

Towards an Ecotheology from the Oriental Christian Perspective

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Recently with the election of V.S. Achuthanandan as the new Chief Minister of Kerala there was a 10 page feature in the *Malayalam* weekly entitled: Will V.S. administration redeem - Forests, Backwaters and Rivers? Kerala was always in the forefront fighting for the preservation of ecology. From Silent Valley to Plachimada we saw people engaged in the fight to protect nature. Today, God's own paradise, is busy discussing the problems of pollution in the environment, air and river; deforestation, stone Quarry, sand mining and earth movers; water scarcity, use of pesticides and chemicals in agriculture and so on.

Where does the Church stand in these struggles? The Church was often admired for its contributions in the fields of education, health, development, social justice etc. Christian theology was inspirational for such works. At the same time how far does Christian theology inspire us to work for the care of the earth? In this paper, I try to look at Malankara Liturgy and the Syrian tradition in general to see how ecological concerns are important in our Christian life.

1. The Ecological Spirituality of the Malankara Church

The cosmic dimension of Christian life is an important characteristic of the sacramental and liturgical prayers of the Malankara Catholic Church. The Syrian and Indian roots contributed a lot in keeping this cosmic dimension. We shall see some examples that clearly manifest the cosmic

dimension of our Christian life.

a. Church Construction and other Symbols

The very building of the churches facing the east symbolically shows the cosmic dimension. The rising Sun from the east is dear to both the Syrians and to the Indians. The Church which is divided into five parts also shows the cosmic reality. Here the sanctuary is depicted as heaven and the place where the faithful stand depicts the earth. The prayers offered in the earth are prayers for the whole world. The Church symbolizing heaven on earth is also an important theme in this context.

Another important symbol is seen in the tri-colour used for *Virikootom* and *Chithola*. While the red colour represents the cosmos, the green represents the green earth, and the white represents the Church. Together it shows that the celebrations in the Church are celebrations in the world and for the whole world.

Incensing is another important symbol that represents the eco-spirituality. The very thurible symbolizes the cosmos. The lower part symbolizes the earth and the upper part represents heaven. The burning charcoal in the lower part points to the sinful realities of the world. The incense that goes upward are the prayers of the sinners to God.

Sleeba aghosham is another important liturgical service which shows the cosmic dimension of our liturgy. It is conducted on all important feast days. The celebrant blesses all four corners of the cosmos twice (totally it could also be said as eight directions -*ashta dikku*). Through these blessings the whole creation is blessed.

Raza (church procession) conducted with the parish feast is considered as blessing and sanctifying the people and the field.

b. Ecological Themes in the Eucharistic Celebration

The celebrant at the beginning of the Eucharist makes a

silent prayer: "Grant us, Lord God, who are merciful and lover of men, that with understanding and reverence and the beauty of spiritual order we may stand before you in purity and holiness and serve you as the Lord and *Creator*, to whom worship is due from all..."¹ It clearly asserts that the celebrant offers the Eucharist with the whole creation to the Creator.

While saying the prayer of *ethro* at the first service of *thooyobo*, the celebrant prays "May the fragrance of our prayers be always well-pleasing to you and let the savour of this incense show forth your graciousness towards us. By your mercy reconcile your *creation* with yourself..."²

In the *sedro* prayer at the second service of *thuyobo* the celebrant says: "We worship and praise and glorify you, *creator of the world and maker of all creatures*, blessed shoot which budded and came up in the dry ground of Mary and *filled the whole creation* with the sweet scent of your beauty and drove away the foul smell of godlessness from every quarter by your glorious doctrine."³ It is adoration of the whole creation before the Creator. It also acknowledges God's presence in the Creation.

