be ‘tradition’ and I find it intriguing and instructive that there was so much opposition to the moves toward union in south India at various levels, especially from the Anglican circles. One of those who voiced his opposition to the proposed scheme for union was T. S. Eliot, who issued a pamphlet under the aegis of “The Council for the Defence of Church Principles,” entitled “Reunion by Destruction: Reflections on a Scheme for Church Union in South India – Addressed to the Laity” (Eliot 1943). The Council is self-identified in the inner front cover of the booklet as something that “has been set up by the Church Union and other Church Societies as a temporary organisation for the preservation of those fundamental principles of the Faith and Order of the Catholic Church which are clearly taught and enjoined in the Book of Common Prayer, in the belief that without these principles, which are now endangered by certain re-union proposals, the attainment of œcumenical reunion and the maintenance of the unity of the Anglican Communion are alike impossible” (Eliot 1943: inside front cover). There is no doubt that the efforts undertaken to form a united church in south India following the Edinburgh conference met with a lot of questions and hand-wringing, to say nothing of the theological, ecclesiological, structural, and liturgical anguish that

followed. (For an example as to what this meant in the life of an eminent churchman whose career spanned the debates and churches, see Daugherty 2008). However, given Eliot's prominence in the wider world and his abiding interest in Indian philosophy, a re-reading of this pamphlet will be instructive.

At the outset Eliot lays out the reasons that prompted him to put down his thoughts in print "as an Anglican layman to the laity." Namely that his was an effort to address the reader "whose mind has neither hardened by bigotry nor fortified by argument, whose mind is easily tolerant but obstinately Anglican; the reader who would not wish to see the Church of England transformed or made unfamiliar" (Eliot 1943: 1). There is almost a sense of an unchanging monolithic stability as far as the essence of what the Church of England is, and that in a world being steadily and irrevocably transformed by the ongoing world war and the ever growing demands for overturning colonialism. I find it interesting that in the large, sweeping work of Robert Young entitled *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* there is one reference (looking at a conference of "colonized peoples" held at Lausanne in the middle of the first world war) to the "arch-conservative" Eliot, and that to a line from his 1922 poem, *The Waste Land*, "By the waters of Lemane I sat down and wept" (Young 2001: 118-119). This attitude towards the demise of the world as he knew it continues in the pamphlet when Eliot offers his interpretation of the events that had led to the point where the united church was poised to come into being, and in an echo of the Athens and Jerusalem dichotomy, says that while it may not be immediately clear as to why "events in places as remote as Tinevelly and Dornakal may have consequences in every parish in England" (Eliot 1943:

2) he will show how this move, especially in terms of ‘inter-communion,’ could prove to be “a concession without adequate compensation” (Eliot 1943: 3). The grounds for this judgment are that while ‘secession’ is not envisaged, even though the “foundation of this proposed Church would necessitate the separation of the Anglican dioceses from the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon,” ‘reunion’ implies that members of the new church would want “to remain in communion with the churches to which they at present belong.” But there is more, and Eliot asks what would happen when the generations shift and those “born and brought up in the new church” come to England (Eliot 1943: 3).

Eliot is aware of the “evils of Christian disunion” and goes on to give a quick capsule tour of the history of the church in India, leading up to the “ill effect, in India and upon Indians, of Christian division.” Recognizing the “consequences of separation” he goes on to say that while “[w]e should be fired by their zeal and fervour; we should not abdicate our reason.” At this point, his key fear emerges as a fear that this is not some kind of experiment that will remain in India and that “[t]hose who urge it in India may have eyes only for India” -- rather he is deeply worried that “the scheme is passionately championed by many people in England” (Eliot 1943: 5). He is concerned that the scheme would establish a precedent:

If it is accepted in India, it will inevitably be proposed in England. Not only logic will compel it, but circumstance. A precedent will have been established; the inconsistency will become intolerable; and we shall be told that if we do not conform to the precedent of India, it is we who will be responsible for the consequent disorder (Eliot 1943: 6).

