

# WOMAN LEADERSHIP IN TOBA BATAK SOCIETY A CRITICAL STUDY ON PATRIARCHY

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## Abstracts:

*The main problem of this research is an attempt to highlight the important aspect that leads to the inequality and marginalization of women in Toba Batak society, including their exclusion from leadership roles. The research aims to discover the root roots of discrimination practiced by Toba Batak women. The researchers used a combination of qualitative and library research methods. The researchers tried to determine basic assumptions about the problem of discrimination that occurred in Toba Batak women through interviews. Afterward, the data was collected, and then the researchers interpreted and processed it through previous investigations through library research. The research result found that the discrimination against women is rationalized by the patriarchal system which is persistent and enduring even to this day. The role of the patriarchal system that resulted in the gender-inequality system is those acts that subordinate women in Toba Batak society. Cultural beliefs and rituals have created an attitude among the Toba Batak to view men as first class and women as second class. Therefore, the Toba Batak people have introduced a breach between men and women, consciously or unconsciously. The conclusion of the study is the need for evaluation and renewal of understanding of Toba Batak's cultural values. This renewal can be useful for creating equal*

*opportunities for men and women including in leadership. Finally, the researchers offer pastoral invitation to the importance of equality between men and women as the image of God through family formation.*

**Keywords:**

***inequality; leadership; marginalization; patriarchy***

## INTRODUCTION

This research will examine the persisting experiences of *Toba Batak* women (TBW) in the society of North Sumatra, Indonesia. Gender inequality in social and political life remains a challenge for societies and institutions. Culturally, the regime strengthened the patriarchal structure in *Toba Batak* society (TBS)<sup>1</sup> by placing limits on the possibilities for the TBW, including as a leader in the community. The TBS revolves around the descendants of the village's founder, who assume the role of royalty, and a pair of lineages that only count men. The *Toba Batak* community has three goals in life namely *hamoraon* (wealth), *hagabeon* (many descendants), and *hasangapon* (honor).<sup>2</sup> In all the struggles of life, the *Toba Batak* people attempt to realize these three goals. The village head has the right to determine the members of the community who have accomplished the three goals of life. Customarily, the families who have prospered in realizing the three goals have a degree in society. The TBS villages are ruled by man as the council of elders, chiefs, and chiefs councils under positions in the founder's lineage. The TBP are one of the tribes in Indonesia that originate from the Lake Toba area.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doangsa Situmeang, *Dalihan Na Tolu Sistem Sosial Kemasyarakatan Batak-Toba (Dalihan Na Tolu Social System of Toba Batak Society)* (Jakarta: Kerabat, 2007), 32–33.

<sup>2</sup> Prinsi Rigitta, "Analisis Kedudukan Sosial Perempuan Batak Toba Dalam Konteks Kesusastaaran," *Normatif* 1, no. 1 (2021): 50.

<sup>3</sup> Harisan Boni Firmando, "Aktualisasi Status Sosial Melalui Upacara Adat Masyarakat Batak Toba Di Kawasan Danau Toba," *Aceh Anthropological Journal* 6, no. 1 (2022): 28, <https://doi.org/10.29103/aaj.v6i1.5721>.

The right to control village affairs is given to the entire male lineage from the descendants of the founder to the next village head.<sup>4</sup> They preside over various ceremonies, over some judicial matters and are socially expected to set high moral standards for everyone to follow. The TBP are generally members of a village community and are obligated to follow all the cultural values and practices to live in a societal relationship among them. Over time, this conventional obligation became a greater principle and developed as the supreme aim of life for all the members of the *Toba Batak* community. This value is supported by the maxim of *Toba Batak*, “*togu urat ni bulu, toguan urat ni padang, togu pe na nidok ni uhum, toguan na nidok ni padan*” which means the roots of the bamboo are strong but the roots of the grass are stronger.”<sup>5</sup>

Based on the history of *Toba Batak* culture, which is part of a patriarchal culture, women do not have the opportunity to be leaders. The TBP firmly adheres to the principle of gender-blind anthropocentrism. With this cultural background, women do not have the right to be leaders. The researchers affirm that *Toba Batak's* patriarchal system excludes women from leadership and public life at the same time relegates them to a different sphere or realm.