Now coming to the anaphora,⁴ the celebrant makes an introductory prayer before the *sanctus* saying: "Whom the heavens praise and all the hosts thereof, corporeal and incorporeal; the sun, the moon and all the stars, the earth and the seas, and all that of them are, the Church of the first born, whose names are written in the heavenly Jerusalem; angels and archangels ... fly one to another proclaiming His holiness, crying aloud His praise with unceasing voices saying, Holy, holy, holy."⁵ Here the human beings join the angels along with the rest of creation in praising God.

Similarly in the introductory prayer before the Lord's prayer the celebrant says: "O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who are blessed by the Cherubim, and glorified by the Seraphim, and extolled by thousands of thousands and myriads of hosts rational and holy, You, O

Lord, who have vouchsafed to *sanctify and perfect the offerings and fruits offered to You* for a sweet-smelling savour, sanctify our bodies, our souls and our spirits, that with pure hearts and with faces unashamed we may call upon You, O God."⁶

At the time of the elevation the priest recites: "The one Holy Father be with us, *who fashioned the world* in his mercy. ... The one Holy Son be with us, who redeemed it by his precious passion. ... The one living Holy Spirit be with us, the perfecter and fulfiller of all that has been and that will be. Blessed be the name of the Lord from age to age and for ever."⁷

Another prayer which is often said at the time of fraction expresses the ecological concerns of the Malankara Church. The celebrant silently says: "...And he was pierced in His side with a spear and there flowed out blood and water, a propiation for the *whole world* and His body was stained therewith. For the sins of the whole the Son died on the Cross. And His soul came and was united to His Body, and he turned us from an evil conversation to the good, and by His blood he reconciled and united and knit Heavenly things with the things of Earth, and the peoples with the peoples and the soul with the bodies. ..."⁸ The redemption of the whole creation and reconciliation between Creator and creation is emphasized here.

We see similar prayers in some of the alternative *Prumion-Sedros*. For example, in one *sedro* we pray, "Lord, light from light, who illumines the whole of creation ..."⁹ In another *sedro*, the celebrant prays: "Standing before burning like place I beg for the remission of sin from all mankind and liberation for all creation."¹⁰ There is another one where Jesus is addressed as "God who creates and coordinates everything, and the saving breath of all creation..."¹¹ He is also qualified as one who has become the sacrifice on his own for the life and salvation of all creation.¹² In another *sedro* he is said to have broken the fences of enmity and united heaven and earth.¹³ In one *prumion* the celebrant says, "though you don't need any

praise from the creation, they are praising you..."¹⁴ In one *sedro* the celebrant prays to bless all seasons of the year.¹⁵ Another *prumion* reads through self-sacrifice you have given remission of sin to the whole world.¹⁶

Some of the prayers of the community too are worth mentioning. For example, immediately after the Eucharistic procession the faithful sing or pray: "All the world shall bow down and worship you and every tongue shall confess your name. You are the resurrection of the dead and the blessed hope of those in the grave. ..." ¹⁷

One will come across ecological themes in other liturgical celebrations too. The Christmas liturgy,¹⁸ liturgy on the day of *Denaha* (Baptism of Jesus)¹⁹ are some examples of this.

c. Christian Practices

Certain practices of the Saint Thomas Christians are also important in this regard. Inspired by the Dravidic culture of Kerala, the Christians in Kerala have adopted many local customs that helped them to live in harmony with nature. Ritual practices from birth rites to death rites are good examples of this.

The ascetical tradition of the Syrians in the Middle-East and in Kerala always emphasized life in harmony with nature.²⁰ The early *dayaras* started in Kerala all gave due emphasis to its natural settings. The life of the monks in the *dayara* tradition was basically contemplative. Bethany Ashram founded by Mar Ivanios in 1919 at Mundanmala also stressed the importance of our life in nature. The saffron colour they adopted and the simple life adopted were all important in this line. Both the *dayaras* and ashrams were centres of study, prayer and worship. The *rhythm* of nature was the *rhythm* of the monks.

