



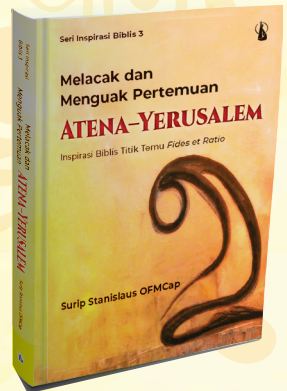
■ **MANAGING & MAINTAINING THE GARDEN OF EDEN**

Biblical Inspiration for Ecological Concern



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MANAGING & MAINTAINING THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Biblical Inspiration for Ecological Concern

An irony unfolds in the history of human life. A pair of twins, science and technology, was born in the early 17th century. Now both have given the progress of civilization and the comfort of human life. Both of them still promise the hope of raising human dignity from the mud poverty-humiliation and liberation from the clutches of tyranny of power. But in on the other hand, the two children have fueled human greed for wealth and triggered unlimited exploitation of nature. Is there a result of wrong education?

Ernst F. Schumacher believes that science and technology are inherently good, but must be used wisely. Wise action means wearing for complete safety. Don't use knowledge for whatever it is possible, because excessive use of science and technology will damage nature. Thus, it is not science and technology that is at fault, but humans, users of science and technology that are not efficient, are the culprits behind the terrible natural crisis and the destruction of the world.

Robert Muller once presented a series of lists of very worrying and concerning conditions in our nature. According to the results of his research, on our Planet Earth there is a drama of destruction by its own inhabitants that threatens the harmony of life. Every minute, 21 ha of tropical forest is destroyed by greedy human hands; every minute, 50 tons of topsoil is stripped away by wind and water; every hour, 685 ha of arable land turns into desert; every hour, 60 cases of cancer eat away at the human body due to the depletion of the ozone layer; every day, 25,000 people die due to drought or polluted water; every day, 10 tons of radioactive waste are scattered by hundreds of nuclear plants; and many more litanies of depravity due to human greed that dangle with it.]

That's a picture of our live environmental crisis, the negative impact of inappropriate use of science and technology. Lynn White, an expert on American history, point out that the culprits of human greed and today's ecological crisis due to teachings and faith Christian. He wrote: "God planned everything explicitly for the sake of human interests and power... Christianity... asserts that it has been God's will, humans exploit nature for human purposes itself.

This opinion was developed by Arnold Toynbee who said that Gen. 1:28 allowed Adam and Eve to do whatever they wanted on the earth. Meanwhile, John A. Passmore analyzes the ecological crisis from a philosophical point of view. He also concluded that the literal interpretation of human power over other creatures in Gen. 1:28 is one of the various triggers for human desire to drain natural resources. As a result, instead of leaving nature as it is, humans tend to cultivate it, and don't even hesitate to exploit it.

Thus, Christians were accused of being the culprits of human greed exploit nature without limits. This accusation is based on a literal interpretation of Gen. 1:28 which tells the story of God's blessing on humankind to fruitful and increased in number, filled the earth and subdued it, mastered the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and all the animals that move on the earth. How do we respond? Are there interpretations above harmony with the ethics of life our Christians? We can go further more and ask whether God wills us destroying our own home?

The book entitled *Managing & Maintaining the Garden of Eden: Biblical Inspiration for Ecological Concern* wants to explain Gen. 1:28 in its context so that we do not fail to understand. In its context, Gen. 1:28 becomes part of the work of humankind creation as the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27) which must reflect on God's Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3) and tasked to cultivating and maintaining the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). In that context, Gen. 1:28 does not have an exploitative meaning at all, but instead advocates ecological concern.

The description of Gen. 1:28 it describes biblical inspiration ecological concern based on the traditions of the Israelites in celebrating Sabbath, Sabbath Day, Sabbath Year and Jubilee Years. The notion of God is the owner of the land, the giver and her fertility restorers from the prophets culminating in the creation of the heavens the new earth and the realization of God's Kingdom in the New Testament also offers ecological concern to address the current natural crisis. Finally, friendship with nature in the style of Francis of Assisi and the hymn of the Canticle of the Sun (Brother Sun and Sister Moon) which is accompanied by songs of praise is inspired from the Holy Scriptures (Psa. 148:1-14; PrAzar. 1:51-90; Sir. 42:15-43:33) become a moral invitation to care for the ecology for us in this era.