The discrimination experienced by TBW is also experienced in various cultures that adhere to a patriarchal system that believes that “control is an essential element of patriarchy”.<sup>6</sup> Discrimination is defined as making unfair and morally unjustified differentiation in one’s treatment of people based on gender, age, race, religion, and other factors.<sup>7</sup> In this study, the Toba Batak still practiced discrimination

<sup>4</sup> Vergouwen, *The Social Organisation and Customary Law of the Toba Batak of Northern Sumatra* (The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 111.

<sup>5</sup> Vergouwen J.C., *The Social Organization and Customary Law of the Toba Batak of Northern Sumatra* (Netherlands: Publication Commissioned and Financed, 1964), 142.

<sup>6</sup> Allan G. Johnson, *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 13.

<sup>7</sup> D R Kiran, *Professional Ethics and Human Values* (India: McGraw Hill Education, 2014), 229.

specifically an equal position of women in the culture. <sup>8</sup>This has led to the mainstream that “patriarchy is a system of domination” which created the problem of gender blindness.<sup>9</sup> Analysis of the domination of women due to gender differences shows that there is an existential influence of the patriarchal system in the structure of society.<sup>10</sup> As a result, consciously or unconsciously a patriarchal system is practiced based on control by men over women. The process of domination and control is an attempt by men to show authority over women and patriarchy provides this opportunity.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the oppressive behavior carried out by men against women has perpetuated women’s oppression in history.<sup>12</sup>

Discrimination against women is rationalized by the patriarchal system. The patriarchal kinship system is a kinship system that upholds the principle that men have higher dignity or value than women. Therefore, men have special rights in the family, especially to ensure the continuity of the lineage.<sup>13</sup> This system is persistent and enduring, for example, to determine “the names of the Patriarchs and the patriarchal period”<sup>14</sup> is only intended for men. The patriarchal system has given the opportunity completely to place women as objects who must be ready to serve men as servants.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the presence of women in families that adhere to patriarchal understanding is only a matter of fulfilling men's

<sup>8</sup> Andreas Fredriko, “Konstruksi Sosial Realitas Perempuan Batak Toba Sebagai Parhobas Pada Komunitas Adat Batak Toba Di Kota Salatiga,” *Neo Societal* 9, no. 3 (2024): 52.

<sup>9</sup> Filiz Akgul, *Patriarchal Theory Reconsidered: Torture and Gender-Based Violence in Turkey* (London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 39.

<sup>10</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Integrating Ecofeminism Globalization and World Religions* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, inc, 2005), 25.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, *The Gender Knot*, 51.

<sup>12</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Know Press, 2005), 46.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond F. Gregory, *Women and Workplace Discrimination Overcoming Barriers to Gender Equality* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 116.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1974), 17.

<sup>15</sup> Cornelius F. Murphy, *Beyond Feminism: Toward a Dialogue on Difference* (United States of America: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 7.

needs, likewise in the TBS. This is the root of the problems and problems resulting from the patriarchal system.<sup>16</sup>

The women can only submit to the laws, the gods, the customs, and the truths created by the males. Pui-lan an Asian Feminist who wrote from the first Asian Women's Consultation on Inter-faith Dialogue, explains similarity with the previous feminist thinkers regarding how the world of religions in the Asian context had been practicing discriminatory laws and religious practices against women, the limitation of women's leadership and ritualistic roles. She affirms, "Women of all religions continue to be marginalized and discriminated against at the societal level".<sup>17</sup> The main purpose of the research is the examination and critical analysis of TBS and its patriarchal culture concerning its position in leadership. Hence, this research intends to look for possible ways forward and methods to liberate and empower to create equal space to be a leader in the Toba Batak society.