2. Participation in the Eschaton

The aforesaid prayers and the Christian life are to be

understood in the background of our Christian faith. It is rooted in the experience of redemption. The redemption reinstates human beings from the fallen state into the state of primordial paradise. Hence our prayers and worship are not something of this world. Instead, they carry us to the heavenly world. There we pray and worship the Creator and redeemer with other angelic beings. In other words, the prayers and worship help the Christians to participate in the *eschaton*. This is at the core of the sacramental celebrations in the Syrian tradition. It is mainly seen in the sacramental understanding of Baptism and the Eucharist.

a. Baptism

Baptism is understood as the gateway for Christians to be restored to the original nature of humanity in Creation. It is the re-entry for each individual Christian into Paradise. It effects "the transformation, by means of the Holy Spirit, of fallen creation into its pristine paradisiacal state."²¹ It is important to note that re-entry here does not mean re-entry into the Paradise of the beginning, but into the eschatological paradise. Hence, the full reality of re-entry into paradise "will only be experienced at the resurrection."²²

The baptismal anointing also symbolizes the restoration of the *imago dei*.²³ Furthermore, the anointing of the baptismal service speaks of human beings' entry into the royal priesthood.²⁴ The Syrian tradition connects anointing with the triad: king, prophet and priest. For example, when referring to anointing Aphrahat states: "Christians are perfected as priests, kings and prophets."²⁵ The baptismal anointing is based on the anointing of Christ at His Baptism.²⁶ Thus, Ephrem notes that "The Spirit who rested on him at his baptism testified that he was the shepherd [that is king, following Old Testament usage], and that he had received the roles of prophet and priest through John."²⁷

The renunciation of this world in the Baptismal liturgy is also very important. God has created two worlds: the earthly world in which you live and the other world. The first denotes the world that represents the fallen aspects of our human nature. Negatively it means, "a way of life that is concerned only with the body, and a mentality which is concerned only with the flesh." This is the world that we reject in Baptism. We however accept the other world that is really our 'ancestral home.' It "is the 'new world' of the resurrection life, which can occasionally be anticipated in this world by the saints who make real the potential for a life of holiness which all are given at baptism." As we noted earlier it is not "a return to the primordial paradise of the pre-fall state, but to the eschatological paradise, the attainment of which would have been the initial intention of God when he created Adam and Eve."²⁸

b. The Eucharist

The Eucharist also helps one to enter into the eschatological paradise. It is a passage from this world to the other world. In the Eucharistic celebration here in this world, we are celebrating the joy and happiness of the other world. In this sense the Eucharist continues the baptismal themes of 'entry into Paradise' and 'new creation.'²⁹

It is also important to note that the Eucharist is pictured as food to be used in our passage to the *eschaton*. It is for this reason that the Eucharist is called 'life giving bread.' It is also called the 'medicine of life.'³⁰ These two images also point to our participation in the *eschaton*.

Another important theme is the use of things from the nature for the Eucharist. It is the elements from Creation - the bread and wine - that are transformed into the saving Body and Blood of Christ.³¹ The material things, like bread and wine that are used in the Eucharist are important not only because they are a symbol of the sacrament, but because of their importance for nourishment of the body.³²

The Eucharistic sacrifice is described as a 'sacrifice of

praise.' Ephrem often points out that the created world is continually urging man on to the praise of the Creator.³³ Praise of God is also seen essentially as a gift from God. It expresses Creation's essential relation to the Creator.³⁴ The Eucharistic service in its strict sense is to praise God.³⁵

In short, the sacrament of Baptism and the Eucharist give the Christians a new life. The newness of this life helps them to look at and understand things differently. A baptized person and a person who is in communion with God in the Eucharist becomes totally a new person. He becomes a divine person. It gives a new outlook on life. This helps them to look at things as Adam saw things in the pre-fallen stage.

