

church is called to witness. Compared to their North American and European counterparts, Filipino theologians regard the academic community as a secondary audience as they address themselves primarily to those who are at the cutting edge of the church's mission in the world. This interest explains the various references to very specific historical facts, for example, Martial Law during Marcos' time or Ramos' program of government. Even attempts to update some specific historical references when the lectures were revised for publication purposes have also been overtaken by recent political events, for example, the ouster of former

President Estrada last January. But even though the facts cited appear anachronistic, they point to some very enduring social and political issues that continue to prevail up to this moment.

In the final analysis, theology does not begin as an academic matter but a wrestling of the mind with faith. Theology may find itself on the pages of a university journal but only in fossilized form, worthy of scholarly scrutiny. But its spirit remains free and moves with vitality in the consciousness of those who, like the Prophet Jeremiah, take their faith like fire shut up in their bones.

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NATIONALISM AND THE PROPHETIC CRITIQUE

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ABSTRACT

The 1998 celebration of the centennial year of Philippine independence provides the backdrop for the reexamination of our identity as a nation and as a church denomination. One of the most pressing questions engendered by that celebration concerns the assertion of our nationalist goals and aspirations in an age of rising globalization. In this paper the teachings of the prophet Jeremiah provide the philosophical underpinnings for the theological paradigm that will be used in probing whether nationalism could provide a viable ideological base for a people's struggle for national liberation. Central in Jeremiah's teachings is the concept of "transformation" which involves, among others, a new liberating, covenant-based, and pro-people consciousness. Jeremiah's concern for the integrity and freedom of one's nation and his conviction that the cry for freedom by the elite leaders of a nation cannot be set apart from the cry of the poor and the marginalized for redemption from their plight find echoes in the contemporary cry in our country for an independent foreign policy in which the superpowers of this world and the powerless and voiceless enjoy equally responsible and meaningful participation in law and policy. Finally, this paper expresses the view that it would do this country good to heed Jeremiah's cry. For our nation to be truly free and respected in the community of nations, it must contribute to the upliftment of its own people as well as others, instead of simply dreaming of becoming like the other more advanced nations and forgetting all about becoming a people of God.

Introduction: The Irony of the Centennial Year

The past celebration of the centennial year of Phil-

ippine independence (1898 - 1998) coincided with the centennial celebration of Protestantism in the country. The twin events placed the issue of

nationalism in the center of the discussions and reflections both in the academe and church circles. For its part, the *Divinity School Silliman Ministry Magazine* devoted most of its August 1997 issue mainly to articles touching on or closely related to these twin events.¹ Other church publications also featured articles dealing with themes related to the centennial observance.² A common concern of these discussions centered on the recovery of the very roots of a people's identity as a nation, or as a church denomination within the framework of the coming of a new colonizer just at the time of its own founding. Even before this, however, there were already attempts to point out the fact that no sooner had the Philippines claimed its independence as a nation from Spain in 1898 that it also had to relinquish it to the Americans who proceeded to colonize the whole country with unprecedented brutality against those who tried to resist.³

Indeed, it is quite ironic that those who link the centennial celebration of our

independence with the coming of the Americans ignore the fact that the Americans soon suppressed the country's hard-won independence from Spain. Equally ironic is the fact that the centennial anniversary of Protestantism in the country is inseparably identified with the people who simply trampled upon our newly won freedom.

Discussions and reflections on these twin issues which continue to this day bring out the common elements of rediscovery [emphasis provided], rediscovering the roots and foundations of the nation's identity and its continuing struggle for sovereignty and real independence, as well as unmasking [emphasis provided], that is, unmasking the myth of American altruism and benevolence in its attempt to colonize the country.⁴ On the one hand, a more resonant and emphatic pleading to reassert [emphasis provided] the nation's legacy of freedom against all forms of foreign domination continues to be felt. On the other, the need to critically reinterpret and review [emphasis provided] our people's history

from a more nationalist perspective so as to make it reusable for the present remains urgent.⁵

Another historical irony that has been noted is that the resurgence of nationalist voices and people's movements engendered by the centennial year of Philippine independence had to contend with the reality of rising globalization and the actual breaking down of national, even ideological barriers through trade and commerce and electronic communication. Although the centennial year gave rise to nationalist articulations and programs for national development and renewal, it was celebrated in the context of a global socio-economic atmosphere that tends to look at nationalist economic policies as narrow minded and backward protectionism which slow down rather than hasten the economic development of trading nations.⁶