Since for Eliot faith and order go together, and his comments on the “Faith and Order Movement” (Eliot 1943: 11) make clear he is alarmed by what he sees as a tendency to separate the words and deplores those who “take for granted” that these words “denote two clearly demarcated areas,” it is evident that he sees “disorder” as having an immediate and lasting bearing on matters of faith. For him the faith of the church is at stake here and the coming into existence of the united Church of South India, with all the adjustments to the structures that this entails, will irrevocably bear upon the faith of the church as he affirms it, and that for him is intolerable.

There is no doubt that Eliot thought long and deeply about this matter and was aware of the complex series of debates and discussions that brought negotiations to the point where it appears that it is only a matter of time before the new united church comes into being. He offers two possible ways of addressing the issue of “reunion.” In one view, divisions result from “our primary sin ... not against each other, but against God. Any scheme of reunion, then, must be conceived in repentance, and delivered in reparation.” The other view, and this is where he locates the movement in south India, is aiming “not so much at the restoration of any previous unity, as the instauration of a new unity.” (Eliot 1943: 6-7) He comes to this conclusion through his study of the build up to the point to which the individual denominations have come and with more than a touch of what he believes to be irony, says that there is an assumption that

each body – Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist – is in possession of some part of excellence and truth, and that these parts only need to be combined. ... It is apparently an assumption of such a scheme, that everybody is right. There is to be no ‘absorption’ of any part by any other. This happy result,

in which nobody has anything of importance to surrender, is arrived at by assuming that the only doctrines which matter are those upon which the several parties already agree; and, where agreement is not secure, by having recourse to some phrase of ambiguous interpretation” (Eliot 1943: 7-8).

There is an almost ominous relentlessness in the certainty that Eliot espouses, especially the certainty of ‘truth’ and an unwillingness to even consider as to whether the Spirit is leading the churches to the unveiling of truth in this new context. By this point I’m wondering about the question of attitude and perception. In terms of appreciation and appropriation of the dominant Indian philosophical tradition, Eliot was undoubtedly not just influenced but also indebted to this in terms of his creativity and imaginative poetic constructions. However, when it came to the possible flowering of the church in what would quickly be a post-colonial set up, we find him almost enraged by the possibility of the dilution of what he held to be the ‘truth.’

Eliot goes on to state that he does not doubt the need and necessity after the ‘last war’ of Christians across ‘races and tongues’ coming together and through this being in a position to “acquaint themselves with each other’s personal, social and national peculiarities” and also to “discover a common basis for social action” (Eliot 1943: 9). The problem is that, according to him, all this has led to the striving ‘toward reunion’ – a striving that has led to the assertion that in this process what should be taken into consideration as “the only essential doctrines are those which they all hold in common” (Eliot 1943: 9). He returns to this point again and again when he says that even in the field of religious teaching and religious education in schools the tendency has been “to bring about the belief that those tenets of the Christian Faith which are ... held in

common are all that one needs to know or to believe.” For him this will lead to a situation of ‘minimal Christianity’ where “the few remaining doctrines will be open to an indefinite latitude of individual interpretation, and to an indefinite future of revision and re-adaptation ...” (Eliot 1943: 10). Revision and re-adaptation – this sounds to me a little like what prevailed at the time the Church of England came into being! Eliot is clearly worried about reductionism in what he sees as the church of the future – a church that accepts the lowest common denominator in its ecclesial and theological self-understanding. I’m not too sure I recognize that this is the reality in the united Church of South India either now or during the time of the negotiations. At the same time there is talk about unbridled expansionism when Eliot talks about “every party and every individual” entering the proposed church and “bringing all their doctrinal furniture and liturgical baggage with them” (Eliot 1943: 11).