COMPLETING & BECOMING ONE FLESH

Biblical Inspiration for Family Building

What is sexuality? How is it different from sex? Strict distinctions and restrictions between the two will help us interpret them correctly. In a narrow sense, sexuality is related to genital sexuality or sex or male and female gender. Thus sex is only a part and not the dominant thing in sexuality. In a broad sense, sexuality is related to existential sexuality, namely everything that determines the existence of a person as a man or a woman. Existential sexuality will color, stamp and influence all existence human life, so that it is impossible for humans to deny or escape from their sexuality. In interpersonal relationships sexuality serves as “a way of existing for others humanly both physically and spiritually.” So, real sexuality is not just sex or genital sexuality, but existential sexuality which includes all human ways of existing as men or women get along with each other in all walks of life.

The intensity of interaction between the opposite sexes will determine the quality of the nature of their sexuality, namely reciprocal or unilateral, total or partial, shallow or deep. In interpersonal relationships sex appeal and eroticism humanity must be controlled and directed towards agape, so that reciprocal agape between the sexes can give birth to new dimensions that form the unity of “we” or interpersonal bipolarity. Meetings between the sexes, especially those involving sex, should be imbued with agape which respects each other as partners and does not treat others as objects.

There are ways of experiencing “being for others in a human way both physically and spiritually” in accordance with the culture of society and the status of life somebody. One can exist for another by choosing the path of celibacy either as a monk/nun or not married. This way is the way to break away from sex and attachment to one person only, no because sex is viewed negatively, but because it is so attracted to God and His Kingdom, thus choosing to devote himself to many person. People can exist for others by choosing the path of family life, marrying a partner to live together as one husband and wife are in profit and misfortune throughout their lives. This method is legal genital sexuality or sexual relations as an expression of husband and wife love and instituted marriage to regulate sexuality.

Traditional views tend to view sexuality and marriage in a negative light. Plato (348 BC) taught that humans consist of a body and a soul. The soul comes from a place of perfection, ideas are eternal, and it wants to return to that place its origin but is imprisoned by the body. This dualistic view was developed by Plotinus (270) by viewing the body as an insult to humans. He is of the opinion that matter is bad/evil and the body is the grave of the soul, so that sexuality and marriage are seen as bad and must be rejected. This opinion was confirmed by the Stoic philosophers who aspired to serenity soul as the source of human happiness. They strive to achieve apatheia, which is an attitude that endures suffering patiently/surrender, and ataraxia, which is an attitude that controls emotions and passions. Therefore, intercourse and the enjoyment of sex must be rejected.

Around 277 AD a syncretic religion created by Mani was formed in Iran which selectively adopted the teachings of Zarathustra, Buddha and Jesus developed into Manichaeism. This school teaches extreme dualism, namely that this world consists of the Kingdom of Light (God) and the Kingdom of Darkness (Satan) which are opposed to each other. The conflict between the two elements occurs within humans, so the struggle of Manichaeism is to free humans from the evil element of darkness by mortification including abstinence from sex.

In our Church also appears a view that lacks respect sexuality and marriage. Tertullian (222) views celibacy as a form and way of life that is far more noble than family life, because marriage is seen as surrendering oneself to the power of the lusts of the flesh. So a second marriage because the partner has died is also strictly prohibited, because they consider it to be nothing but prostitution. Ambrose (339-397) also thought that the ideal of married life is if the husband and wife stop have sex, especially for wives who are elderly, because their intercourse will not give birth to any more offspring. This opinion is confirmed by Jerome (347-420) said that married women you can still achieve a life of holiness if you stop having intercourse altogether sex.

Augustine (354-430), who was trapped in Manichaeism and Platonism, also argued that sexual desire is the greatest human passion that paralyzes and darkens the mind, even original sin is inherited through sex. Therefore, he does not understand why Allah created women and views them so negatively. According to him the only role of a woman is to bear children, but giving birth also means passing on original sin to the offspring. So husband-wife sex may only be carried out for the sake of procreation or to continue offspring and not to seek sexual pleasure, because deliberately seeking sexual pleasure is a sin. Husband and wife should minimize air when having sex desire not to sin gravely.

