

NEW MOVEMENTS DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

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Introduction

Every human institution needs fresh re-orientation and new dynamics in order to make it lively, relevant and appealing to the contemporary audience. Church, which was envisaged as a spiritual movement by Christ, has developed during the centuries institutional structures. Such systems were influenced by historical ideologies and thoughts. Naturally human elements played an important role in them. Thus one can say that the Church is both divine and human. As a human institution she needs fresh outlooks and reformulations of the structures. At this juncture Jn 3:8, "the Spirit blows wherever it likes" becomes pertinent. This is the need of the present times. Some reflections on such movements in the society of Israel may provide insights and initiatives towards achieving this goal. Here is an attempt to study three movements which flourished during the OT times.

1. The Rechabite Movement

We do not have detailed evidence about this sect in the Bible.¹ In the light of the study of the available sources, I will make certain reflections.

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¹Frank S. Frick in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol 5, ed. David Noel Freedman, New York: Doubleday, 1992, 630-632.

1.1. An Apocryphal Document

This work which is entitled *History of the Rechabites*,² originated during 1-4 century A.D. It recounts the visit of a virtuous man to the island of the Rechabites.

1.1.1. Details

According to this work, the Rechabites, during the time of prophet Jeremiah, departed from Jerusalem to the island by the help of the angels of God. It describes the virginal birth of the Word and Lent, the paradisiacal state the members enjoy, and speaks about the death of the body and ascent of the soul. Since this work belongs to the category of apocryphal literature of the Old Testament times, it does not enjoy historical value. Still it reflects certain theological perspectives. The question which is interesting to us is the reason why the Rechabites departed from Jerusalem, the centre of urban culture, and took refuge in an island. It seems that this group could not tolerate the worldliness that crept into the life and culture of the elected people of God. As a protest they wanted to give form to a life-style of 'the Blessed One's – as they called themselves. For them the covenant people are living in 'the world of vanity' (*The History of Rachabites*, henceforth *HR* 5:1). These Blessed Ones wore no clothes. According to them those who live well dressed in the world, are actually naked, who do not discern that their garment is corrupted (*HR* 5:3-4). The visitor saw in the island "the assembly of elected ones, splendid youths and honourable holy ones" (*HR* 6:3). In *HR* 8-10 they narrate the reason for their flight from the world: Jeremiah had foretold about the destruction of Jerusalem "because of the sins of the sons of Israel." According to the instruction of the prophet, Jonadab, the father of the Rachabites, took a resolution that he and his followers will not eat bread nor drink wine, nor put on a garment, and lament and pray for the survival of the wicked Israel. The successor of King Josiah did not subscribe to this kind of lifestyle and imprisoned them. However the angels of God carried them to the paradisiacal island. Their wives lived separately from their husbands in fasting, praying and praising God. They called the island holy land, and lived a life of purity and spotlessness. These Blessed Ones thus speak: "We depend upon the hope of our Lord; and our sight is fixed continuously and unceasingly on the light of the future life. And from prayer to God we are not silent by night and by day, for this (offering of praise) is our occupation" (*HR* 11:2). God provided them with lovely, marvelous and abundant fruit trees. From the roots

²J.H. Charlesworth, "History of the Rechabites" *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 2, New York: Garden City, 1987, 443-461.

of the trees there flowed sweet and delightful water. These remnants of Israel sustained the life by eating these fruits and drinking this water. "There is not among us vineyards, grain, husbandry, wood, iron, houses, buildings, gold or silver... the land is filled with a glorious light so darkness and night do not enter it. And we possess a shining appearance and dwell in light." (HR 11:5). In order to maintain the posterity, men have only once intercourse with the wives. Otherwise they remain as celibates.

1.1.2. Reflections

In the light of the study of this pseudepigrapha we can make certain observations concerning this new movement in the Old Testament times. The Rechabites claimed to be the true Israel, who leads an ascetic life in reparation for the sins, according to the prophetic dictate. However their lifestyle did not win favour of the political authorities. The members of this movement were imprisoned. Now with the help of God, they are leading a heavenly life in a remote island, in expectation of the dawn of eschatological times. The Rechabites disdained all the customs of the world, rejected the worries concerning tomorrow. They wanted to begin the heavenly life on earth by spending day and night singing the divine praises. Perhaps one can find in the Rechabite movement a pre-fulfillment of Jn 3:8.