Semantics aside, this smacks of thinly veiled disdain as to what gifts those who have been separated through historical and missiological realities not of their own making are trying to offer to each other and to the united church. But no, Eliot gets into a philological argument of hair-splitting regarding the use of the word ‘Church’ appealing even to Johnson and Boswell (Eliot 1943: 11-13), and going on to crudely state that “The Church of South India is a pre-fabricated church ...” (Eliot 1943: 12). Following all this, he comes to the crux of the matter – the questions regarding episcopacy and apostolic succession. At this time I do not want to get into the nuts and bolts of Eliot’s arguments, which he makes in a turgid and ungenerous manner (Eliot 1943: 14ff), but point out that on these questions koinonia and generosity in listening to what the Spirit is telling the

churches is trumped by theological nit-picking. I recognize for some listeners this may be the most important part of the pamphlet, and agree that this is not something to be brushed aside or overlooked, especially with regard to what it meant in the post-1947 history of the relationship between the Church of England, the broader Anglican Communion, and the Church of South India, In a major article on the Church of South India, the church historian George Oommen, writing about the process building up to the union notes:

The most difficult encounters were due to the opposition from Church of England representatives, who at times were more ready to count the cost of the union for the Anglican tradition than to envision the vast ecumenical possibilities for a united church in India. No one involved in the negotiations had any clarity about the concrete shape that the united church would finally take. All were open to the possibility of God's acting in and through the new church (Oommen 2005: 62).

To return to Eliot – it is not that he naively holds that everyone in the Church of England believes in exactly the same thing. He is aware that “it has been, on the whole, characteristic of the Church of England to leave a great latitude of belief and interpretation, rather than to strive for the utmost precision ...” and goes on to offer examples from the recent history of the church (Eliot 1943: 16). However, as far as the Church of South India is concerned he uses the analogy of sanitation, saying “unsanitary dwellings in a nineteenth-century industrial town does not excuse the omission of plumbing from the plans for a new industrial centre” (Eliot 1943: 17). I'm intrigued by this particular metaphor, which refers to sanitation. Are there echoes of the “dirty” India, which continues to repel and fascinate visitors even today? He goes on to recognize that

people are free to do what they want since they have “liberty” and that such actions may result in “refusing recognition and inter-communion” and also breakdown in links with other ecclesial bodies – for him all these arguments are “about division: and what I am concerned with, and what I believe to be the concern of the reader whom I address, is that the Church of England should not be destroyed” (Eliot 1943: 18, emphasis in original).

It’s easy for us to be wise in hindsight and project ourselves backwards in time. Nevertheless, what is intriguing is the palpable fear and angst that comes through in this manner of writing and thinking, that if the scheme went forward, it would be the end of the church as Eliot knew it. Perhaps he was being prescient. The formation of the Church of South India in 1947 forced the ecumenical world to look at issues regarding the unity of the church, especially in terms of ‘visible’ unity in a new and fresh way, and the consequences of this act continue to be felt throughout the ecumenical movement, not just in terms of ongoing publications and interactions with this theme, but in terms of efforts in different parts of the world to give expression to koinonia and unity in a broken and fragmented world.

Eliot predicted that the consequences of this action would take time to manifest itself and anticipated that at first there would seem to be no visible changes, but then he describes this projected reality as the ‘peace of death’ (Eliot 1943: 19). The outlook for the Church of England is portrayed in cataclysmic terms:

The future of a Church of England, enlarged according to the pattern of South India, would be as an organ of the totalitarian state, charged with the preservation of morality in the interest of that state. It would be a National Church, not in the

sense of representing the true religious spirit of the people, but as a department of the Board of Education. As a Church, it would only be a shell (Eliot 1943: 20-21).

As for the work that went into reaching this stage, Eliot dismisses it with open contempt, calling it a 'waste' and a 'pantomime horse' and saying that the scheme would be "an utter failure, only if it is accepted and put into operation: if it is repudiated, it will, by providing a warning, have made its own contribution and achieved its own success" (Eliot 1943: 21). For him, the only value to this would come about through its failure and collapse.

