

# Review of: "Risky Hope: A Proflection Through Abraham's Spiritual Journey"

Sara Afshari<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

## 1. Contribution to the discipline:

The article successfully showcases its potential to enrich the field of sociology of religion through its exploration of the concept of hope. However, it falls short in fully elucidating its specific contribution to the field.

## Recommendations:

- a. Currently, there is no clearly defined meaning for the term "risky hope".
- b. Examining the biblical narrative (Abraham's journey) on the concept of hope, it would be beneficial to establish a definition for biblical hope first. For example, both Islam and Christianity view hope as having an element of uncertainty. This has been expressed through the concept of covenant; on one side, we have humans equipped with "hope in the form of active waiting," and on the other side, God's promise of salvation and redemption. In order to better understand the concept of "risky hope" in contrast to biblical hope, it would be useful for readers to be familiar with their similarities and differences.
- c. In both Islam and Christianity, the foundation of hope for all humans is believed to be rooted in the image of God (Christianity) or the breath of God (Islam). The article does not bring this into argument, however, there is some recognition of it, such as when it mentions "Hope is an unwanted guest." If this relates to the image of God within us, then it should become clearer. If so, that means hope within us is not a guest but part of who we are in God's image.
- d. The concept of "proflection" has not been well established in the article. For example, how can one handle a hope with a future in focus without concentrating it on what has already happened (which is the central principle of the reflection theory, the opposite of proflection)? Further examination of the theory of reflection could bolster arguments both for and against the concept of proflection.
- e. The concept of proflection discussed in the article failed to acknowledge the significance of the present moment. My query concerning Abraham's hope is whether one could argue that the potency of his hope stemmed from his mindfulness of the present, as he lived in the moment and entrusted the past and future to God.
- f. I am having trouble comprehending the concept of "impersonal hope". The term itself may be misleading and requires further clarification. It appears that the impersonal hope discussed in the article is actually quite personal in nature, whereas personal hope is more communal or belonging to a community. If this is the case, it could potentially provide a valuable contribution to knowledge, and therefore, more clarity in its definition is necessary.

## **Academic and accuracy”**

1. The methodology and supporting arguments require further strengthening. For instance:
  - i. The introduction of the article presents two contexts - one contemporary and one biblical. While the concept of hope is initially defined from a contemporary perspective, the focus of the article subsequently shifts totally to Abraham. This should be clarified to avoid confusion.
  - ii. There is a need for further development and establishment of the use of the proflection theory as the research framework.

## **Style and structure**

- a. There exist at least two writing styles that require clarification and organisation.