3. The Immanence of God

The paradise experience helps human beings to see the transcendent God, who is immanent in this world. It is for this reason that Saint Ephrem considers the world as a source of revelation along with the holy Gospel.³⁶

Saint Ephrem makes the distinction between Creator and creation and argues that there is an ontological chasm between the two. He also notes that it is difficult for human beings to know God and to cross this ontological chasm. At the same time, he asserts that, while the transcendent Creator is unknowable to his creation, He is immanent in the world. Ephrem presents this 'hidden' (*kasyuta*) but 'revealed' (*galyata*) experience of God from two different perspectives: God's actual being (*ituta*) and God's self-revelation. God's actual being can only be experienced in a hidden and subjective manner. At the same time human beings can experience God from His self-revelation manifested in Scripture and Nature. This vision of Ephrem points to the revelation of God through the things of the world.³⁷ Aphrahat, who enters into the Trinitarian God through a cosmic vision, also says that one can come to know God through the things of the world.

It is an important theme in the thought of Saint

Dionysius the Areopagite.³⁸ Dionysius regards creation as a theophany, the manifestation of God.³⁹ "From the doctrine that creation is theophany, it follows that the entire cosmos is a symbol of God in the realist sense of 'symbol.'"⁴⁰ We see similar things in Gregory of Nyssa, when he makes the distinction between the *ousia* and *energia*⁴¹ and Maximus the Confessor who understands God in the creation by making the distinction between *logos* and *logoi*.⁴² A modern interpretation is seen in the writings of the sophiology school of Russia, which proposed *Sophia* as the universal substance unifying Father, Son and the Holy Spirit of the Trinity. By presenting this *Sophia* as operative in God's ongoing act of Creation, Soloviev and his followers suggested God who is actively present in creation.⁴³

All these theories proposed by the Fathers speak of God who is operating in the Creation. We understand God who is operative in creation through the things in the world because the whole creation is God's gift to us. Everything is coming from God and what He created was good. This we read: 'And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good' (Gen. 1:31). While understanding God through the things of the earth we acknowledge that there are God's gift to us.

4. Role of Human Beings

What is the role of human being in creation? Ephrem has presented the superiority of human beings over Creation based on the creation of human beings in the image of God. For Ephrem, the verse "to have dominion over animal world" in Gen 1: 26, 28 immediately follows "the creation of humanity in the image of God." In particular verse 26 expresses the term 'dominion' as "a consequence of humanity's being created in God's image."⁴⁴

This means that 'to have dominion' and the Creation of human being in 'the image of God' are the two determining verses explaining the Syrian anthropology in

human relation to God and the world. According to the Syriac tradition the word 'dominion' is to be understood in terms of 'authority.' The Syriac word *shultana* used for 'dominion' implies authority (Mk. 1: 22, 27; 11: 28), which is delegated to human beings.

This authority is to be exercised with one's personal freedom (free will) to act (1Cor 8-9).⁴⁵ The authority given to human beings is to be rightly exercised. If not, instead of love and harmony it instills hatred and sows disharmony.⁴⁶ Hence, the uniqueness of human beings is not only in the authority received, but rather in their free will.⁴⁷ It is free will that makes human beings remain as the image of God. This freedom of will is "the capacity to make free decisions that constitutes the likeness to God."⁴⁸

The right use of free will is essentially one of wonder (*tehra*)⁴⁹ and gratitude. It comes from the human being's ability to contemplate the mysteries. The contemplation of the mysteries helps them to see and understand the image of God instilled in Creation.⁵⁰ The contemplation of mysteries does not mean running away from the earthly realities. Rather it is for the glorification of God and to enter into the highest paradise, the House of God.⁵¹

Whereas the wrong use of free will is the result of greed and arrogance. Its failure ie., the misuse of free will leads to the destruction of the cosmic harmony and order.⁵² The Fall, which is the result of the human misuse of freewill, imposed the loss of harmony between humanity and the animal world. It has a deeper impact on the relation to creation.⁵³ At the same time, the potential for recovery is always present. It is our responsibility to put this potential into practice.