1.2. Historical Evidence

According to 2 Sam 4:1-3, 5-12, Recab was a leader of a raiding band under King Saul's son Ishbosheth. Later he killed his master and brought his head to David. The king however executed him.

Joachim Jeremias mentions the existence of a Rechabite family during the period before the destruction of the Temple.³ He, however, denies that they belonged to a priestly family. Rechabites appear in the genealogical lists in I Chr 2:55, and is associated with the Kenites, who lived in the region between Bethlehem and Hebron.

1.2.1. Jonadab and Jehu

2 Kgs 10:15-17 speaks of Jonadab *Ben Rechab* who allied himself with Jehu in his militant Yahwistic revolution.⁴ It seems that he was like the prophets Elijah and Elisha, a militant supporter of Yahwism in the face of the increasing threat of Baal cult under the kings of Omri

³Joachim Jeremiahs, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, London: SCM Press, 1969, 226f, 278ff.

⁴Frank S. Frick, *The City in Ancient Israel*, Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977, 211-215.

dynasty.⁵ Jehu was exterminating the idolatrous king and his family (2 Kgs 9:14-10:29). At this news Jonadab hastened to meet Jehu, who asked him: "Are you in accord with me, as I am with you"? When he answered affirmatively Jehu ratified an alliance with him.⁶ After taking Jonadab up into the chariot, he said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord." Both of them went into the temple of Baal and killed the priests. They demolished the sacred stone of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal.

The text from the Book of Kings illustrates the passionate character of Jonadab. Like the prophet Elijah he was zealously zealous for the Lord God Almighty (I Kg 19:10.14). He devoted his life for the cause of Yahwism, as the monarchs and the people were drifting away from the God of the covenant. By all means Jonadab wanted to establish the purity of religion. Some young men joined his company, with whom he formed a movement. "Death to Baalism," and "Return to the roots" – these were the mottos of Jonadab and his group.

1.2.2. Jonadab and Jeremiah

The nature of the Rechabite movement becomes clear from Jer 35:1-19. It was the time of the reign of the wicked Jehoiakim. He together with the people forsook Yahweh, their covenant overlord. At the divine instruction the prophet went to the place where the Rechabite community was living. These people seemed to have been following the nomadic ideal of the early period of Israel.⁷ They rejected the urban life-style and luxuries.⁸ Jeremiah brought them to one of the chambers of the temple and set before them large bowls filled with wine and cups for drinking, and asked them to enjoy the wine. The people emphatically declined the offer. They used the negative *lō* (vv. 6-10) in order to indicate the strong and permanent nature of their life-style. Jonadab the founder of the community had bound them to observe five norms of life:

You shall not drink wine; You shall not build a house; You shall not sow seed; You shall not plant or have a vineyard; You shall live in tents

⁵Walter Brueggemann, *1&2 Kings*, Macon: Smyth & Helways, 2000, pp 395-399.

⁶On the covenantal meaning of the expression *ntn yād* see Paul Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant*, (AB 88), Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982, 20-26.

⁷J.A. Thomson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980, 614-619.

⁸Most modern authors do not subscribe to this theory. Still nobody can deny that the life-style of the Rechabites celebrated the nomadic ideal.

These instructions are designed to warn against accommodation to the secular values of the society. The movement's identity entails resistance to the comfortable and cozy way of living of Israel, even at the cost of forgetting their divine call. The Rechabites thus challenged the tendency of the covenant community to embrace the ideology of secular civilizations. They wanted to offer an alternative life-style, which had its roots in the early traditions.⁹ The text in Jeremiah wanted to focus on the contrasting actions of the Rechabites and of Israel. While the followers of Jonadab listened to the words of their master, Israel refused to obey their Lord. Yahweh, through the prophet, pronounces the contrasting consequences: Israel will lose the land, while the Rechabites are promised continuity.