Augustine's ideas influenced the Libri Poenitentiales (Books Penances) in the 6th to 11th centuries which were composed to assist confessors in giving penances. Husbands and wives are only allowed to have sex for the sake of continuing their offspring and not for seeking sexual pleasure. They are also required to frequently abstain from sex, for example at fasting period, Advent, Sunday night before celebrating Mass, pregnancy and old age. Therefore, the Scholastic theologians advise married couples to live like Joseph and Mary, that is, not to have sex if they do not want descendants again. This advice was confirmed by Thomas Aquinas (1274) who said that anything that goes against *actio rationalis* (actions of the mind) is bad/evil. Because orgasms can weaken and darken the mind, husband and wife sex can only be tolerated if it is for the sake of continuing offspring.

Even so, traditional views on sexuality and marriage are not all negative. Abelard was of the view that sex was a gift from the Creator, so that sexual pleasure was good. Hugo of St. Viktor emphasized that sex between husband and wife is good. Meanwhile, Albertus Magnus explained the relationship between love and sexuality by arguing that love makes sexuality human or love humanizes sexuality.

How does Scripture play a role in confusing views on sexuality and marriage? The book entitled *Completing & Becoming One Flesh: Biblical Inspiration for Family Building* wants to present a view of the Scriptures which, although not presented in a systematic and practical way, shed light here and there on sexuality and the institution of marriage that governs it.

In the Old Testament, Gen. 1-3 explicitly speak of sexuality and implicitly present the concept of the institution of marriage governing sexuality. The institution of marriage is seen as a civil contract by the nation Israel (Tob. 7:13-14) with the role of dowry (Gen. 34:12), the stages of marriage (Deu. 22:23-27; Gen. 24:66-67) and its endogenous nature polygam polygyny (Deu. 17:3-6 ; 22:28-29). The prophets analogize the institution of marriage, the relationship between husband and wife like the relationship between God and His people/ Israel (Am. 3:2; Hos. 1; 2; Jer. 2:1-3; 3:6-13; Eze. 16; 23; Isa. 54:4-8; 62:4-5). The Israelite sages continued the analogy of the relationship between God and Israel with husband and wife through the Song of Songs which promotes equality between men and women and views sexuality positively as part of true love that cannot be bought and that is brought to death

(Son. 1:13-17) ; 2:2.7.16; 7:10-11; 8:6-7). The true love of a man and a woman used as an analogy of God's love relationship with His chosen people (Jewish interpretation) or Christ's love relationship with His Church (Christian interpretation). The book of Proverbs and Jesus bin Sirach also tells of praise that elevates a woman and wife (Prov. 18:22; 19:14; Sir. 26:15) as well as hymns of praise about the excellence and role of a good, virtuous, polite and capable wife (Prov. 31:10-31; Sir. 26:1-3.13-18).

In the New Testament, to the church in Corinth Paul advised Christians to live and value marriage by abstaining from fornication and free sex (1Cor. 5:1-3; 6:12-20). Paul condemned fornication and all forms of sexual perversion as contrary to Christian ethics and the sanctity of marriage (1Col. 7:1-40; 1The. 4:1-8). In his Pastoral Letters he also fights heretical sects that have anti-marriage tendencies and not emancipative and does not respect children (1Tim. 3:4; 5:14; Tit. 2:4-5). Therefore, Paul give the rules in household life that regulate husband-wife and parent-child relationships (Eph. 5:22-6:4 cf. 1Ptr. 3:1-7). Meanwhile, Jesus emphasized that a husband-wife relationship that has been united by God can not be divorced by humans (Mk. 10:2-12; Mt. 19:3-12).

TRACKING & DISCOVERING ATHEN-JERUSALEM MEETINGS

Biblical Inspiration for Fides et Ratio Meeting Points

In Caesarea Paul was put on trial false accusations of the Jewish religious leaders. As a Roman citizen, because his parents were Roman citizens, he appealed to Caesar and the ship that Paulus was traveling on was hit by a storm and shipwrecked on the island of Malta. The Evangelist Luke records: “When Paul picked up a sheaf branches and put it on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat of the fire, then bit his hand.... they said one to another, “This man is definitely a murderer, for, even though he is having escaped from the sea, the goddess of justice did not spare him” (Act. 28:3-4).