In this context it is also important to note how the 'image of God' is understood in the Syrian tradition. Unlike the Alexandrians who interpreted 'image' (Hebrew *selem*) in terms of 'likeness' (*dmūt*) to God, as spiritual and intellectual qualities,⁵⁴ the Syrians, without denying the human being's analogical likeness to God, interpreted it in

the perspective of its function. For them, image, in Genesis 1:26, is an implicit metaphor of kingship and the authority to rule explains the function of the image.⁵⁵ It is true that in the creation narrative one will not find any names and metaphors picturing God as a King. At the same time as Robert Murray has observed God's act of creation that are qualified with wisdom, power and righteousness are attributes of 'kingship.' Like the Near East tradition, which associates God with the ancient concept of "kingship," the Old Testament ascribes royal images to God.⁵⁶ Human beings created in the image of God are to govern all other creatures with responsibility.⁵⁷ Thus in the Syrian tradition to 'have dominion' and 'subdue' have been pictured, "God's human creature as his responsible viceroy."

This means that the Syrian tradition understands that the human being is God's representative in creation. It is their responsibility to handle things of the earth with reverence. They have the authority and freedom to use. At the same time this authority shall be used with care. A king will be appreciated only if he rules the country with justice and mercy. Similarly it is the duty of the faithful to use the things of the earth as God has created and entrusted them to the care of human beings.

5. Conclusion

Our discussion on the ecological concerns based on the liturgical and spiritual life of the Malankara Church and the Syrian tradition reminds us of our role and responsibility in the world. Three things seem to be very important here:

First of all, we have to think of an eco-spirituality. As we have seen, the liturgical and sacramental celebrations of the Malankara Church generally assert that God is the redeemer not only of human beings but also of all creation. Moreover, the whole creation joins with us in our praise and worship. The interrelationship of human beings with the whole of creation is very much stressed here. These factors point to the need of harmonious relations with the

whole creation. This harmonious relation stressed in the liturgical and spiritual life of the Church demands us to develop an eco-spirituality, which enables us to respect the material things in the world.

Secondly, everything in the creation reveals God's presence. At the same time, seeing God in nature need not lead one to worship God in the nature. Conversely, through the things of the world we see and understand God who is walking with us in history. But the problem is: Looking at the ecologically damaged or spoiled earth can we say now that God's creation is 'good'? The polluted air we smell and the polluted water we drink, the poisonous fruits of the earth we eat, the changing rhythm of weather are speaking to us of a God who is weakened day after day.

Finally, the Syrian tradition says that we the human beings are God's representatives in creation. We have a God-given responsibility to care for the earth. The baptismal anointing and our participation in the Eucharist have made us members in the heavenly mysteries. It endowed us with the roles of priests, prophets and kings. As priests it is our responsibility to sing cosmic rhythms. As prophets we have a responsibility to speak against all sorts of exploitation of nature. And as Kings it is our duty to preserve the whole creation.

In the pursuit of development we are engaged with the projects of changing the face of the earth. And in our eagerness to give new shape to the earth, we spoil the beauty of the earth. But as God's representatives how do we participate in the ongoing growth of the Creation?

Endnotes

- ¹ *The Order of the Holy Qurbono*, Tr. C. A. Abraham, Trivandrum, 1986, p. 1.
- ² *Holy Qurbono*, p. 5.
- ³ *Holy Qurbono*, p. 11.
- ⁴ Here I have taken only the *anaphora* of Saint James. In other *anaphoras* too one may come across the same theme.

