

DO THE GOSPEL AND THE CROSS ADDRESS SHAME?

Introduction

Plato wrote of "that most comely, that divine, fear which has received the name of modesty and the sense of shame,"¹ and Confucius once said, "A sense of shame is the beginning of righteousness."² Shame and honour were significant factors in the different Old Testament cultures³ and remained critical in Graeco-Roman society throughout New Testament times.⁴ Both are significant in the Middle⁵/Far East⁶ and in a number of other societies⁷ today. Perhaps surprisingly, shame (and narcissism)⁸ have become dominating issues in Western psychology.⁹

Western society was, until recently, considered 'guilt-oriented'.¹⁰ Indeed, early studies distinguished between 'shame-based' cultures, "which rely principally on shame as an external sanction for assuring conformity to the cultural norms;"¹¹ and 'guilt-oriented' societies, which rely on "a sense of guilt or 'conscience' as an internal sanction."¹² Western, 'guilt-oriented' cultures were seen as "capable of progressive change, particularly of industrialisation, possessed of absolute moral standards ... effectively reinforced by a religious 'conscience', and as dedicated to the welfare and dignity of the individual."¹³ Non-Western, 'shame-based' cultures were considered to be "static, industrially backward, without absolute moral standards, and dominated by 'crowd psychology'."¹⁴

These assumptions have faced strong challenges. Scholars have shown that such distinctions cannot be sustained,¹⁵ and have demonstrated the importance of shame¹⁶ and the 'shame-affect',¹⁷ noting their increasing significance in Western society.¹⁸

Despite significant biblical material relating to 'shame', the Church, particularly in the West, focused almost exclusively on 'guilt'.¹⁹ Theologies were developed addressing people's internal

1 Plato:p51[Book II (Steph.671)].

2 quoted by Wong:p63.

3 Albers:p39-48,63ff,73-9; Bechtel:p47ff; deSilva:p433ff; Jantzen:p28f; Matthews/Benjamin:p11f; Olyan:pp201ff; Schneider:1977:p113f; Schneider:1987:p198; Stockitt:p113ff; Wells:p164.

4 Albers:p35f,104-5; Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p119ff,165ff; Bailey:"Through...":1983:p132; Neyrey:p113-37; Schneider:1977:p110ff,114ff,119; Schneider:1987:p198f; Stockitt:p114ff; Wells:p172-7; Wurmser:p65f,87f.

5 Burnett:p112; Musk:p156ff; Thomas:p284ff; Wells:p166; Wong:p60.

6 Burnett:p99; You:p57ff; Wells:p166.

7 Puritan Americans - Capps:1993:p73f; Native Americans - Piers/Singer:p63ff; Tuareg Men - Schneider:1977:p123ff.

8 Narcissism/shame are closely linked in psychology - Capps:1993:p7,33ff; Hutch:p344ff; Lewis:p95f; Kinston:p224ff; cf.Wells:p119(note).

9 Wells:p119(note).

10 Bechtel:p52; Capps:p72f; Moxnes:p62.

11 Piers/Singer:p59.

12 Piers/Singer:p59; cf.Hesselgrave:p429.

13 Piers/Singer:p59; cf.Schneider:1987:p196.

14 Piers/Singer:p59.

15 Bechtel:p51; Capps:1993:p72f; Hwa:p84ff; Piers/Singer:p60f,96ff;

16 Erikson:p226ff; Nietzsche:p54ff; Sartre:p221ff; Schneider:1977:pIX-XVIII; Schneider:1987:p197f; G.Taylor:p53-84; Wells:p119(note).

17 Nathanson:"A Timetable...":1987:p12ff; Nathanson:"Shaming...":1987:p255ff; Thompson:p312; Tomkins:p143ff; cf.Piers/Singer:p18.

18 Hutch:p347ff; Piers/Singer:p54f; Wells:p34f,99-110,119-130.

19 Schneider:1990:p1161; Tournier:p13f,Ch.5,13,14 (seems to regard *shame* as a subset of *guilt* – using guilt-language to interpret shame experiences, e.g., p118f); cf.Houselander:p44f - reads complex 'shame/guilt' (Gen.3) *only* as guilt; For the development of 'guilt' in the West, see Delumeau.

sense of guilt and accommodating their misdemeanours.²⁰ Despite some historical references,²¹ the Church noticed, only recently, the absence of an effective 'theology of shame',²² and began reflecting on pastoral implications.²³

This dissertation distinguishes between shame and guilt, identifies different facets of shame, highlights defence mechanisms, considers shame in different cultures, and reviews biblical material relating to shame. It shows that the gospel and, particularly, the atonement speak into experiences of shame. It demonstrates that Christians have a message of hope not only for the 'guilty' but also for the 'shamed', and highlights issues for pastoral ministry.

Shame and Guilt

Distinctions have been made between shame and guilt,²⁴ many are relatively simplistic and hence misleading.²⁵ Some suggest that shame is a response to external stimuli and that guilt is an internal sanction.²⁶ Others propose that shame requires an audience and that guilt does not.²⁷ In some cultures shame is a strong external sanction,²⁸ but if we want to develop a comprehensive understanding of shame we must acknowledge complex cultural differences:²⁹

"We cannot distinguish shame and guilt in terms of external and internal sanctions respectively, for there are 'inner' forms of shame paralleling almost exactly the forms of guilt. Nor can we save the internal-external criterion by saying that shame requires an audience and guilt does not, or that guilt involves a re-enactment of a childhood response and shame does not, for these additional criteria will only serve to differentiate among the forms of shame and among the forms of guilt but not to distinguish shame from guilt."³⁰

Perhaps the clearest distinction is that 'guilt' is about *doing* and 'shame' is about *being*.³¹ So, "guilt calls for forgiveness; ... shame, for acceptance or self-acceptance;"³² "guilt limits action, especially action ... harmful to another; while shame guards the boundaries of the self;"³³ guilt opposes innocence, shame opposes honour.³⁴ Notwithstanding such aphorisms detailed consideration of the differences between shame and guilt is necessary.

Early psychologists "considered shame a comparatively insignificant emotion or anxiety, more or less a result of conflicts over sexual strivings, usually in the particular form of exhibitionism."³⁵ We now accept that:

20 Albers:p17ff; McKenzie:p178; cf.Collins:p135-42.

21 e.g.,Bunyan:p107ff.

22 Albers:p3ff; Bonhoeffer:p145-150; Clapp:p26ff; Fowler:p816ff; Stockitt:p111-9.

23 Albers:Ch.5; Capps:1983:p89ff; cf.Thompson:p311ff.

24 Albers:p17-27; Bechtel:p48ff; Lewis:p107-13; G.Taylor:p131; Wells:p119(note); Wurmser:p85f; You:p57f.

25 G.Taylor:p59.

26 Stockitt:p112; You:p57f (commenting on others).

27 Sartre:p222; cf.G.Taylor:p59.

28 Musk:p161; Wong:p18.

29 Wurmser:p87f.

30 Piers/Singer:p68f.

31 Albers:p23; cf.Wells:p130.

32 Wells:p131; cf.G.Taylor:p90.

33 Nathanson:"A Timetable...":1987:p46; cf.Wurmser:p85.

34 Wells:p131.

35 Piers/Singer:p23; cf.p19-21 for views of Freud, Nunberg, Fenichel, and Reider.

"Shame and guilt often co-occur, and they hold certain elements in common. Due to these shared features, shifts between the states occur rapidly and conceptual boundaries between the feeling-categories are difficult to maintain. Shame and guilt are most similar and most easily confused when moral shame is the type in question. Shame over ineffectiveness (as opposed to shame over immorality) generally is well distinguished from guilt."³⁶

Modern psychologists distinguish 'shame' from 'guilt' developmentally; phenomenologically; physiologically; psychoanalytically; and through other identifying features.³⁷

Developmental issues were first identified by Erikson, who showed that shame occurs earlier in childhood,³⁸ when a child is establishing its own autonomy. Shame is therefore the more basic emotion which is "insufficiently studied, because in our civilisation it is so early and easily absorbed by guilt."³⁹

Phenomenological issues include different worlds of experience, as illustrated in Appendix 3. Shame is intimately connected with visibility. Sartre comments: "Shame ... is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging."⁴⁰ "The shame response is focused on the eyes and in turn the face. Thus we talk of being 'shamefaced', of 'hiding my face in shame, ... or 'I couldn't bear to look him in the eyes'."⁴¹ "Whereas guilt may be characterised phenomenologically as a behavioural violation of one's value system, shame is an ontological violation of one's essentiality or identity as a person."⁴² "Shame is a reaction to the failure to live up to one's own self-ideals. We are disappointed in ourselves. We have once again let ourselves down."⁴³ "Shame forces us to 'see' ourselves. It makes us conscious of ourselves ... the self that shame reveals to us is one we would prefer not to see. ... Besides the feeling of exposure there is the sense that the whole experience is inappropriate or incongruous. The experience of shame feels out of place, as though an element of absurdity has been injected into a normal and ordinary state of affairs."⁴⁴

Physiological and phenomenological differences are highlighted by Lewis:

"Shame ... has a special affinity for stirring autonomic reactions, including blushing, sweating, and increased heart rate. Shame usually involves more bodily awareness than guilt, as well as visual and verbal imaging of the self from the other's point of view. Shame is ... a more acutely painful experience than guilt. Because the self is involved in imagery of itself in relation to others, it can appear as if shame originates 'out there', whereas guilt appears to originate 'within'. This characteristic makes shame appear to be a more primitive or irrational reaction than guilt. Both states, however, involve the self in trying to maintain affectional ties to significant others. Shame is the experience of losing self-esteem in one's own and others' eyes. It is the experience of failure. Guilt is the experience of injuring others or things and requires

36 Albers:p24 (quoting Miller;"*The Shame Experience*";Analytic Press,Hillsdale,Minnesota,1985;p140).

37 Schneider:1990:p1160f.

38 Erikson:p226ff; cf.p74; Nathanson:"A Timetable...":1987:p5ff; Piers/Singer:p46; Rayner:p82ff.

39 Erikson:p227.

40 Sartre:p255.

41 Schneider:1977:p33.

42 Albers:p22.

43 Capps:1993:p72.

44 Capps:1983:p82f.

that one make appropriate reparation."⁴⁵

"Manifestations of shame [also include] averting the eye, covering the face, ... hanging one's head, and wanting to 'sink through the floor'."⁴⁶

Psychoanalytical distinctions are decisively outlined by Piers.⁴⁷ He postulates a distinction between superego and ego-ideal,⁴⁸ which Freud had used interchangeably,⁴⁹ and defines guilt and shame as products of tension between the ego/superego, and ego/ego-ideal respectively. Guilt "is the painful internal tension generated whenever the emotionally highly charged barrier erected by the superego is being touched or transgressed"⁵⁰ by the ego. "Shame ... occurs when a goal (presented by the ego-ideal) is not being reached. It thus indicates a real 'shortcoming'. Guilt anxiety accompanies transgression; shame, *failure*. ... The unconscious, irrational threat implied by shame anxiety is abandonment."⁵¹

Schneider picks up the association with *failure*. Following the work of Lynd, he demonstrates that shame occurs on a strong-weak continuum, guilt on a good-bad continuum. Shame, therefore, "has to do with a sense of smallness or inadequacy, a sense of not being good enough or acceptable. In shame, we perceive the self as *lacking*."⁵²

Other identifying features include a necessity for shame to have an object (usually me)⁵³ - guilt need not have an object - "one may simply feel guilty, but one is always ashamed of something;"⁵⁴ and the strong association of shame with 'loss of face'.⁵⁵

Types of Shame

We are prone to thinking of shame in negative terms.⁵⁶ This constitutes a failure to acknowledge the breadth of emotion/affect which 'shame' encompasses. Shame is in fact multi-faceted.⁵⁷

English has only one word for 'shame'. French, like many other languages, has two words - 'pudeur' (a restraining sense of shame) and 'honte' (felt after an action).⁵⁸ Words for shame derive from two Indo-European roots, both with the same meaning. One cluster of words includes English words *custody*, *hide* (both the noun meaning 'skin' and the verb meaning 'conceal'), *house*, *hut*, *shoe*, *sky*. The common thread in these words is an association with

45 Lewis:p108f.

46 Schneider:1977:p30.

47 First in 1953, republished in Piers/Singer:1971; cf.Capps:1993:p15ff; Kinston:p217; Morrison:p274; Wilson:p185; Wurmser:p76.