The goddess Themis is the goddess of justice in Greek mythology, which is equivalent to the goddess Justitia from Roman mythology. The goddess Themis is personified with a closed-eyed woman who lifts a scale in her left hand and holds a sword in her right hand. From a legal perspective, closed eyes are a sign that one cannot see and cannot distinguish someone based on their appearance or social status. Scales held high in hand sign that he will give priority to consideration in assessing someone both his mistakes and goodness. The sword in the hand that is stretched downwards is a sign that he has the power/authority that is not arbitrary to strike down punishment for someone.

The Goddess Themis is goddess that the Maltese people mean by the Goddess of Justice. They believed that Paul was a bad person, so that even though he escaped death from a shipwreck, the Goddess of Justice did not let him survive. He had to face trial and punishment from the goddess Themis who sent a venomous and deadly viper. Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, who was a doctor, knew full well that the viper was indeed venomous and would surely bring death to the bitten Paul. Likewise the Maltese people believed that slowly the venom of the viper would enter Paul's body, so that he would meet his death as recompense/punishment for his crime. But it turned out that Paul was strong and it was as if nothing had happened to him, so that made the Maltese people think that he could counteract the powerful goddess Themis, which meant he had the power of a god and he is a god.

Such a misunderstanding about himself had also been experienced by Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Act. 13:1-14:28) between 46-49 to Asia Minor including the region of Lycaonia. In Iconium they faced some members of the public who refused their teachings and wanted to stone them, so they fled to the cities of Lystra and Derbe. When Paul performed a miracle healing a lame man, a misunderstanding occurred among the Lystrans who saw Barnabas and Paul as the gods Zeus and Hermes (Act. 14:6-18).

This misunderstanding can only be understood when placed in a setting cultural background and religiosity of the people of Lystra. Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were the three principal cities of Lycaonia or the region of Asia Minor adjacent to Pisidia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Galatia and Prigia. Such as the Asia Minor region which is generally Greek in culture with the worship of the gods, so did the Lystrans. God Zeus is the supreme ruler and the leader of the gods in Greek mythology who is equivalent to God Jupiter from Roman mythology. Zeus is an immortal god, the youngest son of Titan Cronos and Titaness Rhea. After growing up he overthrew his father and became the ruler of the world with the power and ability to controlled the heavens and the earth, so he was named the god of climate, weather and destiny. Meanwhile, Hermes is a god who in Roman mythology is equivalent with Mercury.

He was the son of Zeus and his wife Maia, who reigned as the god of messengers, guides, protectors of adventurers and guide the spirits to the world of the dead.

Paul and Barnabas were deeply saddened by this misunderstanding. They painstakingly tried to explain and convince that they were just ordinary people who did not deserve sacrifices. Paul also raised their belief in the god Zeus as the ruler of heaven and earth to explain the Gospel he preached. He asked the Lystrans to abandoning the belief and custom of offering sacrifices to vain gods, because in fact it is not Zeus but God who is the ruler of heaven and earth, regulator of seasons and soil fertility, giver of crops and the joy of life. However, the invitation did not receive a positive response from them and Paul's efforts to preach the Gospel failed. Paul's failure that was more severe experienced in his second missionary journey (Act. 15:36-18:22) between 50-52. Paul left Jerusalem and stopped in Athens. He preached the Gospel by giving his first lecture at the Areopagus (Act. 17:16-34). Several thinkers from the Epicureans and the Stoics debated with him and someone said: "What does this babblers want to say?" But others said: "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." This was because he preached the Gospel about Jesus and about His resurrection (Act. 17:18).

Athens was a city of philosophy, because of the philosophical traditions (such as the Epicureans and Stoics) that dominated the cultural civilization of that time. Meanwhile, Jerusalem is a city of faith, because Christian faith in the risen Jesus Christ originates and flows from there: "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth!" (Act. 1:8). Paul was an apostle who was sent to proclaim the Christian faith with authenticity the most authoritative teachings of the Early Church in Jerusalem. He traveled on missions to various nations up to Athens. In Athens there lived many Jews, so many synagogues were found and Paul could reason with Jews and God-fearing people. It was in the synagogues that Paul preached the gospel to the Jews.