- ⁵ *Holy Qurbono*, p. 28.
- ⁶ *Holy Qurbono*, p. 37-38.
- ⁷ *Holy Qurbono*, p. 39.
- ⁸ *Holy Qurbono*, p. 36.
- ⁹ *Holy Qurbono* (Malayalam), Trivandrum, 2001, p. 276.
- ¹⁰ *Holy Qurbono*, Mal. p. 287.
- ¹¹ *Holy Qurbono*, Mal. p. 288.
- ¹² *Holy Qurbono*, Mal. p. 291.
- ¹³ *Holy Qurbono*, Mal. p. 301.
- ¹⁴ *Holy Qurbono*, Mal. p. 302.
- ¹⁵ *Holy Qurbono*, Mal. p. 307.
- ¹⁶ *Holy Qurbono*, Mal. p. 309.
- ¹⁷ *Holy Qurbono and Daily Prayers (Ordinary)*, Kottayam, 2003, p. 52.
- ¹⁸ Mathai Kadavil, "Christmas: Redemption of Creation," *VMV* 2:6 (2002), p. 7-8.
- ¹⁹ Joseph Kannamkulam, *Towards a Cosmic Spirituality of Harmony* (unpublished B Th dissertation submitted at BVP faculty in July, 2005).
- ²⁰ Mathai Kadavil, "Malankara Sabhyum Sanyasa Samskaravum," *Sanyasa Bhashyam*, Jose Mariadas ed., 2004, p. 86-109.
- ²¹ Sebastian Brock, "World and Sacrament in the Writings of the Syrian Fathers," *Sobornost* 6/10, 1974, p. 685-696.
- ²² Sebastian Brock, "The Priesthood of the Baptised: Some Syriac Perspectives," *Sobornost* 9: 2, 1987, p. 14-22, 18.
- ²³ *Hymnen de Virginitate* 5: 8. 5-6; 7: 5-7; 7: 7. 1-2.
- ²⁴ Sebastian Brock, "The Priesthood of the Baptised: Some Syriac Perspectives," p. 15.
- ²⁵ Brock also notes that "The reference to prophets does not occur in 1 Peter, [which is the central biblical verse which speaks of the priesthood of all the baptized] but the triad of king, priest and prophet goes back to ancient Israelite practice, where not only kings and priests were anointed, but also prophets (see 1 Kings 19: 16)." Sebastian Brock, "The Priesthood of the Baptised: Some Syriac Perspectives," p. 16.
- ²⁶ Sebastian Brock, "The Priesthood of the Baptised: Some Syriac Perspectives," p. 16.
- ²⁷ *Commentary on the Diatessaron* 4: 3. Sebastian Brock, "The Priesthood of the Baptised: Some Syriac Perspectives," 16. In

- Jewish tradition, also Adam in Paradise was understood both a king and priest. *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ Sebastian Brock, "Humanity and the Natural World in the Syriac Tradition," *Sobornost* 12/12, 1990, p. 131-142.
- ²⁹ Sebastian Brock, "World and Sacrament in the Writings of the Syrian Fathers," p.688-689. See *De Azymis*, , 17.9f.; *Hymnen de Fide* 10.9, 17.
- ³⁰ See Sebastian Brock, *Luminous Eye*, p. 99-103.
- ³¹ Sebastian Brock, "World and Sacrament in the Writings of the Syrian Fathers," p. 693.
- ³² *Hymnen de Virginitate* 16: 2, 4, 5; 31: 13-14.
- ³³ *Hymnen de Virginitate* 33: 7-8.
- ³⁴ *Hymnen de Fide* 14. 1-5.
- ³⁵ Praise and thanksgiving is repeatedly present in the Eucharistic liturgies. For example in the Eucharist according to the Malankara rite at least 45 times conclude the prayers saying: "We offer praise and thanksgiving to You, to your only Son and your Holy Spirit for even and even Amen." See John Berchmans, "The Transforming Doxology," *Visal Malankara Voice* 3:1 (2003) 24.
- ³⁶ It is important to note that in the Syrian tradition – in Saint Ephrem in particular – Scripture and Nature are considered to be two sources of revelation. See, for example, Ephrem, *Hymns on Earth* 35.1; *Hymns against Heresies* 28.11-12.
- ³⁷ Mathai Kadavil, *The World as Sacrament: Sacramentality of Creation from the Perspectives of Leonardo Boff, Alexander Schmemmann and Saint Ephrem*, Leuven: Peeters, 2005, p. 234-235.
- ³⁸ Dionysios the Areopagite is one among the prime exponents of the Orthodox sacramental vision of reality. Eric Justin David Perl, "Symbol, Sacrament, and Hierarchy in Saint Dionysios the Areopagite," *GOTR* 39:3-4, 1994, p. 311-356, 321.
- ³⁹ Eric Justin David Perl, "Symbol, Sacrament, and Hierarchy in Saint Dionysios the Areopagite," p. 313.
- ⁴⁰ Eric Justin David Perl, "Symbol, Sacrament, and Hierarchy in Saint Dionysios the Areopagite," p. 320.
- ⁴¹ Paulos Gregorios, *The Human Presence: An Orthodox View of Nature*, Geneva: WCC, 1978, p. 54-71.
- ⁴² Paulos Gregorios, *The Human Presence: An Orthodox View of Nature*, p. 72-58.
- ⁴³ Mathai Kadavil, "Some Recent Trends on the Sacramentality of