48 Piers/Singer:p25ff. Piers' work is still considered definitive, but some supporters see no need to distinguish between superego and ego-ideal, cf.Kinston:p217; Schneider:1990:p1160; Wurmser:p76.

49 Piers/Singer:p25; cf.Kinston:p217.

50 Piers/Singer:p16.

51 Piers/Singer:p23f.

52 Schneider:1977:p26 (quoting Lynd;"*On Shame and the Search for Identity*";Science Editions,New York,1958); cf.Erikson:p251ff.

53 Sartre:p221f

54 Schneider:1990:p1160.

55 Albers:p100; Bechtel:p50,76; Berke:p319f; Burnett:p99; Erikson:p228; Musk:p159; Neyrey:p51; Wells:p166; Wong:p18-21.

56 Albers:p13f; Piers/Singer:p16; Schneider:1977:p26; Wong:p41,55f,58.

57 Stockitt:p112.

58 Schneider:1977:p18.

'covering'. The derivation is from an Indo-European root *(s)que-; *(s)qewa-, which means 'to cover'. From this same root comes the Lithuanian word 'kuvetis' meaning 'to be ashamed'. A second Indo-European root *(s)kem-; *(s)kam-, also meaning 'to cover', gives us our English words *shame* and *camera*, the French *chemise*, and the German *Hemd*.⁵⁹

Shame is intimately linked to the need to cover. "Shame and blushing are meant to conceal, to cover that which is vulnerable to a perceived threat."⁶⁰ "Most writers ... agree that shame follows a moment of *exposure*, and that this uncovering reveals aspects of the self of a peculiarly sensitive, intimate, and vulnerable nature."⁶¹

The 'need to cover' is experienced in two ways: *discretionary-shame* - akin to modesty; and *disgrace-shame* - the response to having been exposed.⁶² Disgrace-shame can be further subdivided into: *fear of disgrace* - anxiety about being shamed; and *contempt* - feeling ashamed.⁶³

Discretionary-shame "is a fundamentally positive quality."⁶⁴ It "concerns itself with the protection of the private sphere of human activity so that public scrutiny is precluded,"⁶⁵ and "recognises what is the proper attitude, the fitting response."⁶⁶ So, for example, it regulates self-disclosure; ensures the proper covering of nakedness; delineates appropriate boundaries in the care of the terminally ill. It protects development and growth:

"For what is sheltered is not something already finished, but something in the process of becoming - a tender shoot. Like a darkroom, shame protects against the premature exposure to light that would destroy the process. It functions like the protective cover during the period of gestation, until the embryo - whether seed or soul - has come to full term and is ready to emerge."⁶⁷

"Preoccupation with disgrace-shame has left the issue of discretionary-shame forgotten in the shadows."⁶⁸ Most theological/psychological literature has focused on disgrace-shame.⁶⁹ Developing any understanding of shame requires both positive and negative aspects to be acknowledged.

Disgrace-shame "is about exposure of some discrediting fact or quality,"⁷⁰ "a painful experience of the disintegration of one's world. A break occurs in the self's relationship with itself and/or others. An awkward, uncomfortable space opens up in the world. The self is no longer whole, but divided. It feels less than it wants to be, less than at its best it knows itself to be."⁷¹ "Feelings of failure and violation of pride associated with shame are inhibiting and repressive and shake people's confidence in themselves, their abilities, and their worth."⁷²

59 Schneider:1977:p29f provides detailed etymology.

60 Schneider:1977:p31; cf.Bonhoeffer:p145ff; Wells:p134.

61 Nathanson:"A Timetable...":1987:p4; cf.Allender/Longman:p195ff.

62 Albers:p7-14; Allender:p48; Schneider:1977:p18-25; Thompson:p314.

63 Wurmser:p68; cf.Schneider:1990:p1160.

64 Schneider:1977:p21.

65 Albers:p14.

66 Schneider:1977:p20.

67 Schneider:1977:p37.

68 Albers:p8.

69 Bechtel:p48-53; Berke:p319f; Capps:1993:p84; Neyrey:p118; Stockitt:p112; Wong:p55f.

70 Schneider:1977:p36.

71 Schneider:1977:p22.

72 Bechtel:p49f.

In most cultures disgrace-shame was/is the antithesis of 'honour'.⁷³ It operated/operates as a social sanction controlling behaviour⁷⁴ - misdemeanours brought/bring shame on the individual/family/social group.⁷⁵ It could operate as an internal sanction through *fear of disgrace*,⁷⁶ or externally as a powerful disciplinary measure.⁷⁷ In the West disgrace-shame has been a more individual phenomenon⁷⁸ often associated with a narcissistic perspective.⁷⁹ A self-involving/self-focused anxiety⁸⁰ or an attitude of self-contempt.⁸¹ Nonetheless, whatever its dynamics, disgrace-shame is painful and disorienting.⁸² It involves contempt, disgust and a sense of inadequacy/failure.⁸³ It fears and/or results in desertion/abandonment, dishonour/'loss of face',⁸⁴ and loss of social position.⁸⁵

Although often associated with guilt, disgrace-shame does not always have a moral content. People experience shame within a society for being different/defective (physically, emotionally, socially, or even spiritually),⁸⁶ through defilement by others (particularly in cases of incest and rape),⁸⁷ and sometimes over events outside their control.⁸⁸

Defence Mechanisms

"Persons who have experienced shame in their lives will often develop defensive strategies to enable them to avoid or blunt the painfulness of future experiences of shame."⁸⁹ Apart from physiological responses such as hiding the eyes, blushing, hiding or running away, the range of different strategies include:

- perfectionism - living perfectly/flawlessly theoretically eliminates the possibility of criticism/attack which would elicit shame.⁹⁰
- self-righteousness/contempt for others - "externalises shame by adopting a judgmental, faultfinding, or condescending attitude toward others. Holding others in contempt insulates the self against further shame."⁹¹
- power striving - one is less vulnerable if in control. Power serves two purposes: it can insulate against further shame; and compensate for shame internalised earlier in life.⁹²
- scapegoating/blaming - "assigns the cause of shame to someone else ... who usually cannot defend herself or himself."⁹³

73 Albers:p47ff; Bechtel:p52f; Burnett:p112; Chance:p148f; deSilva:p433f; Matthews/Benjamin:p11; Musk:p156-161; Oylan:p202,217;

74 Bechtel:p48ff; Piers/Singer:p63ff; G.Taylor:p54.

75 Burnett:p99,112; Stockitt:p113; Wells:p165f.

76 Piers/Singer:p64ff; Wurmser:p68.

77 Bechtel:p57ff; Piers/Singer:p63ff; Stockitt:p112.

78 Capps:1993:p33ff,74; Wells:p167.

79 Nathanson:"Shaming...":1987:p250; cf.Note.8.

80 Capps:1983:p85; Capps:1993:p74,79; G.Taylor:p67.

81 Albers:p35ff; Capps:1983:p88; Piers/Singer:p28f; Schneider:1977:p35f.

82 Lewis:p107; Rayner:p82; Schneider:1977:p22.

83 Albers:p36ff; Rayner:p82.

84 Albers:p42ff; Nathanson:"Shaming...":1987:p250; Neyrey:p118; Wong:p18f.

85 Bechtel:p50; G.Taylor:p54f.

86 Albers:p50ff; Berke:p319; Nathanson:"A Timetable...":1987:p27f; Wells:p136ff.

87 Albers:p63ff; Capps:1993:p95.

88 Goldingay:1995:p8

89 Capps:1993:p95.

90 Albers:p70ff; Capps:1993:p95.

91 Allender:p62f,66ff; Allender/Longman:p164ff; Capps:1993:p96; Wurmser:p87; cf. Albers:p73f.

92 Albers:p77f; Capps:1993:p96; cf. Hutch:p350.

93 Allender:p57; Allender/Longman:p172f; Capps:1993:p96; cf.Albers:p78f; Hutch:p350; Gen.3:12f.

- a martyr complex - assuming the 'servant-role' "is an attractive reinforcement for a shame-based person. ... The martyr role subtly and insidiously permeates the person's whole being and soon becomes a way of life. It is justified and validated by a misinterpretation of the religious tradition and is often rewarded by commendation."⁹⁴
- rage against others - effectively insulates against feelings of shame.⁹⁵
- withdrawal/isolation - creates a "world of presumed safety wherein the person can hide behind seemingly impenetrable barriers erected as a fortress of defence to ward off all situations which may occasion shame."⁹⁶

We have noted already that shame and guilt often overlap. Many shame experiences have a significant moral element - many of our actions are both shame- and guilt-inducing. In situations where shame has no moral element, culpability is not, and should not be allowed to become,⁹⁷ an issue. However, many of the above defence mechanisms are actions or attitudes which would appropriately elicit guilt. Victimisation in the past is no ground for wrong actions in the present or the future. "The fact that our victimisation was the cause of our resort to such defensive strategies is certainly an extenuating factor, but we must, at the same time, hold ourselves responsible for these defensive attitudes and actions."⁹⁸

Shame in Different Cultures

The place of shame varies significantly between cultures.⁹⁹ This can be seen in today's world, but anthropologists have demonstrated that the passage of time within a culture also alters perceptions of shame and its causes.¹⁰⁰ It will be important in looking at biblical material, to remember that it comes from a range of different periods in the history of the Middle East. This means that, although there will be common themes, we must not force homogeneity onto the material.¹⁰¹

Shame in the West

Western society has, through the centuries, highlighted 'guilt' to the detriment of an understanding of shame.¹⁰² It has, in parallel, placed a greater priority on the individual than the group. This is demonstrated by the general tenor of much psychological, philosophical and theological writing which centres predominantly on the individual.¹⁰³ Theologians in the developing world perceive this as one of the weaknesses of Western society and theology.¹⁰⁴ There is general agreement that one of the principle causes of this Western individualism, is society's historic preoccupation with 'guilt', 'conscience', and 'sin'.¹⁰⁵ It was once considered that "the individualised sense of guilt [was] the standard bearer of civilisation and progress."¹⁰⁶

94 Albers:p79f.

95 Capps:1993:p95; Thompson:p315,317; Wurmser:p87; cf.Allender/Longman:p194.

96 Albers:p81; Capps:1993:p95.

97 Sometimes the victim can be inappropriately held culpable, thereby heaping false guilt/blame on her/his shoulders, exacerbating 'shame', e.g., some cases of rape or incest; cf.Albers:p64f; Capps:1993:p95.

