

# Recent theses from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

## **The Qatal//Yiqtol (Yiqtol//Qatal) Verbal Sequence in Couplets in the Hebrew Psalter with Special Reference to Ugaritic Poetry:**

### **A Case Study in Systemic Functional Grammar**

**Silviu Tatu (Romania)**

#### **Abstract**

The object of this study is represented by the qatal//yiqtol (yiqtol//qatal) verbal sequence, previously known as 'tense shifting', as found in couplets of the Hebrew Psalter. One hundred and two couplets of this sort were found. This study attempts to offer a innovatory explanation for such an irregular use of verbal forms in the Hebrew Psalter by means of the M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Theory.

The data displays evidence both of similarity and of dissimilarity between the two verse-lines of the couplets. Arguably, similarity is achieved at multiple levels. Both verse-lines seem to prefer a similar structure in terms of thematic markedness, mood, Process type, and clause type.

It is argued that dissimilarity occurs at various levels. At the thematic level, a qatal line with a regular Theme is more likely to trigger a Marked Theme in the yiqtol parallel line than vice versa, regardless of which line it occurs in the couplet.

At the interpersonal level, an explicit Subject in the yiqtol line is most likely to be marked. A Marked Theme with a yiqtol in line A is more likely to trigger an explicit Subject functioning as Marked Theme in line B than vice versa.

At the experiential level, the functional structure of these couplets occasionally displays verse-lines with a middle clause as pairs for lines realized by operative clauses, yiqtol verbs being more likely to accompany the former.

In the couplets investigated from Ugaritic poetry, yiqtol verbal forms promote stability and familiarity, whereas qatal verbal forms are closely related to marked Themes, Subject change, Process type variation, and irregular clause complex structure.

## **Luo Women's Negotiation of Mission Education: a critical analysis of Anglican women in Nyanza Kenya, from 1895**

**Emily A Onyango (Kenya)**

#### **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to reconstruct an engendered history of Anglican missionary education in colonial Nyanza. It is based on an analysis of local written sources, oral sources and archival material. The reconstruction is also based on analysis of Luo language and concepts as a way of understanding Luo ideas about women and school. The thesis is a contribution to the study of African history, specifically the study of Luo Christian women. It is also a contribution to mission history, specifically focusing on CMS work on the education of girls by means of a case study of CMS Ng'iya girls' school.

The central argument of the thesis is that Luo Christian women used resources from their faith, culture and mission education to bring change and transformation in Church and society. They managed to negotiate positions of leadership in Church and society and contributed to the general development of these societies. Equipped thus with their new identity as Luo Christian women, they challenged hegemonic forces within Luo culture and in the wider society to work towards justice, peace and reconciliation.

Although Luo society was patriarchal some women had the opportunity to reach positions of leadership. Luo women had property rights like all members of the community, and could use this as

a stepping stone for accumulating individual wealth. All members of the community had access to cultural education. However, the women lost their privileges in the early twentieth century and their position declined because of two main factors. First, was the change in the natural environment that resulted from migration and settlement in Nyanza. The second factor was colonial rule.

The main colonial and missionary actors in education were not interested in educating women for employment. They believed the main aim of education was to prepare women for marriage. The focus of Ng'ya girls' school was therefore to train women as teachers who would be married to the village Christian elite. Luo women however negotiated this education for their empowerment.

They could do so for two reasons. First Luo Marriages reflected women's philosophy of life and their economic and political theories. By focusing on Luo marriage, missions therefore interacted with much of the positive in Luo philosophy. Second, the use of the vernacular at school also meant that there was engagement between Luo and western-Christian ideas. Luo women therefore came up with their own philosophies of life, which became a springboard for their participation in society.

The condition of women in Nyanza has suffered again in recent times due to globalisation, ethnicity, gender disparity and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Many people, especially girls do not have access to education. Since the early Christian women used their faith, culture and education to bring change in Church and society, Luo Christian women need to be empowered to do the same in present day society.

## **The Reception in Transylvania of Karl Barth's Theology of the Word of God**

**József Kovács (Romania)**

### **Abstract**

The influence of Karl Barth's theology on the Reformed Church of Romania was the major theological development of the twentieth century history of doctrines in the Protestant churches of Transylvania. The Hungarian speaking Reformed Church in Romania, after World War I, due to border changes, became isolated from her sister church in Hungary and came to play an important role in preserving Hungarian culture and national existence.

After the failure of liberal theology a number of ways were attempted to bring renewal to church life. This thesis focuses on the process of reception of Karl Barth's theology, which was read against the background of a confessional Calvinism, the Transylvanian form of the Calvin-renaissances in Europe.

Since the process of the reception of Karl Barth's theology in Transylvania was halted with the emergence of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe at the mid 1940s, this thesis concentrates mainly on the 1920s and 1930s. A special attention is given to the theology of Sándor Tavaszy, professor at the Protestant Theological Institute in Kolozsvár (Cluj) who had a pioneering role in popularising Karl Barth's theology among the Hungarians.