1.3. Reflections

Some authors look at the Rechabite movement as a reactionary sect, who wanted to rejuvenate the fossilized Yahwism of the nomadic period. This opinion, however, does not seem to take into account the historical situation, in which this movement had its origin. The elected people were embracing the ideology of the secular societies. The vision of Yahweh about a covenant family with a radical ideology of economics of equality, politics of justice and compassion and a religion of God's freedom¹⁰ was conveniently forgotten. The monarchic times attested to Israel's tendency to become like other nations, espousing an economics of affluence, politics of oppression and exploitation, and a static and triumphant religion. It seems that Jonadab and his followers militated against this evil and wanted to take Israel back to its original ideology, intended by Yahweh. For them the wilderness times, when Israel was journeying towards the Promised Land, served as the ideal lifestyle. Yahweh through the prophets like Jeremiah eulogized that period as the honeymoon days: "I remember the devotion of your youth, how you loved me as a bride, following me in the desert, in a land unsown" (Jer 2:2). During this formative period Yahweh guided his beloved people, spoke to them from heart to heart, provided them the needs and taught them to live by faith.¹¹ They did not drink wine, nor build house, nor sow seed, nor plant or have a vineyard, but have to live in tents. Now the Rechabite movement wanted to become the remnant community who

⁹Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, 330-337.

¹⁰Paul Kalluveettil CMI, *The World Becomes the 'Word'*, Thrissur: Marymatha Publications, 2009, 89-92.

¹¹Paul F. Barackman, "Preaching from Numbers," *Interpretation* 13 (January 1959) 55-70.

lives an authentic covenant life, by maintaining the radical perspective of Yahweh's visions.

2. "The Poor of Yahweh"

In former times the scholars held that there existed a movement, known as *'anāwîm Yahweh* in Israel during the pre-exilic or post-exilic times.¹² Now a day very few speak of such a group. N. Lohfink, however, advocates for such a movement.¹³ E. Gerstenberger seems to tend to this position.¹⁴ I would opt for the existence of such a group. The reasons will be adduced below.

2.1. The Terms *'anî*, and *'anāwîm*

These words, which originate from the root *'ānā II* are not to be understood as independent nouns.¹⁵ The second term seems to be the original plural of the first word.¹⁶ Both forms denote the people who are economically poor, the oppressed and the exploited. The words by themselves do not have religious connotation of piety and humility. However, it is natural that these wretched people turned to Yahweh, the champion of the marginalized and outcasts of the society. In him they would have found their solace and hope. Thus it is possible that slowly they would have formed a group who entrusted themselves into the hands of the Lord for their survival and future. They would have found the inspiration in Yahweh's vision for electing Israel.

2.2. Origins of Yahweh's Covenant Community

Yahweh identified himself with the fate of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt who were condemned to lead a miserable life.¹⁷ He came down to Egypt, liberated them from the clutches of the oppressive regime, and made them his own by concluding a covenant with them (Ex 19; 24). In his vision these *'anāwîm* should lead a life of the children of God's family, enjoying equal rights and duties (for details see No. 2.3). The many laws speak of *'anî*, whom the community has to

¹²A. Gelin, *The Poor of Yahweh*, 1964; J. Jocz, "God's Poor of the People", *Judaica*, 28 (1972) 7-29.

¹³N. Lohfink, "Von der *Anavim*-Partei zur Kirche der Armen," *Biblica* 67 (1986) 153-176.

¹⁴E. Gerstenberger, "*ānā II*" in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol 11, G.J. Botterweck, ed., Grand Rapids, 2001, 230-252.

¹⁵For the arguments see J.D. Plenins, "Poor, Poverty (OT)", in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD)*, Vol 5, D.N. Freedman, ed., New York, 1992, 411-413

¹⁶See the article of Gerstenberger (note 14).

¹⁷Paul Kalluveettil, "Social Criticism as the Prophetic Role," *Jeevadhara* 19 (1989) 137-140.

protect and sustain. Yahweh often makes the Israelites remember their former *'anāwîm* status: "You were aliens in Egypt" (Ex 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:24; 25:23; Dt 10:19). The people were requested to consider aliens as their own brothers and sisters. Otherwise the Lord will make them exiles in other countries.

2.3. *The Concept of 'anāwîm in Psalms*

The plural term *'anāwîm*¹⁸ is used for all Israel in Ps 72:2; 74:19; 147:6; 149:4. Sometimes it represents a particular group or stratum within Israel. These exploited and persecuted poor (Ps 9-10), collectively address Yahweh (Ps 17-18). Probably these *'anāwîm* lived during exilic or post-exilic times. They refer to themselves as "the righteous" (Ps 1:5-6; 34:15; 37:17,29,39; 69:28; 97:12; 125:3; 146:8), "the faithful" (Ps 30:4; 31:23; 52:9; 79:2; 85:8; 89:19; 97:10; 116:15; 148:14; 149:1,5,9), "those who fear Yahweh" (Ps 15:4; 22:23; 33:18; 103:17; 105:11; 118:4), "the upright" (Ps 7:10; 11:2; 32:11; 36:10; 64:10; 94:15; 97:11), and "those whose way is upright" (Ps 37:14).