## METHOD

The researchers used a combination of qualitative and library research methods. The researchers tried to determine basic assumptions about the problem of discrimination that occurred in Toba Batak women through interviews. Afterward, the data was collected, and then the researchers interpreted and processed it through previous investigations through library research. To deeply understand the reality of discrimination in culture, the author uses the theoretical thinking of Pierre Bourdieu. From the socio-cultural analysis, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural dispositions and practices will be used to understand

<sup>16</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: Critical Feminist Ecclesiology of Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Megawati Naibaho, "The Investigating the Oppression of Toba Batak Women: Call for Empowerment and Woman Leadership," *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* 23, no. 1 (2023): 156–74, <https://doi.org/10.35312/spet.v23i1.518>.

how the TBS express and reproduce their habits and behavior that are seen to dictate the culture and the force of patterns of practices that are translated into moral standards. With Bourdieu's analysis, this research hopes to bring into focus the root of women's subjugation in the culture's beliefs, rituals, social arrangements, and habitual practices. It is to be understood that the power of TBW subjugation lies in the power of cultural patterns and memory regarding the place, status, and role assignment of women. Cultural patterns and memory have produced solidified practices that further define women's place or subjugated space in the *Toba Batak* state of affairs. This way, a cultural analysis will bring about a more appropriate proposal in addressing women's subjection; that is, a culturalist approach (like promoting newer beliefs through habitual alternative practices) may be similarly called forth to foster women's emancipation, specifically in leadership.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Toba Batak Culture and Context of Leadership

The status of the TBW can be evaluated based on the ethnic identity and origins of the TBP in general, especially the socio-political structure of TBP and the cultural values and virtues. The TBP are generally rural and agricultural people. The TBS claimed to have a strong patriarchal and patrilineal *marga* (clan) system. The claimed patriarchy, or the subservient and unequal position of women, is a strong element of the cultural matrix of the *Toba Bataks*.<sup>18</sup>

The *Toba Batak* cultural values created an imbalance in the social structure that discriminated against women, especially the leadership rank. This is to show that the oppressive and inequitable character of the

<sup>18</sup> Megawati Manullang, "Inkulturasasi Dalihan Natolu: Bentuk Misi Kristen Di Tanah Batak," *Jurnal Teologi Cultivation* 2, no. 1 (2018): 4-5.

treatment of women lies deep in the culture of the TBP. The TBW are subordinated because of an attitude dictated by the cultural belief systems, especially the social system of *marga*, which places women under the authority of men. This is particularly true of women because they must be available to produce male children under the proscription of the *marga* system of values.<sup>19</sup> Under the *marga* system, women must struggle to secure their husband's heirs. Under this circumstance, the TBS breeds gender inequality and subjugation.

This research is the examination and critical analysis of TBS and its patriarchal culture. To liberate and empower the TBW, we should understand the place where they belong, and what is the root causes of the suppressive situations. Hence, this research intends to understand the root causes of the suppressive situation of women and their sufferings. On the other hand, this study intends to look for possible ways forward and methods to liberate and empower them from culturally rooted discriminations, especially on leadership rank.

### *The Toba Batak Culture*

The cultural values and virtues of TBP can be summarized in their two philosophies, namely the Philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu* and the Philosophy of *Hamoraon* (property), *Hagabeon* (descent), and *Hasangapon* (respectability). In this research, the researchers more focuses of explaining the philosophy *Dalihan Natolu* which specifically became the place for the practice of discrimination leadership against women. The Philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu*<sup>20</sup> is one of the basic elements of *Toba Batak* culture and social structure. This is specific to the *Toba Batak* culture. *Dalihan Natolu* means the three poles used in the stove.

<sup>19</sup> Vergouwen, *The Social Organization*, 192; Catholic Women's Group at St. Francis of Assisi Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra-Indonesia, interview by researchers, February 14, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Situmeang, *Dalihan Na Tolu*, 205.