The contextual study of the reception of Karl Barth's theology of the Word of God refers to the general situation of the Hungarians in Romania after World War I, that of the relationship between church and society and the analysis of the philosophical and theological context. To make the understanding of Barth' reception easier three models of initial responses are presented. The emerging theology resulting from the impact of Barthian thought on indigenous thinking is analysed and compared with Barth's own thinking. The research draws the attention of the reader that for benefiting from the full potential impact of Barth's theology, a consistently following of Karl Barth's theological development is needed.

The conclusion of the thesis points towards the possibility of constructing a theology of culture along the lines of Barthian thinking, a theology which is, as always was, a serious task for the Reformed community of Transylvania.

## ‘Leadership in a Bangkok Slum: An Ethnography of Thai Urban Poor in the Lang Wat Pathum Wanaram Community’

Alan R. Johnson (USA/Indonesia)

### Abstract

This research uses an ethnographic approach to study leadership, viewed broadly as social influence processes, in the Lang Wat Pathum Wanaram slum in Bangkok, Thailand. The purpose of the study was to develop a cultural account of how leadership is perceived and practised both within the community itself and in its broader relations with the state. Previous research on leadership in Thailand has tended to be either descriptive and lacking a theoretical base, or focused on verifying Western generated theory among highly educated subjects. This research was designed around the theoretical frameworks of attribution theory, implicit leadership theory, and cultural models, all of which are sensitive to issues of culture. Systematic data collection was used to establish baseline sociolinguistic data and then interview and participant observation data were added to establish a series of models and key concepts. The analysis explores the configurations and interrelationships of these models and concepts, and examines how they are utilized in social action. The research findings include the *Thukjai* Leader Model (TLM) representing an implicit leadership theory of culturally preferred leadership in the community, the trustworthy (*chuathuu*) leader who exhibits a constellation of behaviours related to TLM giving and task behaviour, the *Sakdi* Administrative Behaviour Leadership Heuristic (SABLH) that affects both leader practice and follower perception, and the role of groups made up of primarily horizontal relations in task accomplishment. Community leaders also relate to the state, which brings both development and the forces of

eviction. The community cannot simply be seen as playing the client role to the state-as-patron. Instead both a public and hidden transcript can be observed, and everyday forms of resistance are practised as state views are modified, rejected, or resisted in various forms.

## ‘A Critical Examination of Michel Foucault’s Concept of Moral Self-Constitution in Dialogue with Charles Taylor’

Gordon Ewart Carkner (USA)

### Abstract

French philosopher Michel Foucault takes a very specific *aesthetic* interpretation in his proposal for the constitution of the moral self in his late work on ethics, work that is located in the ancient world of Greece and Rome. The thesis writer examines the contours of that approach, and brings it to the level of a critical reflection with the aid of Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor and three theologians. Foucault’s construction of the moral self is rooted in autonomous *aesthetic-freedom*, which calls into question norms, rules or codes, and especially prohibitions, focusing on a positive elaboration of the self. It marshals certain *technologies of self* for self-creation to produce a certain beautiful style of self or an *aesthetics of existence*. The analysis focuses on the triangular relationship between power relations, truth games and subjectivity. It is a bold and imaginative proposal for ethics in late modernity.

Taylor responds to this approach with an appreciation of its creativity, but he begins to question why Foucault takes the extreme view of avoiding the good in his ethics of self. Furthermore, he brings a critique to Foucault’s view of freedom as an *ontology*. On Taylor’s view, Foucault’s self and his doctrine of aesthetic-freedom lack a relationship with the good; this makes the self vulnerable to amorality and nihilism. Foucault lacks the element of critique in his practices of the self. Taylor also notes that the heavy emphasis on aesthetics as an interpretative grid on the self has the potential to lead to narcissism and even violence, or to loss of the self, and

loss of relationship with the Other. The key issue that he raises for Foucault's view of freedom is its lack of *situatedness*, the lack of definition of the context and the content of freedom. Taylor offers a moral horizon of the good as an alternative with its own limitations.

The three-way dialogue is picked up late in the thesis by three trinitarian theologians, Long, Schwöbel and McFadyen, responding to Foucault, and yet their contribution is mediated through Taylor's critical dialogue and follows his suggestion of the merits of a *transcendent turn* towards Judeo-Christian *agape* love. In its own way, it adds to the contextualization of the self and definition of freedom; it also offers a response to the crisis of affirmation that emerges in the Foucault-Taylor dialogue. This view articulates a constitution of the moral self from within

a paradigm of trinitarian *goodness-freedom*, which suggests a trajectory of a *communion of love* where the self discerns the possibility of complementary relationships.

The three paradigms explored in the thesis involve firstly an analysis of the character of the *Post-Romantic turn* in Foucault's self, secondly a critical engagement with Taylor's idea of the moral horizon, and finally into creative dialogue with the plausibility structure of *trinitarian goodness-freedom*. The thesis writer concludes with three propositions for a *redeemed freedom* (a contrast to Foucault's autonomous freedom) which revisits the interpretation of the moral self from within a horizon of fecund and significant relationships to the good, the neighbour and trinitarian divine goodness.