98 Capps:1993:p95.

99 Piers/Singer:p53; cf.Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p132; Bechtel:p50ff; Wells:p164.

100 Chance:p148.

101 Chance:p148f.

102 Albers:p17; cf.Note.19; Mackenzie:p178.

103 Examples from texts consulted: Albers; Erikson; Nietzsche (in Schneider:1977); Piers/Singer; Rayner; Sartre; Schneider:1977; Wells; Wurmser.

104 Hwa:p3,76f,83; cf.Kraft:1989:p32ff; Smail:p77.

105 Delumeau:p3; Piers/Singer:p54f,59; cf.Bechtcl:p50ff; Moxnes:p62.

106 Piers/Singer:p61.

However, the events of this century have largely discredited this thinking.¹⁰⁷

Western culture is changing and no longer has a strong sense of 'sin' and 'guilt'.¹⁰⁸ Other factors are developing which determine self-perception¹⁰⁹ and act as controls on behaviour.¹¹⁰ Some commentators highlight a recovery of shame,¹¹¹ or replacement of 'guilt' by 'shame' in popular thinking.¹¹² People are more concerned about 'social position' and 'worth in others eyes' than they are about responsibility/sin.¹¹³

There are significant differences between this new Western perspective and that of other modern, or biblical cultures.¹¹⁴ The loss of an objective understanding of wrong,¹¹⁵ 'excessive' concentration on the individual,¹¹⁶ and concomitant development of narcissistic tendencies,¹¹⁷ are generally not mirrored in cultures traditionally labelled 'shame-based'.¹¹⁸

However, a recovery of an understanding of shame in Western society must be seen as positive. We have noted the importance of discretionary-shame, it is also true that:

"Shame sends out its red flag against the distorted strand of popular thought that seeks to reduce human life to the dimensions of the scientific/technological or the individual self. It reveals the limits of the self and bears witness to the self's involvement with others."¹¹⁹

Shame also brings new perspectives into counselling and pastoral care.¹²⁰ A narrow focus on guilt/repentance will not reach those for whom 'shame' is the underlying problem.¹²¹ Forgiveness addresses a 'sense of guilt' over wrongdoing, but says little to a 'sense of shame'.¹²²

Perhaps of even greater import is that "shame is intimately involved with the holy;"¹²³

"the dialectic of covering and uncovering of the sacred in time and space is at the heart of religion. ... Shame mirrors and maintains a tension between covering and uncovering in our relationship to the sacred."¹²⁴

"It is not always possible to know more by abandoning shame and reserve. Exposure ... does not necessarily reveal truths; 'we no longer believe that truth remains truth

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- 107 Piers/Singer:p61; cf.Bechtel:p50f.
108 Capps:1993:p4; Hutch:p347; cf.Piers/Singer:p54f.
109 Schneider:1977:pXIVff; cf.Capps:1983:p84ff; Thompson:p312.
110 Piers/Singer:p61.
111 Schneider:1977:Ch.1.
112 Capps:1993:p35,39; Wells:p129; cf.Thompson:p312.
113 Clapp:p26; Wells:p167.
114 Wells:p164; Wurmser:p88.
115 Capps:1993:p3; Hutch:p348; Wells:p166.
116 Bechtel:p52; Clapp:p26; Hwa:p3,76f; Kraft:1989:p32ff; Wells:p165.
117 Capps:1993:p4ff,35f; cf.Note.8.
118 Wells:p165f; You:p57.
119 Schneider:1977:pXVII.
120 Allender:Ch.2,3; Capps:1983:Ch.4; Thompson:p311ff; cf.Hess:p509; Schneider:1990:p1162f.
121 Hutch:p347; cf.Allender:Ch.2,3.
122 Albers:p22,39,86f,97; Capps:1993:p83.
123 Schneider:1977:p15 (quoting Nietzsche,"*Human, All-Too-Human*").
124 Schneider:1977:p118.

when veils are withdrawn'."¹²⁵

"The absence of the proper sense of shame and respect before the integrity of truth is an important theme in contemporary philosophy."¹²⁶ The element of 'mystery' is essential for the appreciation of religious truth:

"the alternative to the shameless approach of 'looking at' is the understanding that emerges from 'indwelling', ... [which] has respect for the veiled character of truth, for it senses that we can know important things that are vulnerable to explicitness and that we cannot always articulate. ... Shame cautions us to refrain from 'silencing [the] shy, persistent inner voice', which we might otherwise so easily trample."¹²⁷

Shame, then, not only safeguards the 'humanity' of the individual and enables more effective caring, but it is also critical to religious 'knowing' - in that it honours mystery, and the unspoken or 'inarticulatable', in our experience of the divine.

Shame in Non-Western Cultures

There are significant differences between Western cultures, rooted in Christianity and the Enlightenment, and those cultures which were, until recently, free from such influences.¹²⁸ In highlighting these differences, we must not ignore:

- Our shared humanity - "beneath the vast array of differences between human cultures lies an equally impressive substratum of basic human similarity."¹²⁹
- The diversity of Non-Western cultures - African, Middle-Eastern, Indian and Chinese cultures are very different.¹³⁰ Although such cultures may have a more obvious orientation towards 'shame', they are not determined by shame¹³¹ and their characteristics vary.¹³²
- The need for caution in labelling Non-Western cultures 'shame-based'.¹³³
- The folly of implying that such cultures are 'inferior' to those of the West¹³⁴ - it is easy to demonstrate the weaknesses of any culture, the West is no exception.¹³⁵

Shame is, however, more readily perceived in the dynamics of Non-Western cultures than in those of the West. Various studies have highlighted key features, which include:

- ***Reliance on external sanctions*** "for assuring conformity to the cultural norms."¹³⁶ Such

125 Schneider:1977:p119 (quoting Nietzsche;"*Gay Science*").

126 Schneider:1977:p120 (ref. Heidegger, Sartre).

127 Schneider:1977:p120f.

128 Hwa:p2ff,44ff; Kraft:1989:p27ff; cf.Kraemer:p21,347; Kraft:1979:p60ff; Schneider:1977:p1.

129 Kraft:1979:p81ff.

130 Hesselgrave:p426ff; Hwa:p77ff; cf.Barlas/Wanasundera:p24ff; Kraemer:p159f; Kraft:p91,95,97,325; Wickramasinghe:p6ff.

131 Chance:p148f.

132 Hwa:p85.

133 Hwa:p84f; Piers/Singer:p60ff,96; You:p57.

134 Bechtel:p51; Kraft:1979:p82.

135 Hwa:p4ff; Hiebert:p191ff; Kraft:1989:p37ff.

136 Piers/Singer:p59; cf.Bechtcl:p51; Musk:p159,161; Nel:p622; G.Taylor:p54.

sanctions can include, "withdrawal of ... affection, ... sorcery and accusation of sorcery, threat of starvation, threat of death, punishment, ... destruction of offender's property, expulsion, threat of force, public shaming, divesting of deputation, ritual scolding and ridicule."¹³⁷ Note, however, that shame may appear as an internal, as well as an external sanction.¹³⁸ Individuals may regulate their own behaviour on the basis of shame avoidance, or through in-built shame-related values.¹³⁹

- ***Priority given to the social group*** - particularly the family. These societies "stress, the family, community, and nation over the individual. ... When failure occurs, it is experienced as failure in the *group*, rather than as something purely private."¹⁴⁰ The status of the individual is derived from their family/group.¹⁴¹ Individuals can find it difficult to act without the sanction of the group,¹⁴² and if they lose the esteem of the group, "there is nothing left, no inner quality or whatever, which could be judged to be of value in spite of the loss of public respect. Self respect and public respect stand and fall together."¹⁴³
- ***The importance of honour/status***¹⁴⁴ - The strong group-orientation of these societies means that a person's/family's standing in the community is important, making people status-conscious.¹⁴⁵ "These societies are usually layered by an 'honour' hierarchy which designates the amount of authority held. ... Only friends are equals. Of great importance is the honour and respect the younger generation must show for the elderly and the honour shown to parents. Honour increases status, while shame decreases honour and lowers status."¹⁴⁶ "Honour and human connection are greater promoters of advancement than individual achievement,"¹⁴⁷ and loss of honour is experienced as "total extinction, ... total loss of identity."¹⁴⁸
- ***The concept of 'face'*** - 'Loss of face' can be experienced by individual, family or group.¹⁴⁹ "To lose face is to suffer embarrassment because others see the offender as having let them down, or having dishonoured their family, or town, or the business."¹⁵⁰ Fear of 'loss of face' is central to many Asian cultures,¹⁵¹ emotions associated with 'loss of face' are much stronger than would usually apply in the West. Loss of face can be experienced as a complete negation of personhood.¹⁵² On a number of occasions during a stay in Sri Lanka (Summer 1998), I was told of the importance of 'face'. Appendix 4 records an interview with a leading evangelical churchman in Sri Lanka, Lackshman Peiris, where 'loss of face' was discussed; and Appendix 5 indicates that 'loss of face' is considered a significant element in Sri Lankan culture. I also heard stories those who had suffered 'loss of face' committing suicide.

137 Piers/Singer:p64f; cf.Bechtel:p57ff; Stockitt:p112.
 138 Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p132; Piers/Singer:p64ff; Wurmser:p68.
 139 Piers/Singer:p68.
 140 Wells:p166; cf.Burnett:p99,112; Wong:p19,61.
 141 Musk:p156; cf.Burnett:p112.
 142 You:p59.
 143 G.Taylor:p55.
 144 G.Taylor:p55f; cf.Capps:1993:p72f; Musk:p156ff.
 145 Matthews/Benjamin:p11.
 146 Bechtel:p52f.
 147 Musk:p162.
 148 G.Taylor:p56; cf.You:p61.
 149 Wong:p18,21.
 150 Wells:p166.
 151 Wong:p20f; cf.Musk:p159; You:p60.
 152 There is a strong link between face and 'personality'.