The TBP has been cooking using a stove made up of a three-stone pole. The stove must consist of three poles and the three poles must be in harmonious positions and should have the same height to serve as a balanced support. These stove principles are adopted in the social structure of the life of TBP among the three clan groups known as 1) the *hula-hula* which means wife-giver group, 2) the *boru* which means wife-receiving group, and 3) the *dongan sabutuha* which means womb companions or blood relatives group. *Dalihan Natolu* as a philosophical term is connected to the understanding of family ties as very close to each other.<sup>21</sup>

*Dalihan Natolu* shows the uniqueness of *Toba Batak* culture among other Indonesian cultures. *Dalihan Natolu* is not found in the cultural values of other tribes in Indonesia.<sup>22</sup> *Dalihan Natolu* can be noted as a necessary value that exists within the TBS.<sup>23</sup> Here, the TBP understood that societies are not just collections of people, but it is connected by looking through the kinship order. It can be noted that there exists a configuration of the society reflecting the reality of *Dalihan Natolu*.

The fundamental characteristic of *Dalihan Natolu* as the social structure in *Toba Batak* culture is the existence of different functions with different consolidations within each group that influence the degree of the relation among groups. To maintain the harmonious relationship among the three groups of *Dalihan Natolu*; each group must imbibe the social and moral responsibility to be in solidarity with the other groups. The rule for their connection is, "*Somba marhula-hula, elek marboru and manat mardongan tubu,*" which means show honor and reverence toward

<sup>21</sup> Vergouwen, *The Social Organisation*, 42.

<sup>22</sup> Catholic Women's Group at St. Francis of Assisi of Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra-Indonesia, interview by researchers, February 17, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Muchtar Pakpahan, *Budaya Politik Pemerintahan Desa Di Batak Toba (Government Political Culture in Toba Batak Village)* (Jakarta: Bumi Intitama Sejahtera, 1999), 23.



your wife-givers, or make thoughtful, earnest requests of your wife-receivers and be watchful about protecting your womb companions.”<sup>24</sup>

In the TBS, every member belongs to one of the three functional groups. The TBP adopted the patrilineal system in which a descent group from an assured ancestor used the name of their ancestor to distinguish them from the other members of the other unilineal descent group.<sup>25</sup> The philosophy of *Dalihan Natolu* has a very significant function for the *Toba Batak* culture. It represents the micro-cosmic community and has connected signs with three cosmic worlds according to the *Toba Batak* belief.<sup>26</sup> In every group of *Dalihan Natolu* the leader is a man. Thus, women have no rights as leaders. Even though the group is called *boru*, which means women, the leader is the man, namely the woman's husband. This shows that in *Toba Batak* culture women do not have the right to be leaders.

### PAUL’S BACKGROUND

It is important to note that Paul’s personal background together with the context of the Corinthian Church had influenced his teaching regarding the resurrection of the dead. He was trained by Gamaliel in Jerusalem sometime around 25 to 50AD (Cervantes 2016:1-2). As a devout Jew, he read the Hebrew Bible with the Targums, which were Aramaic glosses. These exposures helped to build his Pharisaic perspectives. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead likewise in judgement and reward for the dead (Craffert 1999:57; Hindson 2001:198). In addition, Paul was a staunch adherer of the Law which opposes Jesus’s movement (Cervantes 2016:1-2). He persecuted the followers of Christ and led the stoning of Stephen to death (Acts 7:58;

<sup>24</sup> Situmeang, *Dalihan Na Tolu*, 221.

<sup>25</sup> Vergouwen, *The Social Organization*, 42.

<sup>26</sup> Anicetus B. Sinaga, *The Toba Batak High God: Transcendence and Immanence* (West Germany: Studia instituti Anthropos, 1981), 65.

8:1; 26:9-11). His conversion was unique and it led to the change of his name from Saul to Paul (Acts 13:9).