2.4. *'Anāwîm Community*

The phrase *'anāwîm Yahweh* strictly does not occur in the Bible. But the whole Old Testament refers to the poor as the ones who belong to the Lord. It seems that the exilic and post-exilic wretched situation would have been the reason for the development of a theology of the poor in Israel. In Is 14:32; 26:1-6; 41:17; 49:13; 61:1-7; Zeph 2:3; Ps 18:27; 69:30-33; 72:2; 74:18-23; 147:3-6; 149:4 the whole Israel are called *'anāwîm*. It is not unreasonable to look at the *'anāwîm* of these texts as a movement. According to A Rahlfs, "Israel became *'anāwîm* through exile: there came into being in Israel a party that voluntarily realized that transformation in its own life."¹⁹ The economics, politics and the tax system of the Persian Empire would have contributed to the evolution of the *'anāwîm* movement. Both the political and social burdens would have forced them to turn to Yahweh, the champion of the poor. It is even possible that the *'anāwîm* group came to consider themselves as the true Israel, the chosen remnant. In such a situation the members of this group held in contempt the foreign oppressors and their domestic collaborators. These poor of Yahweh made Ps 121 their prayer. Their eyes were always turned to the Lord till he showed mercy (Ps 123:2), as He had promised liberation and salvation, by executing his *mišphat* (Is 42:1-4). These poor, brokenhearted, captives, prisoners, who mourned and grieved, who

¹⁸Paul Kalluveettil, "The Covenant Community of the Poor: Perspectives in the Old Testament," *Jeevadhara* 39 (2009) 278-286.

¹⁹Quoted by E. Gerstenberger in *TDOT* Vol 11, 248.

sat in ashes (Is 61:1-3) eagerly waited for the advent of Messiah. The one who comes will proclaim the good news of liberation and salvation, freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners and the year of the Lord's favour and the day of his vengeance. They believed that the Anointed one will provide them a crown of beauty, the oil of gladness and a garment of praise. He will make his *'anāwīm* oaks of righteousness and his planting for the display of his splendor. Yahweh through the Messiah will "disrupt any circumstances of social bondage and exploitation, overthrow ruthless orderings of public life, and authorize new circumstances of dancing freedom, dignity and justice."²⁰

2.5. Dead Sea Scrolls

Qumran texts bear an indirect testimony that *'anāwīm Yahweh* could be understood as a movement. Nobody will object in naming Qumran Community as a sect.²¹ They called themselves the congregation of the poor (4 QP Ps 37:2, 8-9), the devout and the elect. There are at least 18 passages where the members are addressed as *'ānī* or *'anāw*.²² Their laws demanded them to live as *'anāwīm Yahweh* "with humble goodness, loving compassion, upright spirit and submissiveness" (IQS 1QS 3:8).

2.6. Reflections

Only indirect evidence occurs to designate *'anāwīm Yahweh* as a movement during the OT times. Political and social compulsion was behind the origin of this sect. They were poor and the oppressed people. Thus one cannot say that they voluntarily opted for poverty, humility, prayer, and a God-centered life. Their dire situation compelled them to take refuge in Yahweh, the champion of the poor and the needy. Only such people could understand God's good news of liberation. Slowly there developed in them a wholehearted devotion to the Lord, from whom they expected liberation from every kind of bondage - in political, economic, social, physical, cultural and religious realms. At the coming of Messiah there will be a reversal of fortunes, the humble will be glorified, the proud humiliated, the hungry satiated and the rich bankrupted. To sum up, the *'anāwīm Yahweh* movement did not originate as a protest against the evil tendencies of the society. They did not try to revolt and militate

²⁰Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997, 208.

²¹Qumran Community is our next example for the movements during the Old Testament times

²²K.G. Kuhn, *Konkordanz zu den Qumran Texten*, Göttingen, 1960.

against the evil structures of the society in its economic, political and religious realms.