Other features include: concern about defilement;¹⁵³ a sense of reciprocal obligation and interdependence;¹⁵⁴ and the value of one's 'name' - it is considered essential to honour the family name,¹⁵⁵ and in some societies the use of someone's name is carefully guarded.¹⁵⁶

Despite the significance of shame-dynamics in Non-Western cultures we should not allow these dynamics to finally determine our understanding of such cultures.¹⁵⁷ Guilt is also, among other things, an important element in the experience of individuals,¹⁵⁸ and operates in the social dynamics/sanctions of these societies.¹⁵⁹

No human behaviour, Western or Non-Western, is totally determined by culture.¹⁶⁰ In fact, there are significant elements of human experience which transcend culture, elements which we might term, areas of 'human commonality'. Human beings are similar in biological, psychological, spiritual and socio-cultural terms.¹⁶¹ Our needs (for food, water, shelter, companionship, social order and involvement with the numinous) are similar, if not the same, and consequently our needs for community, and reasons for living in society are shared across the world. Societies, and their accompanying cultures, fulfil parallel and similar functions, differences between cultures are in various cultural forms rather than in their underlying purposes.¹⁶²

The balance between shame and guilt in the dynamics of any culture is the consequence of the way in which the society has developed to meet the needs of its members. Both shame and guilt are present in different and interrelated ways in all cultures:¹⁶³ as positive features - regulating behaviour, creating social cohesion and providing privacy;¹⁶⁴ and as debilitating affects which can demean/destroy,¹⁶⁵ or bring the individual/group to a point of (or recognition of the need for) change.¹⁶⁶

As Christians we believe that God is involved in all areas of human experience. This suggests that "there is inherent within the [faith] tradition a powerful word of liberation for people who are shame bound as well as those who may be enslaved by guilt."¹⁶⁷ Although we have well-developed theologies of guilt, repentance and forgiveness,¹⁶⁸ we lack the same understanding of shame.¹⁶⁹ We need, therefore, to develop a theology of shame. To do this we must first appreciate the place of shame in the cultures of the Old and New Testament.

153 Thomas:p284ff.

154 You:p61.

155 Wong:p19; cf.Neyrey:p116.

156 Schneider:1977:p45.

157 Piers/Singer:p63-70,96f; You:p57.

158 Piers/Singer:p65ff,97,100.

159 Hwa:p85; Piers/Singer:p68ff,99.

160 Kraft:1979:p83.

161 Kraft:1979:p84-6.

162 Kraft:1979:p64-6.

163 Bechtel:p53f; Piers/Singer:p99.

164 Schneider:1977:pXIVff; Wurmser:p80f,85f.

165 Nathanson:"Shaming...":1987:p268f; Schneider:1977:pXIV; G.Taylor:p165f; Wurmser:p85f.

166 Albers:p5; Collins:p140ff; Hesselgrave:p442; Hutch:p347; Matthews/Benjamin:p12; Nel:p622; Stockitt:p113; Tournier:p121; Wells:p140,171; cf.Goldingay:1995:p8ff.

167 Albers:p4.

168 cf.Note.20.

169 Albers:p3,22f; Capps:1993:p35.

Shame in the Old Testament and Its Cultures

Although we do not have direct access to the cultures of the Old Testament, we have in its pages a significant volume of material which, if carefully handled, will provide illuminating insights into the various cultures within which it was written. We have noted already that it is not appropriate to force homogeneity onto shame-related material in the Old Testament.¹⁷⁰ However, we may begin, with care, to determine areas of commonality in the shame-dynamics of those cultures.

Appendix 2 highlights the variety of shame-related vocabulary in the Old Testament. It is striking that:

"where references to guilt per se are relatively few, there are many instances of shame."¹⁷¹ Shame is at the heart of Israel's response as she again and again is confronted both by her own betrayal of the Covenant relationship with Yahweh, and by her idolatrous neighbours' defilement of the Holy Law of Yahweh."¹⁷²

However, until recently, there was very little research on the Old Testament sanction of shaming. In fact, it has been assumed,

"that shame and guilt are the same emotional response and the same sanction, so shame is treated as if it were guilt; ... [and] in the analysis of shame, particularly in the commentaries, shaming instances are recognised and perceived as isolated experiences. There is a lack of understanding of how shame functions as a major sanction of behaviour within the society, and of social dynamics that are necessary for the society to use shame as a sanction of behaviour."¹⁷³

In fact, both shame and guilt "were determinants of behaviour and checks on unacceptable behaviour, ... shame was equally important, if not slightly more important, than guilt as a means of social control."¹⁷⁴ We have seen that honour and shame are important and opposite dynamics in some cultures. This is true of the various Old Testament cultures. "As a consequence, 'sinning' tend[ed] to be perceived ... as the violating of honour,"¹⁷⁵ as much as it was seen as contravening God's law. Sin was shame-inducing as well as guilt-provoking.

The following paragraphs summarise key elements in the Old Testament vocabulary of shame, and review the Old Testament's major shame-related themes.

Shame Vocabulary - The significant variety of alternative words (Appendix 2), with meanings that overlap and often differ only in nuances, is testimony to the importance of shame in ancient Israel and the surrounding nations. Slight differences in meaning/use can be

170 Chance:p148f.

171 "Concordances list approx. 150 occurrences of shame and its derivatives. Lynd, however, notes that the word 'guilt' and 'guiltiness' each occur only twice in the OT. 'Sin' and 'trespass' occur more frequently, ... - see ... Lynd; *"On Shame and the Search for Identity"*; p25" (Schneider:1977:p113(note.20)).

172 Schneider:1977:p113; cf.Ezra.9:6f; Jer.3:24f; Hos.4:6f.

173 Bechtel:p47f; cf.Nel:p624f.

174 Bechtel:p48.

175 Musk:p162 - cf.2 Sam.3:13, where Amnon's sin is the shattering of Tamar's honour; and Job.19:9, where Job is unaware of disloyalty to God but believes God has stripped him of his honour.

discerned.¹⁷⁶

- **Shame as emotion/sanction** - references include grammatical forms derived from the following roots: בּוֹשׁ, 'to shame/be ashamed';¹⁷⁷ חָפַר, 'to be dismayed/feel ashamed';¹⁷⁸ כָּלַם, 'to be shamed/humiliated/hurt', 'to cause disgrace/humiliation'¹⁷⁹ or 'to humiliate/shame';¹⁸⁰ מָקַךְ, 'to be low, humiliated';¹⁸¹ מַשָּׁל, 'object of scorn/byword';¹⁸² קָלָה, 'to be of low esteem/to treat with contempt';¹⁸³ שָׁפַל, 'to be(come) low/abased/humiliated'.¹⁸⁴ Such words "are often accompanied by phrases that express shame on the face (blushing) or shame ... in the body position (hanging the head in shame) or that show that a person has been shamefully reduced to a lower social position."¹⁸⁵ So, for example, we read:

"O my God, I am *ashamed* and *blush* to lift my face to you, my God" (Ezra.9:6).

"From our youth the *shameful thing* [Baal] has devoured all for which our fathers laboured. ... Let us *lie down* in our *shame*, and let *dishonour* cover us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God" (Jer.3:24-5).

- **Verbal shaming** - a number of roots and their derivatives, are used to denote verbal shaming, taunting, mocking or scorning: גָּדַף, 'to revile/blaspheme';¹⁸⁶ הָתַל, 'to mock/deride';¹⁸⁷ חָרַף, 'to taunt/mock/insult/defy'¹⁸⁸ or 'to reproach/verbally shame';¹⁸⁹ לוֹיץ (לִיץ), 'to scorn/ deride/mock';¹⁹¹ לָעַג, 'to scorn/mock/deride';¹⁹² קָלַס, 'to disdain/scoff/jeer/mock/shame/deride';¹⁹³ שָׁחַק, 'to laugh/mock/scorn'.¹⁹⁴ Such reviling can, for example, be directed at the faithful psalmist:

"All day long my enemies *taunt* me;
those who *deride* me use my name for a curse" (Ps.102:8).

It can be directed at God:

"How long, O God, is the foe to *scoff*?"

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- 176 Bechtel:p54.
177 Bechtel:p54; Davies:p83; Feyerabend:p37; VanGemerem:Vol.1:p621ff; cf.2 Sam.19:5f; 2 Kgs.19:26; Isa.30:5f; Jer.2:26.
178 Bechtel:p54; VanGemerem:Vol.2:p236; cf.Ps.35:4; 40:14; 70:2; Isa.1:29; Jer.15:9; Mic.3:7.
179 VanGemerem:Vol.2:p658; cf.Ezra.9:6; Jer.22:22.
180 Bechtel:p54; cf.Isa.16:14.
181 Bechtel:p54; cf.Lev.26:39; Ps.38:6; Isa.34:4; Zech.14:12.
182 Feyerabend:p201; VanGemerem:Vol.4:p195; cf.Deut.28:37; 1 Kgs.9:7; 2 Chron.7:20.
183 Bechtel:p54; VanGemerem:Vol.3:p925; cf.Ps.83:16; Prov.3:35; 13:18; Hos.4:7; Hab.2:16.
184 Bechtel:p54; VanGemerem:Vol.4:p224; cf.Job.40:11; Mal.2:9.
185 Bechtel:p54; cf.Jer.48:39, בּוֹשׁ; 2 Sam.10:5, נִכְלָמִים (נִכְלָם); Isa.16:14, נִקְלָה (נִקְלָה); Jer.50:12, הִפְרָה.
186 Feyerabend:p55; VanGemerem:Vol.1:p829; cf.Ps.44:16; Isa.43:28.
187 Davies:p173; Feyerabend:p81; cf.1 Kgs.18:27.
188 Feyerabend:p111; VanGemerem:Vol.2:p280ff; cf.2 Kgs.19:4,16; Ps.42:10; 44:16.
189 Bechtel:p54 (who lists this as an emotion/sanction); Davies:p232f; Feyerabend:p111; cf.Job.27:6; Prov.27:11.
190 VanGemerem:Vol.2:p798.
191 Bechtel:p54; Davies:p321; Feyerabend:p157; cf.Ps.1:1; Prov.9:12; 14:9.
192 Bechtel:p54; VanGemerem:Vol.2:p804; cf.2 Kgs.19:21; Neh.2:19; Isa.37:22.
193 Bechtel:p54; VanGemerem:Vol.3:p928; cf.2 Kgs.2:23; Ps.44:13; Jer.20:8; Ezek.22:5.
194 Davies:p631; Feyerabend:p331; cf.2 Chron.30:10; Ps.2:4; Prov.1:26.

Is the enemy to *revile* your name for ever?" (Ps.74:10).

Wise behaviour, however, avoids reproach:

"Be wise, my child, and make my heart glad,
so that I may answer whoever *reproaches* me" (Prov.27:11).

- **Contempt** - other roots denote 'contempt for' or 'despising': **בוז**, 'to show contempt for';¹⁹⁵ **בוזה**, 'to be contemptible/think lightly of/despise', 'despised/contemptible' or 'to cause to despise';¹⁹⁶ **געל**, 'to abhor/detest/reject';¹⁹⁷ **נאץ**, 'to reject/disdain/despise/revile';¹⁹⁸ **סלה**, 'to despise/reject/treat as worthless';¹⁹⁹ **קוט**, 'to feel disgust/loathe';²⁰⁰ **קלל**, 'to be slight/appear trifling/curse/be cursed/treat with contempt';²⁰¹ **שום**, 'to slight/despise';²⁰² **שקץ**, 'to loathe/detest';²⁰³ **תעב**, 'to loathe/abhor'.²⁰⁴

The main counterpart to shame was **כבוד**, **פְּבֹד** ('honour/heaviness').²⁰⁵ "In the Old Testament, the word honour and its derivatives occur 115 times."²⁰⁶ "Honour increased status or heavy esteem, while shame decreased status, causing light esteem."²⁰⁷ Therefore:

"The wise will inherit *honour*, but the stubborn fools, *disgrace*" (Prov.3:35).

