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**Reading Romans from an Asian Perspective**

***What is an Asian Perspective? Key Asian Voices***

**Topic:** Hermeneutics

**Subject:** What is an Asian perspective of reading Romans?

**Complement:** It takes into account Asian values

**Purpose:** The listeners will

# Introduction

### Interest: We all look at the world differently.

### Need: How do you look at the world?

### Subject: What is an Asian perspective of reading Romans?

### Background: Romans is a western book.

# I. Asian Voices

## Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Signifying Monkey,* insults Asian theologians as if they cannot write anything of value.

## Tat-Siong Benny Liew

## Sunand Sumithra

## King-Kok Cheung, *Words Matter*, notes that Asian writers have value and promotes them in the USA.

## Bong Rin Ro divides Asian theology into four categories:

### Syncretism combines the Bible with Buddha, Krishna, etc. (e.g., Korean creation myths merged with Genesis 1)

### Accommodation takes prevailing customs and puts them into Christianity (e.g., Thai *darma “logos”* read into John 1, water buffalo theology takes the good things in Buddhism and incorporates them into Christianity).

### Situational Theology is a form of Liberation Theology according to the situation (e.g., Palm Tree Theology in Nepal, *Pain of God Theology* by Japanese Kazoh Kitamori says God suffers with his people but lacks understanding of God’s omnipotence)

### Biblically Oriented Theology takes the problems of Asian society, brings them back to the Scripture and looks for a solution.

## Sri Ramakrishna

## Klaus Klostermaier

# II. Three Models of Asian Theology

## Linear versus Circular: This classical model says that western thinking is linear while Asian thinking is circular

### “The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you” (Rom. 8:11).

### The West is satisfied with stating what is not true. The East wants to know what is true as well.

## Colonial versus Post-Colonial

### “Everyone must submit himself to the *true* governing authority, for there is no authority but God. The authorities that truly exist have been established by God” (Joseph Sarma).

### The above statement will not recognize the Indian PM since he believes that he is not a “true” authority.

## Cultural Anthropological Perspective

### Jesus shows admiration for the shrewd manager who reduced his master’s demands to gain himself friends before being fired (Luke 16:1-9).

### This attempt to reduce his master’s demands makes him look good in town as he doesn’t charge interest, thus assuring that he won’t be fired when he makes the master look good.

# III. What is an Asian Perspective?

## Definition: “An Asian *biblical* hermeneutics is biblical hermeneutics done by Asians (or scholars who reside in Asia) with the explicit goal of helping to address issues confronting Asian communities by understanding the Bible from Asian perspectives” —Spurgeon’s definition

## Eternal Life

### Andrew asked a Indian man on a long train ride if he wanted eternal life, to which he replied, “Why would I *want* eternal life? I have been trying to *get rid of* eternal life! I have 28 more incarnations to go!” Three hours later he finally figure out how to answer him, so Andrew asked, “Would you like to *get rid of* eternal life?” The man answered, “Are you trying to get me to commit suicide?”

### We need to communicate the gospel in a culturally appropriate manner.

## Shame

### Rome had over 30,000 slaves who were so ashamed that they could not look up. They had poor health, no possessions, and lived in shame. There were more of them than free men! More than half of the names in Romans 16 are slave names. Some names mean “Miss Candy” (a low status prostitute).

### DTS conducted an experiment while Andrew was a PhD student. They used makeup on a fellow student to make him look like a bum and placed him outside the worship hall. The students who had just heard a sermon on the Good Samaritan had three reactions: (1) some ignored him by walking on the other side of the hall, (2) some walked right by him, and (3) some tossed him a penny. Their reactions were caught on film.

### How many of you want to be a millionaire? Claudius kicked out all the Judeans (Jews) in AD 49, so the church leadership was turned over to Gentiles. Claudius died in AD 54 and the Jews returned, but they did not have the same status that they had previously since they had lost their property and status.

## Righteousness

### God reveals his righteousness through the gospel (Rom. 1:17).

### Ungodliness, in Paul’s thinking, was not a *lack* of God in their life (a western idea), but their dedication to their god through great sacrifice, pilgrimages, idolatry, etc. Due to this, the true God had handed them over.

### Slaves were often “handed over” (*paradidomi*) from slave owner to slave owner, except by their gods. That is why Rachel took her household gods.

## Homosexuality

### In the West, if something is legal, then it is deemed moral. Therefore, homosexuals fight to make their sin legal in the USA and other western countries.

### Lori’s homosexual brother’s boyfriend was surprised that Andrew and Lori would eat with them. “I thought you were Christian missionaries,” he said with surprise at the end of the meal. “Yes, we are,” Lori responded. “We don’t approve of what you do, but we love my brother Ron.”

### Homosexuality in Paul’s day was popular as older males tricked young men into homosexuality. Eventually these men began to like this state as it did not involve all the responsibilities of marriage.

### Paul took something that is cruel in a culture and uses this abusive relationship of God handing people over.

### This is probably not the best passage to use to show God’s hatred of homosexuality, as it depicts God’s hatred of man’s abuse of other men. There are better passages to use to show God’s hatred of this sin.

# Conclusion

### An Asian perspective of reading Romans takes into account its eastern values (Main Idea).

### Main Points

### Exhortation/Application