3. The Qumran Community

3.1. Origin and Inspiration

Scholars tend to identify the Qumran community with the sect of Essenes.²³ Their origins in the Qumran area date to the last period of the Second Temple (140-130 BCE). It seems that group under the leadership of the so-called Teacher of Righteousness has broken away from the Israelite religion, which according to them has lost its original purity and radical vision. They upheld the tribal ideal of the ancient Israel, and claimed to be the community of the new covenant. The members called themselves “the sons of light” and considered others as the sons of darkness. The Qumran Scrolls refer to the community as “doers of the Law,” i.e., those who observe the Law of Moses. They “separate from the congregation of the men of iniquity in order to become a community in Law and in wealth, responsible to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant, and to the majority of the men of the community, who hold fast to the covenant” (*IQS* 5:1-3). “Whoever comes to the council of the community shall enter the covenant of God in the sight of all who have freely pledged themselves. He shall undertake with a binding oath to turn with all his heart and all his soul to the Law of Moses...” (*IQS* 5:7-9). It is prescribed that “wherever there are ten men, there shall not lack one who studies the Law continually, day and night... And the many shall keep vigil in common for a third of every night in the year to read the Book, to study the Law and to bless in common” (*IQS* 6:6-8).

3.2. Qumran Writings

The main writings of the Qumran Community are available to us. One can divide the writings into eight categories:

Community Rule (Manual of Discipline) – Messianic hopes and the community’s organization and practice.

Rule of the Congregation (Messianic Rule) – Rules and Regulations concerning the “last days,” education, and members’ duties.

Thanking Hymns – Communal or individual prayers of thanks.

Damascus Rule – Legal and moral Precepts and sermonic material to strengthen the group’s separatist way of life.

²³For a concise study, see John J Collins, “Essenes” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol 2, 1992, 619-626.

War Rule – Final battles and Victory in the war of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness.

Copper Scroll – Description (accurate or fictional?) of vast treasure hidden away in Jerusalem or elsewhere in the land of Israel.

Genesis Apocryphon – Apocryphal recapitulation of the biblical account from Lamech to Abraham (Gen 5:28-15:4).

Temple Scroll – Temple and other biblical laws, description of the Temple area, and purity of the cities of Israel.

3.3. Basic Traits

One can garner from these Scrolls how the members lived in common, held their fortunes in common, ate in common, prayed in common, and worked in common. Their lives centered on divine worship, with prayers held twice daily, at dawn and dusk. The community celebrated the biblical festivals according to the 52 week solar calendar consisting of four 13 week seasons, which was different from the traditional Jewish lunar-solar calendar. Communal meals were considered sacred, which substituted for the sacrificial meals at the temple in Jerusalem. They believed in predestination and eagerly waited for the coming of a prophet and Messiahs of Aaron and Israel. The community expressed its belief that it was already living in the end time.

3.4. New Covenant Community

This movement claimed that God has made a special pact with it, in virtue of which it withdrew from contact and communion with the other Jews. Potential members were required to undergo a three-year probationary period. Only on completion of this period, and after having sworn an oath concerning frankness towards the community, could one become the official member. Only adult males were admitted. The former scholars held that Qumran community rejected marriage. Although the *Manual of Discipline* proper seems to envisage a celibate group, its Appendix A and the *Damascus Document* reckon with marriage and children. J.A. Fitzmyer suggests that there would have been “two different forms of community life among the sectarians of Qumran, or at least different life-styles at different periods.²⁴ This group insisted on personal modesty, physical cleanliness and ritual purity. The members wore white garments. They were extremely strict in observance of the Sabbath. Their life-style may be compared to that of semi monastic existence, which was

²⁴Fitzmyer, *Responses*, 65-66.

previously unknown in Judaism. The binding oaths may be interpreted as antecedents of the Christian vows.²⁵

3.5. The End of the Movement

The War Scroll describes the community as preparing for the holy war of the end-times. According to scholars the members took part in the Great Revolt against Rome of 66-73 CE. As the revolt failed, the movement lost its cause. The Romans destroyed the community centre at Qumran in the summer of AD 68. It marked the end of this movement.²⁶

3.6. Scrolls and the Bible

As we have noted, the Scriptures played an important role in the life and ideology of the Qumran community. Their writings contained expositions from the prophets, Torah, Psalms and Daniel. *11 QMelchizedek* speaks of the eschatological liberation of the Sons of Light at the end of days. Melchizedek will act as liberator and expiator of sins for the Sons of Light. The community developed its own exegetical method. The Dead Sea Scrolls abound in biblical passages.²⁷

3.7. Reflections

The Qumran movement arose as a protest against the secularist and materialistic elements that vitiated the Israelite religion. The members wanted to return to the roots. They were inspired by the new covenant concept, exposed in Jer 31:31-34. The sect called themselves the new covenant community, and lived an ascetic life with puritanical overtones. It was a closed community with exclusivist tendencies. Christian monasticism may have its inspiration from their life-style. According to the scholars John the Baptist would have been a member of the Qumran community before his call.²⁸ The ideology of his baptism seems to have had its inspiration from the ritual washings of the Qumran community. The authors do not reject the possibility that Jesus knew this sect.