"The more they increased, the more they sinned against me;
they changed their *glory* (honour, {fdOb:K}) *into shame* ({}Olfq:B)" (Hos.4:7).

Some commentators find it difficult to distinguish 'shame' and 'guilt'.²⁰⁸ However, there were no linguistic connections, and no inherent sense of 'guilt' in the shame vocabulary of the Old Testament.²⁰⁹ The vocabulary for guilt is much more limited than that of shame. The significant root words are: **אשם**, 'to offend/be guilty/commit iniquity'; **רשע**, 'to be wicked/condemn as guilty'; and the noun **עֲוֹן**, 'iniquity/guilt/punishment'.²¹⁰ These words alternated between meaning 'guilt' and meaning 'iniquity' or 'wrong-doing', and it is often difficult to decipher which meaning was intended."²¹¹

Major Shame-Related Themes - Shame was experienced as a negative 'affect', and as formal/informal social sanctions; it acted with 'honour' to define acceptable behaviour, and provoked various defence mechanisms. Shame maintained a sense of awe and reverence.

195 Davies:p81; VanGemer:Vol.1:p618; cf.Lev.19:18; 2 Kgs.19:21; Prov.1:7; 13:13; 23:22.

196 Davies:p83; VanGemer:Vol.1:p630; cf.1 Sam.10:27; Ps.22:6; Prov.15:20; Mal.1:6f.

197 Feyerabend:p62; VanGemer:Vol.1:p882ff; cf.Lev.26:11,15; Jer.14:19.

198 Davies:p392; VanGemer:Vol.3:p5; cf.Num.14:11; Deut.32:19; Jer.14:21; Lam.2:10.

199 Feyerabend:p232; cf.Ps.119:18; Lam.1:15.

200 Davies:p556; VanGemer:Vol.3:p898; cf.Job.10:1; Ps.95:10; Ezek.6:9.

201 Davies:p562; VanGemer:Vol.3:p927ff; cf.2 Sam.19:44; Hab.1:10.

202 Davies:p624; VanGemer:Vol.4:p63; cf.Ezek.16:57; 25:6,15.

203 Davies:p669; Feyerabend:p363; cf.Lev.11:11; Deut.7:26.

204 Davies:p694; VanGemer:Vol.4:p314ff; cf.Deut.7:26; Job.9:31; Prov.8:7.

205 Davies:p286; cf.Exod.20:12; 2 Chron.25:19; Ps.86:9; Job.14:21; Isa.58:13; Jer.30:19; Dan.11:38.

206 Musk:p162; cf.1 Chron.4:9.

207 Bechtel:p54.

208 Nel:p624f; cf.Note.19.

209 Bechtel:p55.

210 Bechtel:p55.

211 Bechtel:p55.

There were also provisions within the Old Testament for restoration/renewal of those experiencing shame.

- ***Shame as Negative Affect*** - shame was experienced as: deficiency in one's person, particularly evident in the reticence of those called by God to leadership or prophetic roles;²¹² confusion or disorientation undermining trust that the world is as it seems;²¹³ desertion or abandonment, expressed in a fear that God will desert his people as a result of disobedience,²¹⁴ or in God's threats to desert Israel;²¹⁵ dishonour, particularly in battle²¹⁶; defectiveness,²¹⁷ specifically in a physical sense;²¹⁸ and defilement/being unclean.²¹⁹
- ***Shame as Sanction*** - shaming occurred both formally, as a judicial or political sanction, and informally in the course of community living.

Judicial sanctions included public humiliation. Shame was regarded as a punishment for sin²²⁰ - for example, when a man refused to enter into a levirate marriage, the law provided for his public shaming by dead brother's widow, and for long-term stigma to be attached to his family.²²¹ The law was, however, also concerned to avoid excessive shaming of someone punished for a crime.²²²

Political sanctions could be used in warfare and in diplomacy. It was usual to humiliate captive warriors,²²³ and shaming was an effective way to convey displeasure or disgust to a neighbouring monarch.²²⁴

Informal sanctions were used by the less pious against the devout,²²⁵ and more generally, anyone who failed to comply with accepted social norms could face a myriad of different shaming sanctions,²²⁶ including: taunting, mocking, or scorning;²²⁷ wagging or shaking the head mockingly;²²⁸ gaping with an open mouth;²²⁹ sticking out the tongue;²³⁰ gnashing the teeth;²³¹ spitting;²³² hissing;²³³ striking the cheek shamefully;²³⁴ winking;²³⁵ and defiling the

212 Albers:p39f; cf.Moses (Exod.3:31); Gideon (Judg.6:7ff); Solomon (1 Kgs.3:7,9); Jeremiah (Jer.1:6).
 213 Capps:1993:p78; cf.Ps.40:14; 70:2.
 214 Neh.9:19,31; Ps.16:9f; 22:1; 38:21; 71:9,18.
 215 Albers:p42ff; cf.2 Kgs.21:14; Isa.2:6; Jer.7:29.
 216 Albers:p47ff; cf.2 Chron.32:21, Neh.1:3.
 217 Albers:p50ff.
 218 Sarah's inability to conceive (Gen.16); mutilation of defeated people (Judg.1:6f; 2 Sam.10:4f).
 219 Albers:p62ff; Goldingay:1995:p4ff; Thomas:p287f; cf. 2 Sam.13.
 220 Schneider:1990:p1161
 221 Deut.25:5-10; cf.Bechtel:p57f; Stockitt:p113f.
 222 Deut.25:1-3; cf.Bechtel:p62f.
 223 Bechtel:p63ff.
 224 1 Sam.11:1-4; 2 Sam.10:1-5; cf.Bechtel:p68ff.
 225 Bechtel:p71; cf.Ps.10:2-5,12; 22:6ff; 31:9-18; 42:10f.
 226 Bechtel:p72; cf.Bertram:Vol.5:p630.
 227 e.g.,2 Chron.30:10; Job.12:4; Ps.44:14; Isa.57:4; Ezek.23:32.
 228 e.g.,2 Kgs.19:21; Job.16:4; Ps.109:25.
 229 e.g.,Ps.22:7,13; 35:21.
 230 Isa.57:4.
 231 e.g.,Ps.35:15f; Lam.2:1.
 232 e.g.,Num.12:14; Deut.25:9; Job.17:6; Isa.50:6.
 233 e.g.,Job27:23; Jer.18:16; Zeph.2:15.
 234 e.g.,Job.16:9f; Lam.3:30.
 235 e.g.,Ps.35:19; Prov.6:13; 10:10.

beard.²³⁶ The presence of injunctions against such shaming²³⁷ indicates "that excessive informal shaming was prevalent and problematic."²³⁸

- **Shame Defining Behaviour** - shame/honour defined acceptable behaviour. For example, they prevented serving army officers enjoying conjugal rights with their wives;²³⁹ distinguished households in good social standing from those that were not;²⁴⁰ demanded female chastity;²⁴¹ defined acceptable behaviour in times of disaster.²⁴² Idolatry was particularly shameful²⁴³ - idols were referred to as 'the shame' or 'the abomination'.²⁴⁴
- **Defence Mechanisms** - there is evidence either of the employment of some of the defence mechanisms we noted above, or of rebukes against their use. Examples include: the rebuke of contempt/self-righteousness;²⁴⁵ the use of blaming/ scapegoating;²⁴⁶ rage against others;²⁴⁷ withdrawal.²⁴⁸
- **Miscellany** - commentators have highlighted the importance of the honour/shame dynamic in different parts of the Old Testament and other texts, particularly the David narratives,²⁴⁹ Proverbs and Ben Sira,²⁵⁰ and the people's lament over Jerusalem.²⁵¹ Others have highlighted the importance of the family name.²⁵²
- **Shame and 'Awe'** - Many Old Testament characters manifest a quality of awe and reverence:

"Moses removes his sandals, for the place where he stands is holy ground. He also wishes to see God's glory, but is permitted to see Yahweh only after He has passed by; no man can see God's face and live. He covers his face, afraid to look at God. Holy things and holy places call for a proper sense of deference and awe before their transcendent mystery: the unutterable name of Yahweh, the indescribable appearance of Yahweh, the untouchable Ark of the Covenant - all these reflect the reticence and reverence that characterise the sense of shame."²⁵³

One element in the important Old Testament concept of 'atonement' is the idea of

236 2 Sam.10:4f; Isa.50:6.

237 e.g., Prov.3:34f; 6:12ff.

238 Bechtel:p75.

239 2 Sam.11:8-13; cf.Stockitt:p114.

240 Matthews/Benjamin:p11.

241 Bergant:p33f - protecting the chastity of women of the family was a matter of honour for the men.

242 Joel.1:5-14; Simkins:p46ff, the nation's trust in Yahweh was in question; he had failed them, they were ashamed. They turned away from Yahweh. Joel calls them to overcome shame and mourn before the Lord.

243 Schneider:1990:p1161; cf.Ps.97:7; Isa.45:15f; Hos.10:6; Jer.2:26f; 17:13.

244 1 Kgs.11:5; 2 Kgs.23:13; Jer.3:24f; 16:18; Ezek.5:11; Dan.9:27.

245 Isa.5:7-25; Amos.6:1; Albers:p73f; cf.Jon.4:1 (Capps:1993:p156 highlights the sarcasm which betrays Jonah's unspoken contempt).

246 Gen.3:12f; Jon.4:1; Capps:1993:p156; Hess:p509.

247 Jon.4:1; Capps:1993:p156.

248 Gen.3:8ff; cf.Clapp:p27.

249 Stansell:p55ff; cf.Olyan:p208ff.

250 deSilva:p438ff.

251 Olyan:p215ff.

252 Albers:p94; Neyrey:p116; cf.Gen.17:5,15,32:28ff; Deut.25:5ff; 1 Sam.9:1f; Ezra.7:1ff.

253 Schneider:1977:p114; cf.Exod.3:6; 33:18ff; 2 Sam.6:6f. Other references suggest Israel's lack of awe/humility before Yahweh is 'shameless' (Jer.3:2f; 6:15; Zeph.2:1ff).

'covering':²⁵⁴

"Shame is a symbolic covering of what is exposed. ... Such a covering consecrates the approacher, making him or her fit for access to the 'numen'. ... 'Atonement' ... is a 'sheltering' or 'covering', but a profounder form of it, which not only protects the individual ... but shelters the holy from desecration by the profane."²⁵⁵

- **Restoration/Renewal** - doing wrong has two different moral consequences. "It puts us in a situation ... something like that of a debtor: there is a wrong which needs righting. In addition we acquire a status 'something like being unclean'."²⁵⁶ "Leviticus 4-5 presupposes an equivalent dynamic in our relationship with God, and provides two corresponding forms of offering, ... traditionally ... called the 'sin offering' and the 'guilt offering', but 'purification offering' and 'restitution offering' are better renderings of the words."²⁵⁷ The Old Testament is scattered with images showing humanity's "defilement as integral to [its] depravity."²⁵⁸ Wrongdoing leaves us in debt but it also leaves a stain, a stigma, a sense of shame. Cleansing, removing or covering this stain on the community was part of what the Day of Atonement signified,²⁵⁹ and individual cleansing/covering was part of the Old Testament sacrificial system:²⁶⁰

"Sacrifice does not involve penal substitution in the sense that one entity bears another's punishment. By laying hands on the offering, the offerers identif[ied] with it and pass[ed] on to it not their guilt but their stain. The offering [was] then not vicariously punished but vicariously cleansed."²⁶¹

Cleansing was also necessary when there was no specific sense of culpability, as in the case of sufferers of leprosy.²⁶²

Sacrifice included elements of "the cleansing of a relationship"²⁶³ with God, and the covering of sin/shame. Atonement had "a protective purificatory role."²⁶⁴ Sacrifice provided not only a mechanism for the removal of 'guilt', but also the ritual means whereby shame/defilement could be dealt with.