Most scholars believe that the book of 1 and 2 Corinthians was written sometimes after Paul's visit to the city of Corinth around 55 to 58 AD.<sup>27</sup> Paul went to Corinth after his second missionary journey. He preached first in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Athens before arriving at Corinth (Cervantes 2016:4). The city of Corinth laid between two harbours namely Lecheion and Cenchreae (Hodgens 2001:67). Corinth was an extension of a Greek province in the southern area. Before the time of Jesus, it was called Achaia. Rome invaded the city in 146 BCE and rendered the city dormant for almost a century. Julius Caesar pioneered and revived the city in 44 BCE. Rome itself was highly Hellenized and influenced by Greek cultures and religions. These backgrounds affected the socio-political structure of Corinth. Cervantes explained that "...the Roman world had been thoroughly Hellenized; and since Corinth was historically Greek, it maintained many of those ties-religion, philosophy, the arts" (Cervantes 2016:3-5). So, it can be surmised that there were many other cultures and religions including a buoyant commerce or trade that reigned in Corinth during the time Paul (Hodgen 2001:67).

In addition, the Sadducean theology<sup>28</sup> termed as an "over-realized-eschatology" posits that the resurrection had already taken place (2 Tim 2:17-18). Likewise, another belief system termed as "realised immortality" denied the reality of the resurrection. Gnosticism<sup>29</sup> and other Greek

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Acts 18:1ff.

<sup>28</sup> The Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead and while they valued the Old Testament, they doubted the Book of Daniel which gave clearer terms regarding the resurrection (Dan 12:2-4). The Samaritans like the Sadducees do not also believe in resurrection (Mt 22:23, Mt 12:18, Lk 20:27) (Agai 2024:1-7).

<sup>29</sup> There is another view according to which Gnosticism did not contribute to Paul's defence of the resurrection. In other words, some scholars are of the view that Gnosticism complied with Paul's view about the resurrection of the body (Hodgen 2001:70). It might be recalled that Gnosticism is a notion according to which the material world including the human body perceived as weak and evil repelled a God who is Good, Holy and spiritual (Boer 1976:56). The relevant question the Gnostics asked is how can a human body that is weak and probably rotten after death resurrect? The argument presented by Hodgen is relevant because Gnostics were in the first place not concerned about raising such type of question for intellectual curiosity; instead, they were

philosophies<sup>30</sup> in addition to other terms mentioned above might have influenced Paul's responses to the Corinthian Church on the resurrection of the body (Hodgen 2001:70). Paul had earlier met with the Epicureans and Stoics (Acts 17). It is important to note that Epicurus taught that both the body and the soul will cease to exist after death. This view is contrary to Platonism according to which the soul was created before the body and that the soul will continue to exist after the death of the body (Karadza 2014:167).

Stoicism, a philosophy invented by Zeno, a native of Cyprus around the 300 BCE is a view according to which everything including the mind, spirit, body and God are matter. Stoicism is a form of pantheism according to which everything is God and that humans can only relate to God through divine reason called *Logos* (Boer 1976:10-11). As a result, the stoics do not believe in the concepts of personal immortality and they do not have a specific belief regarding the resurrection of the dead (Karadza 2014:167). Despite the various Greek philosophies regarding the resurrection, there is a wider view among scholars that the Greeks generally rejected the resurrection of the body. Karadza echoed "[g]reek philosophies do agree on one thing, which is that it is impossible to resurrect a dead body" (Karadza 2014:167).

Paul, a Roman citizen and a devout Jew acquainted with Greek cultures was faced with the challenge of addressing the resurrection question to the church in Corinth. Paul's letters were written in Greek and his warning to the church against some philosophies are indications that he was conversant with Greek writings (Col 2:8; 1 Tim 6:20; 1 Cor. 1:20; Karadza 2014:166). He had to address some in Corinth who doubted the resurrection "...how can some of you say that there is no

passionately indebted to finding redemption for the entire humanity and on striking a balance view on how humans can fellowship with God despite human weaknesses (Boer 1976:56).