It would be remiss on my part not to point out that reaction to this came in various forms from a variety of people, not least the then Bishop of Durham, who immediately wrote a reply, where, among many other things he states:

Disputes about Church Order and partisan over-stressing of a particular theory of episcopacy, neither to be proved by the New Testament nor steadily upheld in Anglican history nor supported by any consensus of recognized authorities, have absorbed too much attention and have contributed to blur more significant cleavages within, not between, the Churches (Williams 1944:13).

For other aspects of the debate, including interaction with Catholics, see Leachman (2009). Having looked back in rather exhaustive, not to say anything of exhausting, detail at Eliot and his discontents, as well as reactions to such efforts, not least of which was the almost defiant coming into being of the united Church of South India, let us look ahead to what one possible approach to missiology could look like in the uncertain present.

Postcolonial Missiology and Our Mission to God

In missiological thinking, 'tradition' has come to play a major role, even when certain 'traditions' may be of fairly recent origin. Our examination of the Eliot pamphlet and the intensity of feelings to which it testifies offers us much to reflect upon located as we are one hundred years after the Edinburgh 1910 meeting and more than sixty years after both the nation-state of India and the united Church of South India have come into existence. Missiological thinking and praxis have been deeply impacted by the postcolonial turn in cultural studies, where smug, self-contained dominant ways of reading and interpreting are constantly called into questions. Sugirtharajah puts it well when he writes:

Interpretation is a struggle between instinctive, untutored, untheorized modes of appropriation and institutional conventions, codes, practices, and doctrinal manipulation. One has to work against dominant meanings to produce new knowledge or to deepen or indeed to problematize well-established positions (Sugirtharajah 2002: 203-204).

One such 'well-established position' and strongly entrenched 'tradition' is that regarding *missio Dei*. Although the *missio Dei* ideology has functioned as a dominant paradigm in missiological thinking for very many decades, it is worth questioning some of the assumptions that underlie this concept and ask what would happen if we talk about a mission to God, rather than the mission of God. For quite some time now, using some of the insights culled from Bonaventure's image of the itinerant journey to God combined with the understandable 'dis'-ease of missiological thinkers from the so-called 'third world' context, I have posed several questions to inherited forms of missiological

thinking, positioned as I am as both a 'recipient' of mission and a 'practitioner' of missiological thinking (See, among others, Sebastian 2005). This is hardly the place to trace the origin and use of this concept, something that I have done in another publication (Sebastian 2007), nor is it the time to underline how important this concept has been in contemporary missiological thinking. My response engaged with the reality of having to deal with the fall-out of what is perceived as an aggressive mission enterprise by many, including those advocating Hindutva as the only way of understanding all things Indian, and formed part of a major initiative undertaken through a collaborative effort between the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton, New Jersey, and the United Theological College, Bangalore, India, the fruits of which were published in two volumes entitled, *News of Boundless Riches: Interrogating, Comparing, and Reconstructing Mission in a Global Era* (Stackhouse and Pachau 2007). This is an effort that deserves far greater recognition than it has been accorded till now. How can alternate ways of understanding mission "non-violently" be of help in furthering, rather than hindering, unity? With thanks to the editors of these volumes, I want to place before you the creative part of my contribution, which tries to sketch out what a postcolonial missiology would involve if we position it in terms of our mission to God.

What are the contours of talking about the implications of a missiological understanding of our mission to God? For those of us who have a deep and abiding commitment to the exploration of theological issues and themes that we believe are crucial in the present context of pluralism and disparity, religious and economic, the question regarding our mission to God holds both promise and frustration. Promise

because we can now own responsibility for our actions and truly attempt to translate our commitment to both inter-religious understanding and missiological praxis in a world of competing claims and counter-claims regarding how the divine is conceived and understood; frustration because such an endeavour is fraught with the possibility of motivations being misunderstood and propositions and proposals being misattributed, with motives being implied.

Yet, in this postcolonial context, it is necessary to straddle the world of promise and frustration, because our mission to God speaks of responsibility and not just of grace. “In postcolonial memory it is the memory of present predicaments that recalls the dislocations of the past” (Hesse 2002:165). Such memories demand that we go in search of not just new meanings but new epistemologies - even those that have to be arrived at by rejecting the existing ones.