Although we must be careful not to over-generalise, and specifically must not assume that its cultures were homogeneous, we have identified a strong theme of 'shame' running throughout the Old Testament. We have seen that it is a multi-faceted theme, relating to personal/social sanctions, and to feelings/affects; that it has both negative and positive connotations, and is linked to a proper appreciation of the holy. Finally we have noted that the sacrificial system of ancient Israel provided an effective way for a

254 Exod:25:16ff; 30:6; 31:7; Lev.16:2; cf.Budd:p86ff; Durham:p359f; Hartley:p235; Pullan:p62.
255 Schneider:1977:p117 (quoting Otto;"*The Idea of the Holy*";2nd. Ed., trans. J.W.Harvey, OUP,London, 1950:p54)
256 Goldingay:1995:p7f.
257 Goldingay:1995:p8.
258 Thomas:p287f; cf.Exod.30:17ff; Lev.10:10; 15:31; 18:24f; Isa.6:5; 24:5; 52:11; 59:3; Jer.32:34; Ezek.20:7.
259 Lev.16:30; cf.Oesterley:p219; Pullan:p62; Ryder Smith:p97,99,101.
260 Lev.14:10-32; Num.6:9-12; cf.De Vaux:p100; Kurtz:p415ff,443ff.
261 Goldingay:1995:p10.
262 Lev.14:10-32; cf.De Vaux:p100; Kurtz:p417,432ff; North:p168f.
263 Ashby:p36.
264 Budd:p225; cf.Durham:p359; Hammond:p118; Pullan:p62.

debilitating sense of shame/defilement to be address and resolved.

Shame in the New Testament and Graeco-Roman Culture

Around the Mediterranean and across the Middle East different cultures gained prominence and political power. In the East, Old Testament superpowers were superseded by Greek civilisation and culture; further to the West, and increasingly dominant throughout the whole region, was the Roman Empire.

Before we can develop an understanding of 'shame' in New Testament times we need, not only to have considered its Hebraic background, but also to note the Septuagint's and the Classical Greek/Roman understanding of 'shame'.

Appendix 2 provides some insights into the use of shame-related vocabulary in the Greek world and the Septuagint. "Ancient Greek culture possessed a rich vocabulary with which it could communicate the concerns and manifestations of shame."²⁶⁵ Words changed in their meaning over the centuries, but the key word groups appear to have been those associated with αἰδώς, αἰσχύνη (αἰσχύνω), γελάω (καταγελάω), ἐμπαίζω, καταφρονέω, μυκτηρίζω, ὀνειδίζω, ταπεινός and ὕβρις - the most important were αἰδώς and αἰσχύνη.

Among many references to αἰδώς and αἰσχύνη is the quotation from Plato used in the introduction to this dissertation. He spoke of "that divine fear which has received the name of modesty (αἰδώς) and the sense of shame (αἰσχύνη)."²⁶⁶ Αἰδώς initially related to a sense of awe/respect/reverence - that feeling of shame which originates as the reaction which the holy excites in someone. "The sense of reverence ... is roughly akin to respect for the intrinsic worth of others, ... a respect for the power and mystery of being."²⁶⁷ Αἰσχύνη was generally the equivalent of disgrace or dishonour.²⁶⁸ The two terms, however, came to be used interchangeably in Greek literature.²⁶⁹

The shame-dynamic was important, not just in Hebrew and Greek cultures, Roman society was also an "honour society":²⁷⁰

"Greeks, Romans, and Judeans all considered honour and shame to be pivotal values in their cultures. ... From Homer to Herodotus and from Pindar to Paul, ... men lived and died in quest of honour, reputation, fame, approval, and respect."²⁷¹

While there is ample evidence that honour/shame loomed large for ancient Greeks and Romans,²⁷² caution must be exercised in labelling their societies 'honour/shame-based': "there is more to Mediterranean culture than honour and shame."²⁷³ We need to avoid making a

265 Schneider:1977:p110.

266 Plato:p51[Book II (Steph.671)]; cf.Schneider:1977:p110.

267 Schneider:1977:p110; cf.Bultmann:p169; Link/Tiedtke:p561.

268 Schneider:1977:p110.

269 Bultmann:p170; cf.Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p131.

270 Moxnes:p65f; cf.Rom.13 - "a ... useful description of a society in which honour is the most prominent value" (p65).

271 Neyrey:p115.

272 Chance:p149.

273 Chance:p148.

blanket application of a monolithic cultural model, but must properly recognise the importance of honour/shame.

The Septuagint made flexible use of Greek concepts to convey the meaning of different Hebrew words. In a number of instances different Greek words are used for one Hebrew root. Appendix 2 attempts to provide some insight into the relationships between the Greek and Hebrew words. It also indicates the way in which the use of the Greek words is different in the Septuagint than in other Greek literature. For example, αἰδώς is used very little,²⁷⁴ whereas αἰσχύνη occurs frequently; and γελάω and καταγελάω carry a scornful meaning in the Septuagint which is less evident elsewhere.

New Testament authors, predominantly of Jewish extraction, wrote for both Jewish and Gentile readers. Consequently, they had to exercise care in their use of different Greek words. This is probably the reason why the word αἰδώς is used only once in the New Testament, in 1 Tim.2:9, where it is used to describe the proper conduct of women as being μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης.²⁷⁵ The main reason for the absence of αἰδώς was that in Greek it represented a non-Christian understanding of being/personhood and relationship. Αἰδώς suggested that the appropriate way of relating to another was through respect/restraint/reserve. The Christian, however, was to relate not on the basis of virtue, but on the basis of the other's need. In Christian thinking αἰδώς is replaced by ἀγάπη.²⁷⁶

Shame occupies a much less prominent place in the New Testament than the Old, and almost all New Testament references speak of shame as disgrace.²⁷⁷

Αἰσχύνω, αἰσχύνη and their derivatives are less frequent in the New Testament than in the Septuagint.²⁷⁸ The derivative κατααἰσχύνω is important in Paul's writings,²⁷⁹ either in the active sense of 'to shame or disgrace' or 'to put to shame' (e.g. Rom.9:33; 10:11²⁸⁰; 1 Cor.1:27²⁸¹), or the middle sense of 'being ashamed'. The noun has a significant use in Heb.12:2.²⁸²

Γελάω and καταγελάω signify 'derisive laughter' (Mt.9:24; Mk.5:40; Lk.8:53).²⁸³ The word group of ἐμπαίζω is generally restricted to the passion narrative and relates to mockery and torture²⁸⁴ (e.g., Lk.22:63; 23:11).²⁸⁵

The word ἐκμυκτηρίζω, used twice in the New Testament, has a strong sense of contempt (Lk.16:14; 23:35).²⁸⁶ The point that is being made is that Jesus "necessarily meets with

274 App.2; cf.Bultmann:p171.

275 Bultmann:p169; cf.Schneider:1977:p115; Vine:Vol.4:p17.

276 Bultmann:p171; Link/Tiedtke:p562.

277 App.2; Schneider:1977:p114.

278 Link:p563.

279 Link:p563.

280 Dunn:p609f; cf.p583f.

281 Lias:1899:p40; cf.Fee:p83.

282 Ellingworth:p642; Moffatt:p197.

283 Hendriksen:p462,467; Vine:Vol.2:p312; cf.Cranfield:p189; Marshall:p347; Shakespeare:Macbeth,V.5. "our cattle's strength, will laugh to scorn."

284 Bertram:Vol.5:p633.

285 Hendriksen:p1001,1012,1015; cf.Marshall:p845f.

286 Farrar:p315,392; cf.Hendriksen:p780,1040; Marshall:p869.

derision in the same way as the righteous in the Old Testament. The mockery of Jesus is an integral part of his Messianic suffering."²⁸⁷

Καταφρονέω, 'to despise/disparage' and its derivatives are not particularly common in the New Testament. The most significant use is in association with αἰσχύνῃς in Heb.12:2.²⁸⁸

The word ὀνειδίζω means, among other things, 'to revile/reproach'. It is important in the passion narrative (e.g. Mk.15:32),²⁸⁹ and emphasises that the disciples will have to share their master's suffering (Mt.5:11; 1 Pet.4:14).²⁹⁰ The derivative ὀνειδισμός is used in Rom.15:3²⁹¹ and 1 Tim.3:7²⁹² but its fullest use is in Hebrews (Heb.10:33; 11:26; 13:13)²⁹³ where Christians are reminded of the reproach and disgrace which accompany following Christ.

Shame-Related Themes - the key elements of the New Testament approach to shame are: the lack of a 'sense of awe'; honour; shame in the teaching of Jesus; the face of God; and shame and the Cross/Passion of Christ.

- **A sense of awe and discretion-shame** are absent from the pages of the New Testament. Indeed there is even an unabashed shamelessness evident:

"At almost every point of symbolic significance, shame - conceived as a sense of awe, a reticence before the holy - is abolished. There are no holy places that one may no longer enter into: there is no temple in the Revelation of John. There are no holy things that one may no longer touch: Peter, with his Old Testament scruples about unclean animals, is told that there are no unclean things now. When Jesus dies, the veil of the temple is rent in two. ... Jesus does away with special holy places and permits free access to God."²⁹⁴

Further, Jesus challenges the traditional meaning of the Sabbath,²⁹⁵ and introduces familiarity into relationship with God.²⁹⁶ Paul defeats 'Judaisers' who want to impose Jewish rituals on new Gentile believers.²⁹⁷

This might appear to suggest that all vestiges of shame/awe can be cast off, and perhaps explains the absence of shame in the traditional thinking of Western society and the Western church. This is, I believe, not what was intended. We are intended to read the New Testament against the backcloth of the Old. The New Testament:

"adds an important dynamic to the picture. The religious encounter is not only one of reticence before that which one venerates; it also involves the revelation of what is hidden. Religion may be understood as the dialectic of covering and uncovering of the sacred in time and space. ... The freedom and intimacy of the New Testament

287 Bertram:Vol.4:p799.

288 Ellingworth:p642; Moffatt:p197.

289 Cranfield:p457.

290 Davids:p167.

291 Dunn:p838.

292 Alford:p326.

293 Ellingworth:p546,614,717f; Moffatt:p153,180.

294 Schneider:1977:p115; cf.Mt.27:51; Mk.15:38; Lk.23:45; Acts.10:9ff,24ff; Rev.21:22.

295 Mt.12:1ff; Lk.13:10ff.

296 Mk.14:36; cf.Rom.8:15; Gal.4:6.

297 Acts.15:1-35.

presuppose the restraint and respect of the Old Testament. The invitation to address God as '*Abba*' is issued to those who dared not utter His name."²⁹⁸