Athens was also known as a city of gods and a thriving idol-worship that made Paul's heart ache. The Acropolis is a hill crowded with temples and statues of deities. In the center of the city there is the Agora, which is a large square where many people meet. It was in that place that traders peddled their wares and philosophers presented their ideas. Therefore, Paul was able to meet with thinkers/philosophers from among the Epicureans and Stoics. From among the philosophers some argue that Paul is preacher of the teachings of foreign gods, because he preached the Gospel about Jesus and His resurrection. The Stoic and Epicurean philosophers rejected the doctrine of the resurrection. So, when Paul spoke about Jesus and His resurrection, they assumed that he was teaching and introducing foreign gods. They thought Paul was preaching about two new gods, namely the God Jesus and the Goddess Anastasis. Because the Greek for "resurrection" is anastasis. But anastasis is also a name for a goddess. Therefore, the Epicureans and Stoics who did not recognize the existence of the resurrection, called Paul a chatterbox or a talkative braggart.

It is most likely that Paul climbed to the Acropolis hill and was on the Mars hill observing the Parthenon which is the seat of the statue of the goddess Athena. On that hill the Athenians came one after another to offer prayers and offer sacrifices to their gods, especially the goddess Athena at the Parthenon. The road leading up to the hills was fenced off with statues of the Greek gods, so everywhere indeed there are idols. Not far from the Parthenon is the Areopagus or the place of the highest court of the Athenians. It was there that Paulus was interrogated and given the opportunity to present his teaching: "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means" (Act. 17:19-20).

Paul's skill as an apostle was tested by the Athenians. Nonetheless he is not afraid and there are ways to preach the Gospel. Already it is certain that he did not lecture on philosophy, but taught and expounded teachings of the Christian faith. He began his teaching with an approach contextual (Act. 17:22-31). The Athenians worshiped the gods so that the whole city was full of images and things idol. Thus, Paul's statement to the Athenians that "in all things you worship very much" is an appreciation from him based on context local culture that is in touch with the worship of the gods.

Paul was walking around in the city and found an altar inscribed: "To the unknown god." The inscription on the altar about god unknown that Paul made a stepping stone to preach Jesus Christ. He taught: "What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (Act. 17:23). Then he outlined the core teachings of his lecture, namely about Jesus Christ: The unknown God is "The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things [...]. He has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Act. 17:24-31).

Paul taught that Jesus Christ was the name of a God they did not know and worship. He is the Creator who incarnates into a human being, suffers tribulations, dies... Until here the Athenians were very enthusiastic about listening to Paul's teachings, but when he continued his teaching by saying the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, he was immediately ridiculed and abandoned by his listeners: "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, 'We will hear you again about this'" (Act. 17:32).

The Athenians mocked and abandoned Paul, because they were not know and do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They did acknowledge the existence of life after death, but life is not because resurrection, but because of the immortality of the soul. Man consists of soul and body. While humans are still alive, the soul is imprisoned in the body. Therefore, the death of man liberates his soul and that soul lives on in eternity. Meanwhile, the body dies and disintegrates, so there can be no resurrection of the body. Paul was disappointed by the response of the Athenians and felt like a failure.

Paul failed to catechize on the resurrection of the dead among the people Athens, because they have their way of thinking/rationality, culture and religiosity alone. For adherents of the Epicurean school, they argue that everything that exist can be explained by Intellegibilis Principles/Causes, namely the principle that covers the area of intellectual capacity or human ratio/rational. For example, intellectually death is understood as the end of suffering or pleasure that can be felt by the body, so that bodily reality is not interest or not find any value after death. Adherents of the Stoic philosophy do not have an understanding of the glorification of the body, because they were heavily influenced by Plato and had a dualistic view of human being consists of soul and body. The soul is eternal and imprisoned within human body, so that the death of the body releases the soul back to its world eternal. So, glorification is related to the soul and not the body. Therefore, the glorification of the body through the resurrection of the dead because of the resurrection of Christ taught by Paul is deadlocked. At this point his teaching on the Christian faith: "If Christ had not been resurrected, so our preaching is in vain and your belief is in vain" (1Cor. 15:14).