At a time when nationalism can easily be interpreted or misinterpreted as plain and selfish protectionism, how then did the nation make any asser-

tion of its own nationalist goals and aspirations during its centennial celebration? Is there still room for nationalism in an age of rising globalism or globalization? Is there still a space for the assertion of one's national identity, heritage, and aspirations as a people in a time of rising international relationships and dependencies? Could nationalism provide a viable ideological base for a people's struggle for national liberation at this time?⁷

Nationalism and the Scriptures

As one engaged more in the field of Scriptures rather than contemporary economics and politics, I will try to address these questions by drawing lessons and insights from the teachings and experiences of the prophets as they also respond to issues not totally dissimilar from ours today. This I will do through a critical examination of selected texts in the Old Testament out of which certain trajectories or patterns of development of meanings of certain texts or terms may be traced through various periods in the history

of Israel. This trajectory approach, however, will start not from the earliest texts or traditions but from what may appear to be relatively late prophetic materials such as Jeremiah, and then go backwards. The teachings of the prophet Jeremiah will then be used as the basis for synthesizing the insights taken up in the other texts and for constructing a possible theological paradigm that may be used in responding to the questions raised above. It is hoped that in reviewing the scriptural roots we will rediscover some fundamental aspects of our topic. These reflections are intended to be a modest contribution to the continuing discussions on the significance of the centennial celebration of our Protestant faith and that of our independence.

Initial Definition as Applied in Jeremiah

Nationalism is understood essentially as that spirit of loyalty and devotion to the interests of one's nation as a whole.⁸ Usually, it is related to the people's demand and strug-

gle for sovereignty and freedom from all forms of domination by any other nation, people, or group. Such popular understanding of nationalism is also imbedded in some of the prophetic testimonies. In the days of Jeremiah, for instance, there were times when the issue of nationalism was inextricably identified with the issue of independence. This understanding, however, has been challenged by those advocating what may easily appear as submission or collaboration with foreign invaders.

During the time of Jeremiah, Judah was already a vassal state of the superpower Babylonia. At this time, the ruling elite of the nation had already been expelled to Babylon in the first exile of 597 BCE. Some popular nationalist prophets, however, were stirring up and reviving the hopes and faith of the people by proclaiming the end of the exile of their leaders, the defeat of Babylon, and the return of the exiles to Judah, including their king Jehoiachin. One such nationalist prophet was Hananiah (Jer. 28). Right there

in the vicinity of the temple in Jerusalem, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, Hananiah proclaimed with much confidence: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years, I will restore to this place all the vessels of the temple of the Lord which Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, took away from this place to Babylon. And I will bring back to this place Jeconiah (Jehoiachin), son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles of Judah who went to Babylon,' says the Lord, 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon'" (Jer. 28:2-4).

Hananiah imbued his prophetic pronouncement with the power of the imagination which envisions a future for the nation free from foreign domination. In doing so, he revived the fading hopes of the people and inspired them to nurture plans of joining any movement that will hasten the day of the downfall of the hated Babylonian empire.

Being a Jerusalem-based prophet and probably

also a priest, and most likely the father of a certain Zedekiah, an official or cabinet member in the court of King Jehoiakim (cf. Jer. 36:12), Hananiah must have been among the beneficiaries of the earlier reformation movement launched by king Josiah in 621 BCE. This movement mandated the centralization of all worship in the city of Jerusalem to protect it from any foreign, non-Yahwistic religious contamination, and the removal and destruction of all other sanctuaries in the provinces (2 Kings 23). With King Josiah himself rallying the people towards a more independent political and religious posture vis-a-vis the then superpower Assyria, the reformation movement he led fostered very strong nationalist sentiment.

Thus, Hananiah was just speaking and acting as a product and beneficiary of a very popular movement started by no less than one of their most popular and beloved kings. This movement aimed to cleanse the nation of all forms of foreign influence in both religion and politics. One cannot

be more nationalistic than that. It stressed that the religion of Israel, the worship of Yahweh, is itself the identifying mark of the nation. The rejection of all other foreign influence and domination therefore implies the affirmation of the sole lordship of Yahweh over his people, Israel. Thus, the words of Hananiah come as words that affirm the uniqueness of the nation as the people of Yahweh, a God who will allow no other rival for the people's allegiance. The call to reject Babylonian domination and declare the forthcoming freedom of the exiles becomes a high point in the heightening of Israelite nationalism at this time.