Our mission to God is not afraid to affirm new knowledge forms that come from the so-called margins. It will find a way of questioning received ideas of mission and yet create a notion of mission that is not simply built on any form of nativism. Those for whom the violence of mission in various overt and subtle forms has contributed directly and indirectly to what it is that defines their identity in the India of today are not prepared to run away from the processes necessary for the resignification of what it means to talk about our mission to God. The ‘our’ seeks to reclaim space, reach out in order to seek partnerships across ancient enmities, explore traditions and experiences from the past, valorise and interrogate the complexities of the present, and foster any inquiry that seeks to understand rather than explain, in a spirit of honest listening and learning.

How far have we really got? Talking about our mission is not just talking about us. We're very good at that and can go on indefinitely on this track. We need to talk about our mission to God. Is this a long and convoluted way round to come back to our starting point about the *missio Dei*? While we continue to debate on this, let me affirm that this displaced (misplaced?) way of interrogation forces us to re-examine the manner in which we begin and the way in which the beginning is shaped not by a referent outside ourselves, but by an appeal to indicate, as unambiguously as possible, how we understand ourselves and our mission to God in this world of religious variety and economic disparity.

Herein lies the challenge that we should not be afraid of accepting. Our mission to God forces us to try and articulate – and contemplate – who this God really is. This attempt comes about because we are forced to look into ourselves, our fears and frustrations, our prejudices and our value-systems, our happiness and our use of pleasure, in order that we may be ready and willing to give expression to the hope that is within us, a hope that engages our very being in our mission to God through our mission to our neighbour, whoever this neighbour may be, and whatever “mission” this neighbour may have to us, in the gloriously frightening and exhilarating multiplicity of the pilgrimage of life in India today” (Sebastian 2007: sections from 42-44).

Conclusion: Destroyed by Reunion?

In our contemporary context, new bonds and linkages are being formed not just because of the power of the Internet and the possibility of travel and direct interaction

with people, places, cultures, and cuisines, but also through a willingness to learn, unlearn, relearn, and interrogate the entire process. This is not something that happens seamlessly and smoothly, but involves a willingness to engage with the histories that have shaped us and with the connections that have been forged, willingly and unwillingly, between us. Chen, in reflecting on “Asia as Method” puts some of these realities as follows:

In Southeast and South Asia, decolonization in the form of national independence has been achieved, but the countries’ relations with their former colonizers have not yet been properly addressed. And the imperial powers involved – England, France, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and the United States – have not deimperialized themselves enough to be able to acknowledge the harm they did to these regions. I believe that critical studies of experiences in Asia might be able to offer a new view of global history, and to pose a different set of questions. This is the true potential of Asia as method (Chen 2010: 14-15).

Much harm has been done in furthering the project of the flowering of the understanding of the unity of the church by dominant voices such as those of Eliot, but much good has also transpired by those willing to see that another world, another way of thinking is possible. Instant solutions, like instant noodles are never very appetizing. In writing about the religious factor in relation to ideology and the social vision, Wole Soyinka pointedly says that “[t]hanks to the tendency of the modern consumer-mind to facilitate digestion by putting in strict categories what are essentially fluid operations of the creative mind upon social and natural phenomena, the formulation of a literary ideology tends to congeal sooner or later into instant capsules which, administered also to the writer, may

end up asphyxiating the creative process” (Soyinka 1976:61). The creative process cannot be allowed to wither and die by being asphyxiated. The triple ‘Shantih’ with which Eliot ends *The Waste Land*, should not be the peace of abandoned efforts to work towards the unity of the church, but echo the creative tension brought into being by the opening up of new, fresh, distinct, and imaginative possibilities that respond to the breath of the creative spirit that blows where she wills and sets hearts, minds, and lives aflutter with the freshness of getting caught up in our mission to God.

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