In Jerusalem, teaching about the Christian faith did not encounter many bottlenecks and dead ends, because the truth of faith was revealed by God, the guarantor of truth. In

Athens, the teaching of the Christian faith collided with a rational/philosophical way of thinking that was inconsistent and even contradictory. For example, belief of a God creating all things out of nothing (creatio ex nihilo) was impossible in the realm of thought that Greek philosophy was accustomed to. The Parmenidian univox truth thought: "All that exists is present, all that is not is not." Thus, it makes no sense "create something out of nothing." He also thinks about God the Creator as far as the Motor Immobilis (Motor that is not driven by anything else) or Causa Prima Non Causata (Uncaused Cause) or Actus Purus (Pure Actus - the Principle of Perfection itself).

Aristotle (384-322 BC) had actually initiated the principles of actus and potentia from being, but still could not explain the origins of this world and all its contents. He is only able to say that this world and everything in it is eternal, which means "already existed and will always exist." Plato is the originator of the Divine Idea as the ultimate reality from which all that exists originates and flows. The Stoic philosophers, who saw that everything was material, also argued that the Logos was the divine force that was present and animates all that exists or the initial reality/origin of all that exists.

Plato's and the Stoics' concept of the Logos presumably brings them together Greek and Jewish philosophical thought about God. Philo of Alexandria (25 SM-45 AD) thought of God as indivisible Pure Being, sufficient in itself, free, independent of time and space, transcending everything including the human mind and everything is in Him. This emphasis on the transcendent and universal nature of God raises the need intermediary beings between man and God such as angels, Messiah, Wisdom of God, Spirit of God and Logos. Adhere to Plato's philosophy, Philo says that God needs an intermediary, i.e., Ideas, to communicate with the world. Ideas are what create the world with order and He is Verbum Dei, Logos. Thus the Christian faith of Jerusalem about the Word of God (Verbum Dei) from whom all that is there was created, in Athens rationally understood as the Logos of which everything that exists originates and flows. So, preaching the Christian faith is not enough just to teach the contents of the truth of faith, but must also pay attention to the context nature of thought, religiosity and local culture.

Indeed, the Church Father Tertullian (160-222) denied the role of philosophy in believing in God and emphasized that to reach God it is enough with a surrendered soul. Philosophy has no effect and even vanity mere and not beneficial to the preaching of the truth of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Philosophy is even dangerous because it can distort the truth revealed by God, but the fact is that he also cannot avoid the influence of philosophy on him because his theological reflections also originate from philosophical schools certain. For example, he accused Plato's philosophy of heresy, but used Stoic and Aristotle philosophy to explain the human soul.

Ambrose, Augustine and several other Church Fathers disagreed with Tertullian and saw the enormous role of philosophy in reflection Christian faith. Dionysius of the Areopagus was one of the first Christian philosophers explores Plato's philosophy to explain the Christian faith and embraced by Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and most of the philosophers of the Middle Ages. On the contrary Christian faith also influences the discussion of philosophy. Influence these include, among other things, the concept of Christian monotheism which replaced Greek polytheism, the concept of an anthropocentric world because of the incarnation of God that replaces the the subject of cosmological discussion about the world of human life and the meaning of law very rational nature becomes theological, that is, it comes from God. Eternity the human soul according to Greek philosophy also received a theological meaning

in the period Church fathers, that is, the soul that unites with God.

Christian faith and philosophy that influence each other gave birth terminology among the Church Fathers that became popular in philosophy Thomas Aquinas that philosophy is *Ancilla Theologiae* (Servant of Theology). Philosophy is like a servant/helper who is in charge of helping and facilitating man to understand rationally the mysteries of the revealed Christian faith God. Philosophy is also called *Praeambulum Fidei*, namely Introduction Faith. This terminology was adhered to by Church Fathers such as Dionysius of Areopagus, Anselm, Bonaventure, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

Augustine argued that “faith seeks understanding” (*fides quaerens intellectum*) which means faith seeks true understanding, no inconsequential/reckless. So, having faith in God means constantly seeking true understanding of God. But Augustine also emphasized that a true understanding of God will only be obtained by having faith or surrender to Him. That is, to get the right understanding about God’s mystery, the condition is to have faith in Him. With his statement “*inquietum est cor meum donec requiescat in te*” (how restless my heart is until it rests in You) Augustine revealed his struggles in believing in God while continuing to restlessly seek true understanding of God. Thomas Aquinas who married theology and philosophy systematically adopted the term philosophy *transubstantiatio* to explain the mystery of the change of the bread and wine into the body and the blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Justin Martyr (100-165) and Clement of Alexandria (150-215), Christian thinkers in early Christianity, argued that Socrates and Plato had sought and tried to explain what truth is, even though its fullness had only occurred in Jesus Christ. The search for truth is not the monopoly of Christians and in a way philosophy becomes a preparation for receiving the Gospel (*preparatio evangelica*). Justin Martyr testified that his conversion to Christianity was due to the role of philosophy he had studied, so that for him philosophy was one of the most valuable gifts from God and was designed to lead man to God.