- Creation in Eastern-Oriental Christian Traditions," *Theology and Conversation: Towards a Relational Theology*, J. Haers & P. De Mey eds., Leuven: University Press, 2003, 323-335.
- ⁴⁴ Sebastian Brock, "Humanity and the Natural World in the Syriac Tradition," p. 32.
- ⁴⁵ Robert Murray, "The Image of God: Delegated and Responsible Authority," *Priests & People* 14: 2, 2000, p. 49-54.
- ⁴⁶ Sebastian Brock, "Humanity and the Natural World in the Syriac Tradition," p. 135.
- ⁴⁷ Mathai Kadavil, "World as Sacrament: Ethical and Liturgical Response to Creation in Saint Ephrem," *Questions Liturgiques* 84, 2003, 5-22, 9.
- ⁴⁸ N. El-Khoury, "Anthropological Concepts of the School of Antioch," p. 1363.
- ⁴⁹ Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, The Spiritual world Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, Kalamazoo, 1992, p. 68.
- ⁵⁰ David D. Bundy, "Language and Knowledge of God in Ephrem Syrus," *The Patristic and Byzantine Review*, 1986, p. 91-103.
- ⁵¹ N. El-Khoury, "Anthropological Concepts of the School of Antioch," *Studia Patristica*, 1982, p.1359-1365. Mathai Kadavil, "World as Sacrament: Ethical and Liturgical Response to Creation in Saint Ephrem," p. 10.
- ⁵² *Hymnen contra Haereses* 28: 9. Ephrem expresses this already in his treatise on Paradise and the Fall. The same theme is expressed also in *Commentary on Genesis* II: 31. See also his biblical narrative of *Commentary on Genesis* 3: 18.
- ⁵³ For example it is shown through the example of Jezebel. *Hymnen de Virginitate* 7: 3.
- ⁵⁴ It is carried over in the western tradition. In Particular, in the Augustinian tradition, the 'image' defines human nature by spirituality and intellect, and viewed the rest of Creation as mere resources for human use by the power of their spiritual superiority. Robert Murray, "The Image of God: Delegated and Responsible Authority," p. 50.
- ⁵⁵ Robert Murray, "The Image of God: Delegated and Responsible Authority," *Priests & People* 14: 2, 2000, p. 49-54, 50.
- ⁵⁶ Robert Murray, "The Image of God: Delegated and Responsible Authority," p. 52.
- ⁵⁷ Robert Murray, "The Image of God: Delegated and Responsible Authority," 52. Based on this, Murray criticises some of the recent efforts to attribute the metaphor of 'stewardship' to the human being, and argues to use the biblical metaphor "royal."