<sup>30</sup> There were various Greek-Philosophical thoughts at the time of Paul and it is difficult to ascertain the specific Greek philosophy that influenced Paul's teaching on the resurrection of the dead (Karadza 2014:167).

resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:12)? It is likely that many Corinthians believed in resurrection and especially the resurrection of Jesus but their contention was in the idea that the human body would resurrect. Due to the influenced of Greek philosophy especially of those that points to matter as evil, it was difficult for the Corinthian Church to believe in the resurrection of the body of other believers:

By denying the resurrection, the Corinthians were almost certainly not denying life after death; virtually everyone in the ancient world believed in that. Rather, they would have been disputing the Jewish and Christian doctrine of *bodily* resurrection endorsing one of the more Greek forms of belief that limited the afterlife to disembodied immortality of the soul (cf. 2 Timothy 2:17-18). In keeping with their overly realized eschatology, and like some later Gnostics, they may have applied the language of resurrection to the state of spiritual transformation they believed they already achieved in this life (Cervantes 2016:4).<sup>31</sup>

Paul generated a timid conversation and he was required to explain to the Corinth Church how the material or physical body of humans bound to decay after death would resurrect. He had to explain how matter or the human body assumedly weak can be transformed into righteousness for eternity through resurrection.

### **PAUL’S PERCEPTION OF THE RESURRECTION BODY**

Paul’s view on the resurrection of the dead is a compilation of an absurd yet, a seemingly comprehensible dogma when taken into cognizance his background. Here are some of his perceptions of the resurrection of the dead and of the resurrection of the body in particular. He explained that there are celestial and terrestrial bodies’ likewise natural and spiritual bodies (1 Cor. 15:40, 44). In his view, it is the

<sup>31</sup> Originally from Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 295.

celestial or spiritual body that will inherit the kingdom of God. He made it clear that flesh and blood cannot be part of the eternal kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). In other words, humans in their present bodily state are corruptible and would have to be *changed* and be given a new body that is qualified to inherit God's kingdom "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51b). He added that the process of the change shall take place within a very short period of time "in a moment, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52).

The profound view of Paul with regard to meeting the Lord is that both the dead and the living shall together be caught-up in heaven. Paul taught that at the coming-down of the Lord from heaven, the dead will rise first before those who are alive will be caught-up together with the dead that have risen in the cloud to meet the Lord (1 Thes. 4:16-17). The most significant point is the idea of the change in the bodies of both the living and the dead. More so, he relied on Christ resurrection body to explain how the body of other believers would look-like after death. This research is an attempt to describe the kind of body that shall rise after death from a Pauline point of view. It is difficult for an individual to rely on human senses to explain exactly what even Paul himself referred to as a mystery. He taught that the resurrection body is a mystery (1 Cor. 15:51a).

Paul's reliance on Jesus's kind of resurrection served as a pattern for the resurrection of other believers. He emphasized that the physical bodies of Christ followers would be changed similar to the glorious body of Christ "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body..." (Phil. 3:21 cf. Perman 2006:1-2). It is pertinent to look into the kind of body Christ resurrected with and to relate it or compare it with the physical body he had before resurrection and after resurrection. This will enable us to understand the kind of body Paul expected other Christians would possess in the resurrection life.

## **A DESCRIPTIVE EVALUATION OF THE RESURRECTION BODY FROM A PAULINE PERSPECTIVE – THE JESUS’S ANALOGY**

It is vital at this stage to note that there were instances in the Old Testament whereby some people were resuscitated from death likewise in the New Testament (Lk 7:11-15; 8:49-56’ Jh 11:43-44). The difference being that Christ rose with an immortal and imperishable physical body unlike others who had to die again (Geisler 1989:150). Although Jesus had powers to perform miracles before his resurrection, yet, he was fully human equal to other humans.<sup>32</sup> Let us examine the nature of Christ resurrection body. He ate with his disciples (Acts 10:41). He was seen and touched (Mt 28:9 cf. Jh 20:27).