This does not, however, go far enough. The 'dynamic of covering and uncovering' is essential to religious experience, but so also is the sense that 'shame' has been dealt with. This is not to imply that we are now to be 'shameless', or that 'shame' should no longer be part of the experience of Christians, but rather to note that the experience of shame, first noted at the Fall,²⁹⁹ has been realigned or renewed by the work of the 'Second Adam'.³⁰⁰

- ***Honour, shame and holiness/righteousness*** are significant in different parts of the New Testament. Hanson demonstrates the honour/shame dynamic behind the 'makarisms' of the Gospels, suggesting that honour (Mt.5:3ff) and shame (Mt.23.13ff) bracket the Lord's ministry.³⁰¹ Moxnes highlights the themes of honour, shame and righteousness, as an important part of the epistle to the Romans.³⁰²

Paul, in Romans, spoke to a society with a strong honour code, which as a result was highly stratified, and had a strong sense of shame.³⁰³ His message to Christians subverted the relationship between honour and shame, in that he juxtaposed shame with 'holiness'.³⁰⁴ He challenged Christians to step outside of a dynamic which was endemic in society; to have a separate identity based, not on honour/competition but on holiness/righteousness.³⁰⁵ He highlighted that the resources available to achieve this came from God and could be experienced in the life of the Spirit.³⁰⁶

- ***Shame in the teaching of Jesus*** - Examples include: Luke 11:5-13, where a sleeping man avoids shame (to himself and his village) by granting the request of his neighbour;³⁰⁷ Luke 15:11-32, where Jesus speaks of a family that experiences deep shame, the younger son's requesting the money and leaving home would have brought incredible shame on his family.³⁰⁸ On his shameful return to his village he expects scornful mocking by the community.³⁰⁹ The father's actions, within the culture of Jesus' day, were incredible. He took on himself the shame of the prodigal - running through the village, embracing both the shame and his son.³¹⁰ This story of shame, perhaps "more than any other story in the Gospel, ... expresses the boundlessness of God's compassionate love."³¹¹

298 Schneider:1977:p116.

299 In the hiding/nakedness of Adam and Eve (Gen.3:8ff); cf.Bonhoeffer:p145; Clapp:p26f; Hess:p509; Stockitt:p116; Thomas:p286; Wolff:p172.

300 Rom.5:12-21; cf.1 Cor.15:20ff; Peterson:p41ff.

301 Hanson:p81ff - 'makarisms' = blessings/woes in Matthew.

302 Moxnes:p61ff.

303 Moxnes:p65f; note numerous references to honour/shame - e.g., τιμή Rom.2:7,10; 9:21; 12:10; δόξα 1:23; 2:7,10; 3:7,23; 4:20; 5:2; 6:4; 8:18,21; δοξάζω 1:21; 8:30; 11:30; 15:6,9; ἑπαινος 2:29; 13:3; ἑπαινέω 15:11; καύχημα 4.2; καύχησις 3:27; 15:17; καυχάομαι 2:17,23; 5:2,3,11; ὀσχημοσύνη 1:27; ἄτιμία 1:26;9:21; ἄτιμαζω 1:24;2:23; ἑπαισχύνομαι 1:16; 6:21; καταισχύνω 5:5; 9:33; 10:11.

304 Rom.6:19-22; cf.Moxnes:p66f.

305 Rom.6:18; cf.Moxnes:p67f.

306 Rom.8:2-4.

307 Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p119-33; Stockitt:p114; cf.App.2 - ἀνοήδεια.

308 Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p165; Musk:p163; Nouwen:p36.

309 Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p178.

310 Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p181f; Musk:p163.

311 Nouwen:p36; cf.Musk:p164.

In John 8:2-11 we see Jesus dealing with the shame of the woman caught in adultery. He "shatters the solidarity of the shamers,"³¹² and, unlike the Pharisees who use shame to hurt and destroy, "Jesus uses shame to affirm and rescue a degraded woman. He does not deny the shame of her sin, but he refuses to let shame have the last word or define her."³¹³

- ***The face of God*** - In the Old Testament there is an interesting dilemma about whether human beings can be permitted to see God's face³¹⁴ and live.³¹⁵ Yet there is an association between the face of God and 'blessing',³¹⁶ and the hiding of God's face and divine 'abandonment' and 'disgrace'.³¹⁷ Seeking God's face is associated with the pursuit of holiness and repentance,³¹⁸ and the "shining face of God is a summary statement of salvation."³¹⁹ In fact, "to follow the word {yinf, 'face', through the Old Testament is to be offered a fresh perspective on salvation from that associated with most doctrines of atonement."³²⁰ This is especially true if we juxtapose shame, described by a loss of face or an inability to lift the face,³²¹ with salvation represented by the ability to look into the 'shining face of God'. The answer to 'shame' is the ability to see God's face; something greater than empathy,³²² it is the experience of God's smile of acceptance.

This Old Testament dynamic is worked out in the New Testament - Christ is God incarnate, face-to-face with humanity. Not only can we look to the Transfiguration (Mt.17:2; Lk.9:29),³²³ to the teaching of Paul (2 Cor.4:6),³²⁴ and the evidence of Revelation (Rev.1:16; 22:4),³²⁵ but if we consider Jesus using 'facing' as an interpretative aid:

"then its literal and metaphorical ramifications are vast, ranging through the great variety of meetings, dialogues, addresses and conflicts; through ideas of rejection of evil, with conversion and repentance as 'turning'; the Last Supper authorising a face to face community around a meal; and an eschatology ('now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face' - 1 Cor.13:12)."³²⁶

Critically, at the Cross, Jesus cries out 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me' (Mt.27:46) which comes from Psalm 22. Later in that Psalm comes the answer 'he has not hidden his face from him, but has listened to his cry for help' (Ps.22:4). There is a suggestion here that we can look to the Cross for a resolution of 'loss of face' - of disgrace/shame. On Christ's face "we see the cost of God's initiative in bodily form. It is a human face that is in torment, the face of one who is in a place of shame."³²⁷ This face was the face that had looked with pain at Peter after his denial.³²⁸ In front of that face Peter's

312 Clapp:p28; cf.J n.8:7.

313 Clapp:p28; cf.Jn.8:11.

314 equates to the overwhelming knowledge of God; cf.Exod.33:20ff; Num.12:8.

315 Gen.32:20; Exod.3:6; 20:19; 24:2,10.

316 Num.6:24ff; Ps.4:6; 67:1.

317 Deut.31:16ff; Ps.22:24; 27:9; Isa.57:17; cf.Ford:p218; Stockitt:p118.

318 1 Chron.16:11; 2 Chron.7:14; Ps.24:3-6; 27:8.

319 Ford:p217; cf.Ps.31:6; 67:1f; 80:3,7,19.

320 Ford:p217.

321 Ezra.9:6; cf.Stockitt:p118.

322 Hutch:p347f (proposes empathy as the answer to shame).

323 Farrar:p238; Hendriksen:p504,510; Marshall:p383.

324 Lias:1892:p61f; Plummer:p62,121; Thrall:p317; cf.2 Cor.2:10.

325 Stockitt:p119.

326 Ford:p220.

327 Stockitt:p118.

328 Lk.22:61.

shame was intense, but in front of that face Peter's shame was addressed.³²⁹

Also at the Cross we see the dead face of Christ - the dead face of God. The dead face means that we cannot separate the atonement from the physical humanity of Christ. The dead face indicates that the person has died. The dead face:

"acts somewhat like a black hole of infinite, impenetrable meaning. ... But it is, most importantly, a black hole with a human face. Evil, sin, death, suffering and all the distortions and corruptions of creation can now be identified with this face. There can be no separation of person and work here. The face of this person leads to the heart of his work. Many atonement theories rely too heavily on the language of 'event' - one objective happening once for all. ... The dead face by no means rules out event language - it is incomprehensible without it. But it ties it into person language in a way that other forms of expression do less adequately."³³⁰

- ***Shame and the Cross*** - A crucifixion was a shame-burdened event, "an utterly offensive affair."³³¹ The cross was known as a place of shame³³² throughout the Mediterranean:³³³

"When Paul spoke ... about the 'crucified Christ' (1 Cor.1:23; 2:2; Gal.3:1), every hearer in the Greek-speaking East ... knew that this 'Christ' ... had suffered a particularly cruel and shameful death, which as a rule was reserved for hardened criminals, rebellious slaves and rebels against the Roman state. That this crucified Jew, Jesus Christ, could truly be a divine being sent on earth, God's Son, the Lord of all and the coming judge of the world, must inevitably have been thought by any educated man to be utter 'madness'."³³⁴

"When Paul talks of the 'folly' of the message of the crucified Jesus,³³⁵ he is therefore not speaking in riddles or using an abstract cipher. He is expressing the harsh experience of his missionary preaching and the offence that it caused. ... [Jesus] died like a slave or a common criminal, in torment, on the tree of shame. ... He was 'given up for us all' on the cross, in a cruel and a contemptible way"³³⁶

In addition to the cross itself, the events surrounding the crucifixion were designed to bring the greatest possible humiliation/shame. Torture, mockery and shaming are particularly evident in the passion narratives of Matthew,³³⁷ Mark,³³⁸ Luke³³⁹ and John.³⁴⁰ We see Jesus facing not only physical pain, but deep humiliation/shame.

However, far from seeing the crucifixion as shameful, the early church saw it as the place

329 Jn.21:15ff; cf.Stockitt:p118.

330 Ford:p221.

331 Hengel:p22 cf.Clapp:p28.

332 Heb.12:2; cf.Albers:p103; Clapp:p28; Moffatt:p197.

333 Clapp:p28; Hengel:p2-10.

334 Hengel:p83.

335 1 Cor.1:18,21,23,25; cf.Fee:75f; Robertson/Plummer:p22.

336 Hengel:p89f.

337 Mt.26:67f; 27:27-31,39-44; cf.Morris:p686,709-12,716-9.

338 Mk.15:1,5,13f,16f,29,31f,34; cf.Clapp:p28; Cranfield:p452,456.

339 Lk.22:63ff; 23:11,35-39; cf.Hendriksen:p996,1001f,1012f,1029ff,1040f; Marshall:p845,856,868ff.

340 Jn.18:34f; 19:1-5; cf.Beasley-Murray:p334-7; Neyrey:p123ff (suggests that John is concerned to show that Jesus was not 'bowed' by these shaming experiences).

of Christ's glory. What was shameful in the eyes of the world was glorious to the eyes of faith.³⁴¹ Christ's shame was his true glory.³⁴²

We have noted that the New Testament brings a different perspective to the issue of shame, and have seen that 'shame' in the New Testament inevitably focuses around the Cross and Passion of Jesus. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider what, specifically, the Atonement has to say to 'shame'.