The thought of Thomas Aquinas is a representation of the intimate relationship between faith and philosophy in the Middle Ages. Justin Martyr’s thoughts are a representation of the role of philosophy in the Christian faith in early Christianity. Even today, the reciprocal relationship and the role of philosophy in the Christian faith is still an interesting topic of discussion. In 1998 Pope John Paul II issued the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio* which emphasized the influence and close relationship between philosophy and Christian faith. Philosophy does not trivialize the mystery of the Christian faith, Christian faith does not conflict with reason. Both of them together lead people to the true Truth that gives fullness to human life goals. The Acts of the Apostles provides evidence that the Christian message had from the very beginning come into contact with the philosophical schools of that time. If Christians want unbelievers to listen to them, they just can’t refer to Moses and the prophets, but must also make use of knowledge natural knowledge of God and the conscience found in every human being. Faith and reason is like two wings by which the human spirit is lifted up to the contemplation of truth.

The book *TRACKING & DISCOVERING ATHEN-JERUSALEM MEETINGS: Biblical Inspiration for Fides et Ratio Meeting Points* wants to describe the search for meeting points between philosophy and theology, especially Hellenism and Neo-Platonism with Scriptures in the history of the life of the faithful. Presumably this meeting point between the two can make us realize how inseparable they are and how mutually influencing one another. Indeed, the benefits of philosophy in theology it should not be exaggerated so that it seems that

philosophy is the source of the truth of the Christian faith. On the other hand, it is wrong to assume that there is absolutely nothing to do with theology which teaches and proclaims the Christian faith with Greek philosophical thought. The two are related to each other and show common ground whose influence is either positive or negative. The positive influence is most evident in the attitude of Christianity which takes over philosophical ideas to explain the Christian faith and the negative influences appears in the apologetic attitude of Christianity which provides answers to controversies and fundamental questions that question the Christian faith.

Hellenism has affected the Jewish nation, especially the upper class society and even resulted in especially young people who had received Hellenism education apostatized from Judaism. This fact was responded to by the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes who is a teacher/scribe by preparing critical teaching materials and equipping his students to critically question the truth of all traditional Israelite wisdom and Hellenism according to the main principle of “fear of God”. Meanwhile, the Son of Sirach saw Hellenism as a threat to the Jewish nation’s apostasy from the monotheistic Yahwistic religion, so it had to be shunned and the Book of Jesus bin Sirach was compiled as a practical guide, especially for young people in responding to Hellenism. Indeed even Jews could derive great wealth from Hellenism and remain faithful to the religion of Yahwism. This openness to Hellenism and remaining faithful to Judaism has been demonstrated by the author of the Book of Wisdom of Solomon. This openness to Hellenism and remaining faithful to the Yahwistic religion which later in the New Testament era provided an opportunity for writers to formulate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of a readership especially outside Palestine which was different and civilized Hellenism and Neo-Platonism.

It is this awareness of the mutual influence between philosophy and theology that encourages the writer to trace and uncover the meeting points between the two, so that they can live and teach the Christian faith responsibly. The Latin expression says: “Felix, qui semper vitae bene computat usum.” It means, “happy is the man who always has the best idea of how to live his life.” Thinking is a ratio/mind activity related to thinking, calculating, planning, observing, reflecting, re-listening, and examining human beings who are essentially thinking creatures. Aristotle said that by nature every human being wants to know. Want to know what? Want to know everything related to the origin and purpose of his existence, life and all who participate for him, and others, God and the environment around him. This curiosity also encourages humans to think correctly or rationally, because of the demand for accountability for whether or not what is thought, decided and lived. Meanwhile, fides/faith means belief in the truth as well as true testimony of life. Faith is God’s grace as well as human relational experience with God. Faith is a surrender to God which is at the same time displayed in a contextual human way of life.