From the above excerpt, it can be said that his resurrection body was physical because he had flesh and bones. He disputed the view that he was a spirit and said “...handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Lk 24:39 cf. Acts 13:33-37; Perman 2006:1). While in one perspective, his resurrection body can be described as physical, there are other instances whereby his resurrection body could describe as spiritual. For the resurrection body, there shall be no more marriages (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25) and no more death because the humans who are resurrected shall be like angels (Lk 20:36). Jesus’s resurrection body could walk through walls (Jh 20:19) and disregard the force of gravity by ascending up to heaven (Acts 1:9-11) (Kreeft 2000:15). If we are to believe that Jesus’s kind of resurrection body is what other believers in Christ will inherit after bodily death, it thus suggests that much aspects of human personality before death shall be inherited after body death. Professor J.A. Schep surmised:

...men will indeed rise up in their own physical bodies.... This excludes any explanation suggesting that we shall be raised as

<sup>32</sup> One of earliest heresies pertained to the debate on whether Jesus was a man (1 Jh 4:2; 2 Jh 7).

spirits, or that we shall receive an ‘angelic body,’ consisting of some heavenly glory-matter,’ without any physical connection with our present bodies (Schep n.d.:21).

Although at first, some of Christ’s disciples were not able to recognize him quickly, yet they recognized who he was after his bodily resurrection (Lk 24:13-32; Jh 20:11-16; 21:1-13). Kreeft said that the resurrection body is a continuity of the former or physical body in a changed state unlike the physical body (Kreeft 2000:15). The central point that will connect the present body and the resurrection body is the ability of the individual concern and the people that are known to him or her to recognise or identify the person’s personality. Badham noted that “... the only bond of unity between our present and future bodies is that they will be ‘owned’ successively by the same personality” (Badham 1976:85). Geisler tabulated the difference between Paul’s view of a resurrection body and the present body (Geisler 1989:153):

<b>Pre-Resurrection Body</b>	<b>Resurrection Body</b>
Earthly (1 Cor. 15:40)	Heavenly
Perishable (1 Cor. 15:42)	Imperishable
Weak (1 Cor. 15:42)	Powerful
Natural (1 Cor. 15:44)	[Supernatural / Unnatural]
Mortal (1 Cor. 15:53)	Immortal

It is not clear how bodies that are already decayed after burial or informally exposed would be piled together and be made to resurrect. This raises the question about what kind of body exactly would resurrect after physical death? Badham mentioned that the resurrection body would not be the molecules that are buried and would not comply with naturally physical, chemical and biological rules bound to humans and nature (Badham 1976:85-86). What marvelled me is that, the resurrection body has the ability to eat food ate by human beings but the biological and chemical processes which involves excreting all that is consumed is likely

not applied accordingly (cf. Rev. 21:27). Human desire for sex, lust, war, sin and anything filthy is subdued in the resurrection body. In other words, the resurrection body would have physical human personality feature yet spiritual and celestial.

Memory plays a great role in the identification and the acknowledgement of the resurrection body by both the resurrected person and those who were conversant or familiar with the resurrected person. Hick believed that Paul's intention is to describe a resurrection body that is spiritual yet identifiable by common human senses. He called the resurrection body *soma pneumatikon*, meaning a spiritual body:

When someone has died, he is, apart from any special divine action, extinct. A human being is by nature mortal and subject to annihilation at death. But in fact, God, by an act of sovereign power, either sometimes or always resurrects or reconstitutes or recreate him- not however as the identical physical organism that he was before death, but as a *soma pneumatikon* ('spiritual body') embodying the dispositional characteristics and memory traces of the deceased physical organism, and inhabiting an environment with which the *soma pneumatikon* is continues as our present bodies are with world (John 1985:279).