'The Atonement' and Shame

Throughout history attempts have been made to explain the Atonement. Theories or 'motifs' for the atonement include: Ransom;³⁴³ Victory;³⁴⁴ Satisfaction³⁴⁵ and Merit;³⁴⁶ Substitution/Penal Substitution;³⁴⁷ Representation;³⁴⁸ Sacrifice;³⁴⁹ Moral Example (or manifestation of God's love);³⁵⁰ Martyrdom.³⁵¹ Each of these motifs is valuable but culturally conditioned. With hindsight and from different cultural perspectives, the weaknesses and strengths of each have become evident.³⁵² It is helpful to consider these motifs as a range of explanations, each providing helpful insights, which then can interact with contemporary culture to create a more rounded and culturally significant understanding of Christ's atoning work.³⁵³ Indeed:

"The evidence of scripture, the theories of the atonement, the interaction of faith and culture all bear witness to the Christian experience that salvation is deliverance, liberation, life."³⁵⁴

"New models must be forged if the atonement is to take root in people's lives."³⁵⁵

Among criteria for considering fresh interpretations of the atonement are: commitment to rigorous biblical exegesis; willingness to come to terms with the variety of images and metaphors in Scripture; readiness to consider practical, ethical and pastoral dimensions of the atonement as primary to the theological process.³⁵⁶

Our theories of 'atonement' have been developed in a primarily guilt-oriented Western culture. There has been a tendency to subsume shame under guilt,³⁵⁷ and this is particularly

341 Stott:p40: cf.1 Cor.1:18-25.

342 Carey:p91ff; Neyrey:p114,118f; Stott:p40; cf.Lk.24:26; Jn.7:39; 12:28; 17:5.

343 Carey:p117f; Grensted:p56-87; Moses:p127; Paul:p47ff; Pruyser:p16f.

344 Aulen:p20ff,160ff; Peterson:p46-54; Sykes:p6f.

345 Aulen:p17ff,160ff; Carey:p118ff; Franks:p126ff; Grensted:p71f,120-143; Moses:p128ff; Paul:p65ff; Pruyser:p18f; Sykes:p7.

346 Peterson:p72-76.

347 Baxter:p54ff; Carey:p132-148; Crawford:p257ff; Grensted:p191ff; Gunton:p189; Paul:p91ff; Peterson:p55-63; Smail:p73ff; V.Taylor:p51f..

348 Carey:p128ff; Gunton:p166; V.Taylor:p59f.

349 Ashby:p49-60; Dillistone:p29ff,411f; Peterson:p64-71.

350 Ashby:p60ff; Aulen:p18f,160ff; Carey:p120ff; Dillistone:p27; Franks:p142ff; Grensted:p104ff; Moses:p130ff; Peterson:p77-81; Pruyser:p20f; Sykes:p7.

351 Ashby:p62ff.

352 Moses:p140ff; e.g. Satisfaction theories focus on satisfying God's honour - appropriate for feudal societies, but of limited value in other cultures.

353 Moses:p140-7; Sykes:p8f; cf.Dillistone:p399ff.

354 Moses:p147.

355 Begbie:p194.

356 Begbie:p200ff.

357 See Notes.19,39.

true of the penal substitutionary motif.³⁵⁸ Humanity's guilty/alienated status and need for change/forgiveness are emphasised for meaningful relationship with God to be restored. Humanity's experience of 'shame' has until recently been neglected, apart, that is, from some work by Pruyser in which he considered existing theories of atonement and suggested that we need to opt for the moral influence theories if we are to adequately address 'shame'.³⁵⁹ It is my contention that we would be better served by a new look at the biblical resources and the faith tradition in the spirit of the above criteria, which could then be set alongside existing theories.

I have already drawn attention to a number of areas which must be considered if our understanding of atonement is to embrace shame-related concerns of Non-Western societies and developing pre-occupations with shame in the West. These are:

- ***Jesus' Teaching*** - In the examples we have considered Jesus is demonstrably concerned to honour appropriate shame,³⁶⁰ challenge inappropriate shaming,³⁶¹ and demonstrate the eagerness of God to cover the shame of the penitent prodigal.³⁶² Any theology of Christ's life and work *must* address these issues.
- ***Shame and Awe*** - Maintenance of balance between an Old Testament sense of awe before the divine³⁶³ and a New Testament sense of intimacy/ease of access. The Cross does not herald an era of shamelessness before God and each other,³⁶⁴ rather it provides access to the grace of God which deals with guilt and shame, providing forgiveness, cleansing and covering.
- ***Covering*** - The Old Testament indicates that when shamed, we are exposed or defiled. We need 'covering' or 'purifying'. The Cross sits in a biblical tradition, which addresses these needs. Starting with God's covering of Adam and Eve,³⁶⁵ and continuing with the sacrificial system, ways were found to 'cover'/'purify' shame.³⁶⁶ While some stress the need for cleansing from shame's defilement,³⁶⁷ Bonhoeffer highlights the importance of 'covering' in thinking about shame.³⁶⁸ He suggests that "covering is necessary because it keeps awake shame, and with it the memory of the disunion with the origin. ... Shame is overcome only ... through restoration of fellowship with God and men."³⁶⁹ Thus it is through the Cross that it becomes possible to know reconciliation, cleansing and God's acceptance.
- ***Shame, Honour, Glory and Holiness*** - We have seen that the early church understood

358 Baxter:p55f; cf. Calvin:II.16:5-11 (who often alludes to Isa.53 (e.g., II.12:4; II.15:3; II.16:5,6) but ignores the 'shame' imagery.

359 Pruyser:p25.

360 Lk.11:5ff

361 Jn.8:2ff

362 Lk.15:11ff.

363 Schneider:1977:p109 quotes the Talmud - "A sense of shame is a lovely sign in a man. Whoever has a sense of shame will not sin so quickly; but whoever shows no sense of shame in his visage, his father surely never stood on Mount Sinai."

364 Schneider:1977:p116; cf. p1,12,57,118ff & Nietzsche's 'shameless presumption' of Christianity.

365 Gen.3.21.

366 See Notes.257-262.

367 Goldingay:1995:p7ff; cf. Albers:p96f; Carey:p109.

368 Bonhoeffer:p145ff.

369 Bonhoeffer:p146ff.

Christ's 'shame' as his 'glory'.³⁷⁰ Society can make honour the opposite of disgrace-shame, the Christian community needs to recognise a different dynamic centred around holiness,³⁷¹ and glory (as defined by Christ's suffering not by the hierarchical honour systems of human society).³⁷² "Our hope is not that shame has ended. Our hope is that Jesus bore shame on the cross and shamed it. Shame was crucified, itself disarmed and publicly stripped of its ultimate malignancy."³⁷³

- ***The Face of God*** - We need to pursue the ideas about the face of God, suggested by Ford³⁷⁴ and Stockitt.³⁷⁵ The 'shamed' need to see the smile of God's acceptance - acceptance bourn out of real understanding. Jesus' experience of 'loss of face' in the passion narrative may enable the shamed to *feel* his understanding. The once dead and now living face of God bears the scars of deep shame - God understands:

"To gaze upon the face of someone else is an essentially intimate act. It is to desire to know the other, to understand, to appreciate, to give respect. The mutuality of Christ gazing upon us in love and we reciprocating that gaze is an image of healing and restoration. The face of Christ conveys a depth of interaction with humanity that calls for a response of thanksgiving and praise. It deals with the loss of respect and value that all of humanity feels. It treats the experience and condition of shame with the utmost seriousness, yet counts it as nothing and replaces it with honour."³⁷⁶

Some Pastoral Issues

A narrow focus on guilt has limited Christianity's ability to address shame-related issues.³⁷⁷ If shame has been recognised, it has often been seen as subsidiary to 'guilt'.³⁷⁸ Distinguishing between these two 'affects' will enable the Church to identify ways in which it can provide more effective pastoral care to those debilitated by 'shame'.³⁷⁹

Beyond those issues highlighted in association with the atonement, we should consider:

- ***A renewed focus on our status as God's image bearers*** - Depravity emphasises the distinction between the creature and the creator, so much so that it sometimes seems that the image of God has been totally effaced. Our fundamental worth, value and eternal connection with God are a necessary antidote to shame.³⁸⁰
- ***Acceptance of Limitations*** - The assumption that we should strive for perfection is deeply embedded in the consciousness of many. Shame can result from a failure to live up to internalised but impossible standards. We need to celebrate and accept our limitations:

370 Clapp:p28; cf.Note.340.

371 Wells:p131.

372 Carey:p91ff; Neyrey:p114,118,126.

373 Clapp:p28; cf.Col.2:15.

374 Ford:p215ff.

375 Stockitt:p118ff.

376 Stockitt:p119; cf.Lk.7:36-50; Capps:1993:p163f.

377 Albers:p90; cf.Hutch:p348f.

378 See Notes.19-23.

379 Capps:1983:p94ff; You:p64.

380 Albers:p90f; cf.Jantzen:p29.

"Human finitude is not a curse. It is a gift which frees us from the anxiety of having to be like God!"³⁸¹

- **Baptism and Identity** - We have noted that people can develop a life-long, shame-based identity early in life.³⁸² For the faith community, identity is something established 'covenantally'. The concept of covenant is significant in Scripture, as are the 'rites of passage' by which one enters into a covenant relationship with God.³⁸³ Both circumcision, under the old covenant, and baptism under the new, are 'identity-creating' events.³⁸⁴ Baptism provides cleansing³⁸⁵ and a new identity - not shame-based but sanctified,³⁸⁶ clothed/united with Christ,³⁸⁷ with a name written in the book of life.³⁸⁸ It seals us by the Spirit into a specific caring community, providing the certainty of inclusion and acceptance.³⁸⁹
- **Grace** - The guilty need to experience grace and forgiveness, the 'shamed' need to experience unconditional acceptance.³⁹⁰
- **Justification** - We have seen that shame provokes narcissistic/defensive behaviour patterns³⁹¹ - self-defence can be transformed through appropriation of the believers status as justified by grace through faith.³⁹²
- **The Community of Faith** - can be a significant agent for healing.³⁹³ "Love ... is at the core of dismantling ... shame ... in the lives of people"³⁹⁴

Conclusion

Shame is addressed throughout the Scriptures, but nowhere as dramatically as at the Cross. The Cross is the place where shame was transformed into glory, and it forms the focal point of a range of pastoral responses to shame available to the Christian community. We have established, in principle, that the Gospel and the Cross address shame, and have highlighted areas which clearly require further study - in so doing we have only been able to scratch the surface of an important issue.

381 Albers:p92; cf.Goldingay:1998:p93; Hutch:p348; You:p64.

382 See Note.38

383 270+ refs. to 'covenant'; 80 refs. to 'circumcision'; 90 refs. to 'baptism' (NIV).

384 Albers:p93ff - incorporating the individual into the community.

385 Eph.5:26; Tit.3:5; cf.Albers:p96f; Thomas:p289f.

386 Col.2:10-12; Albers:p95; cf.Rev.21:27.

387 Rom.6:3f; Gal.3:27; cf.Albers:p96.

388 Phil.4:3; Rev.21:27; cf.Albers:p94.

389 Eph.1:13; 4:30; Albers:p95.

390 Albers:p97ff; You:p64; cf.Lk.15:20ff; Bailey:"Poet...":1983:p181ff.

391 See Notes.78-81,89-96.

392 Rom.3:21ff; cf.Albers:p100f.

393 Albers:p106ff,131f; Capps:1933:p165; Hutch:p347.

394 Albers:p125f; cf.Goldingay:1998:p131; Nouwen:p36f.