²⁵V. Desprez, "The Roots of Christian Monasticism," *American Benedictine Review* 41 (1990) 57-377.

²⁶Devorah Dimant, "Peshurim, Qumran," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol 5, 244-251.

²⁷David L. Washburn, *A Catalog of Biblical Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.

²⁸Fitzmyer, *Responses*, 106-108.

Conclusion

We have seen three movements that originated during the Old Testament times. The Rechabite group and the Qumran community wanted to re-vitalize the Israelite society, which was elected by God to become the holy people, dedicated to serve Him and humans, his living images. They were called to be filled with the divine blessings, and to bestow those blessings upon fellow brethren. Thus Israel's existence had both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Unfortunately the people of the covenant failed to perform this sacred duty. Instead of becoming the servants, they wanted to be the masters of others. Thus Israel forfeited the very purpose of its call. At this juncture these two movements came into existence. It is not wrong to assume that the divine providence had played a role in the origins of Rechabite and Qumran movements. They would have reminded the people the very purpose of their radical call.

Of course fanatic elements would have played a part in the formation and evolution of the Rechabite group. Their uncompromising and extreme attitudes concerning the tribal life-style failed to take into account the existential situation of the Israelite society. Every living community needs growth of its original ideology. This is the sign of life. Tendency to live in the past is not a healthy sign. Original charism has to assume new and new horizons and dimensions. In the case of the Rechabite group this was missing.

The Qumran group wanted to live as the eschatological community, living in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. They wanted to live as Sons of Light, since the Israelites, according to them, failed to live their original call. Elements of asceticism and prayer centeredness would have served to prepare Israel for the coming of the Son of God. Still the legalistic, exclusivist and self-righteous mentality cannot be ascribed to the divine inspiration.

The *'anāwîm* Yahweh movement came into existence not as a reaction to the life-style of the post-exilic Israel. These people suffered poverty and oppression from the rulers. They had no way to liberate themselves from this misery. These wretched ones became resigned to fate, and gradually learned to commit themselves into the hands of Yahweh, the champion of the marginalized. Slowly there evolved in them attitudes of humility and piety. The *'anāwîm* Yahweh dreamt of a golden age, when the Lord would lift them up and crown them with victory and glory. They resembled the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, who, however, do not seem to have had cultivated a God-centered orientation.

This study of the three new movements in the OT times may help to evaluate the present movements in the Church and the society. The spirit of the Lord, which seemed to have blown during the OT times, is more active and energetic in the modern times.

Concerning the present day movements in the Church and outside the Church, there should be a study which approaches them from a scientific and objective perspective. I do not venture here to undertake that task. However, certain general observations are in order. While the three OT movements flourished outside the main stream of Judaism, certain new communities like charismatic movement, enjoy the blessings of the religious authorities. Although all of them seem to have originated from an intense desire to live the pneumatic vision of Christ, there slowly seems to have crept into them non-Christic elements. There is in humans a certain unconscious or subconscious urge to play the part of God. It seems that the leaders of some movements have succumbed to that temptation. Also there is a tendency to exploit the emotional and sentimental yearnings inherent in human nature. Unfortunately because of this element in some movements, at least a good number of Christians are holding a very simplistic faith. As a result highly educated people with intellectual caliber are drifting away from the Church. Generally speaking, the new movements are devoted to the spiritual perspective alone, thereby conveniently forgetting the Christian task to build up a better society based on authentic economic, social, intellectual and cultural foundations. Thus some movements pose a great danger of forcing one to live in an unreal, dreamy world. Also there is developing an attitude of exclusivism and fundamentalism in matters concerning other religions and attempts of inculturation. Some tend to cultivate a literal interpretation of the Bible.

The Church authorities look at the new movements with apprehension and hasten to condemn them, rather than helping them to correct the faulty steps. To err is human, but to raise one up from the ground, is divine. In the light of the study of the three OT movements, I would propose that the Church should allow the Spirit to blow in whatever way God wills, which may assume unconventional, unorthodox and even revolutionary forms.