Paul's explanation of the resurrection body is seemingly incomprehensible without faith or a distortion of some current scientific absoluteness. His view of the resurrection body is undoubtedly influenced by his experience of Christ when he was on his way to Damascus. Although Jesus lived long before him, Paul claimed that he met Jesus who changed his life from being a persecutor of the Church to an evangelizer to the Church (Acts 9:1-18). It is not surprising that Paul acclaimed that the risen Christ appeared to him "[a]nd last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8). Paul's tune in this biblical passage has a greater emphasis of Jesus literally appearing to him than just a metaphorical undertone. Ivan Karadza echoed that "[i]n this



encounter [of Paul allegedly meeting Christ], Paul recognizes the reality of Jesus' resurrection, and for him Jesus becomes the firstborn of the resurrected (1 Cor 15:20)" (Karadza 2014:164). Paul's experiences made him to regard the resurrection of Christ a reality. His claim is that he had seen Christ's resurrection body and has experienced Christ divine or supernatural power. In the modern or western contemporary world where science and reason dominate human thoughts, the question pertaining to the kind of body that will resurrect after death is relevant (Cervantes 2016:15). Unfortunately, many scholars have expressed the blurredness of the biblical understanding of the resurrection body. For example, Rev. A. E. Whatham of the Trinity Episcopal Church Louisville in Kentucky noted that both Paul and other New Testament passages made no clarity or give no any relevant knowledge of the concepts of the resurrection body which kept scholars rather mute or guessing over the subject:

In view of all the evidence now produced, what is the logical conclusion of the whole matter? It is this, namely, that the New Testament in its teaching, Pauline or otherwise, has no message whatever for us on the subject we have been discussing, since what it does say here is in absolute contradiction to the accepted teaching of science, as this is fully indorsed by modern biblical scholarship (Whatham n.d: 34).

One of the gaps covered in this research is the combination of various views by different scholars regarding Paul's perception of the resurrection body, this is in addition to Paul's own views about the resurrection body. The views are that the resurrection body might be seeing, felt and the pre-resurrection personality of the dead seemingly inherited. This research attempts to bring all the views together so that an imagery of the resurrection can be formed.

## CONCLUSION

Paul explained the resurrection body as a physical personality that can be recognized, felt and known to the resurrected person that he or she was the same person who once had a body that lived in the physical world. His emphasis indicates that the resurrection body is spiritual but the personality of the person could be known. The best reference Paul had to use to explain the resurrection body pertained to the resurrection body of Christ. This is so because Christ is the *only one* that died and was resurrected according to the New Testament. Others that died were rather resuscitated because they had to die again. In modern world, the kind of body Paul said would resurrect can hardly be understood using scientific calibrations or simple logical categorisation. What is clearer from the New Testament perspective about Christ resurrection body is that, it has some physical features or personality features and spiritual features mainly noted in Christ's type of body after resurrection and in some of Paul's description of Christ resurrection body.

The researcher pointed out that Christ body after resurrection had both physical and spiritual features. It is physical because it was seen by others, touched, and that Christ talked and visited people and he ate like other humans. His ability to appear and reappear in various places including his ascension and other unique features he possessed spiritualized his being as a spiritual person. The researcher points that Paul's socio-political and philosophical backgrounds in addition to his experience of Christ on his way to Damascus influenced the need for him to defend the Christian faith with regard to the resurrection of the body. Paul ignored the physical features of the resurrection body of Christ with an emphasis the spiritual features of the resurrection body. In Paul's view, the resurrection body is strictly spiritual. His view can further be supported with other biblical teaching according to which humans should

focus on building the spiritual aspects of their lives more than the physical aspects.

Unlike other ancient cultures like those of the Egyptians, the Assyrians and the Yorubas that emphasized the preservation of a deceased body in an expected resurrection, Paul seemed to ignore ideas that pertained to the preservation of the physical body in order for it to resurrect.

Though unproven, it is likely that ancient Greek philosophical thoughts that regarded the body as evil might have influenced Paul to de-emphasize the resurrection body a physical being. With regard to some Asian tradition that normally cremate the dead to and keep the ashes from the dead as a symbolic connection between the living and the dead (Berill 2020:372-380), there is an implication from a Pauline perspective. Paul de-emphasised any kind of treatment given to the physical body of the dead in order to preserve the sanity of the dead, and his emphasis is strictly spiritual suggesting that being more concern about the spirit of the dead is more important than the body of the dead. These researchers are aware that Asian traditions value the spirit of the dead also, unlike Paul, some Asian traditions value both the physical and spiritual components of the dead.

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