But Jeremiah happens to see things differently. He called on the people not to believe, not to listen to the words of prophets like Hananiah, for, as he says, they are just plain lies. And to Hananiah himself, Jeremiah declared, "The Lord has not sent you, and you have raised false confidence in the people. For this, says the Lord, I will remove you from the face of the earth; this very year you shall die, because you have

preached rebellion (*sara*) against the Lord" (Jer. 28:15-16).

It is not surprising that after this pronouncement Jeremiah was booed and jeered by the listening crowd. His unpopularity must have reached unprecedented levels at this point and must have been a factor in the various attempts to incarcerate and even kill him. One arresting group was even led by a grandchild of Hananiah (Jer. 37:13). To the crowd in his time, Jeremiah appeared as the false prophet while the likes of Hananiah were being glorified as the true prophets for articulating the essential hopes and aspirations of the people. Hananiah called for a national revival and renewal along with independence in the tradition of Josiah's reformation movement. Jeremiah called for submission and collaboration with the invaders along with working for, praying for, and seeking the welfare of their captors as he states in his letter to the exiles, an approach which must have been unprecedented (Jer. 29:7). But Jeremiah's accusa-

tion against Hananiah is no less serious. The Hebrew word *sara*, translated as "rebellion" by most versions actually implies an act of turning aside or simply, in a more military sense, "defecting to the other side."⁹

Why would the articulation of nationalist hopes and aspirations be labeled as an act of rebellion against Yahweh? Why would the attempt to galvanize the spirit of a people into one body united in its opposition to foreign domination be labeled as defection to the other side? No wonder this part of the Scripture often poses a challenge to contemporary interpreters pushing for a more nationalist perspective in looking at the present realities.

A Continuing Tension: To be God's People or to Become like the other Nations?

Underlying Hananiah's prophesy was his call for the restoration of the nation-state of Judah governed by a Davidic king and dominated by the few who were actually exiled and whose return and restoration to their old power

and privilege Hananiah was anticipating. In effect, Hananiah was calling for the revival of the Davidic monarchy to rule and dominate the nation-state of Judah. In contrast, Jeremiah was calling for an indefinite period of submission to the power of Babylon as the only way to survive. He was not looking forward at all to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy, not even to the restoration of Judah as a nation-state (*goy*). Instead, he was waiting for the restoration of Israel as a people, specifically, as a people of God, when God would once again re-claim Israel as a covenant partner, and when God would once again declare to her: "I will be their God, they shall be my people" (*'am elohim*, Jer. 31:33).

Jeremiah's conviction had deep roots in the pre-monarchic days of Israel. The earlier stages in the history of Israel may be seen as reflective of the continuing desire of God to make Israel an *'am elohim* even in the midst of the ongoing efforts of the Israelites to become a nation-state (*goy*). Thus it was a history high-

lighted in most parts by this tension between the covenant intention to form Israel into an 'am elohim and that of the aspiration of the people to become like the other nations (*goyim*).

Hebrew thought and language make clear distinction between the concepts, 'am and *goy*. Although the term *goy* may also designate a people, the word is used more appropriately to refer to the political as well as territorial affiliations and identities of the people concerned. Given this implication, *goy* approximates our modern idea of a nation with a centralized tax-extracting, bureaucratic, military-imposing government system.¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the term *goyim* evolved in meaning which up to the present would mean "non-Israelites", or non Jews. They are the strangers, those that are different from Israel.

On the other hand, the term 'am, although closely related to *goy*, refers chiefly to a social and cultural grouping identified by linguistic or ethnic identities existing in tribal or even smaller communities without the presence of any

centralized political authority.¹¹ Predominantly, however, 'am is used to express two basic characteristics of people considered as a grouping: (1) the relationships sustained within or to the group, and (2) the unity of the group. Relationships could range from those within the family or clan, such as maternal, or ancestral, filial, children, wives, to those outside including slaves and servants. In other cases, they can be established or cut off on the basis of religious affiliations, such as distinguishing between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Such relationships are established and even strengthened and evolve into a clan or tribal unity on the basis of common traditions, beliefs, customs, practices, and the need to protect each other and defend each other from outside threats and invaders. Unity, on the other hand, can also be achieved on the basis of family and clan ties, as well as religious identities.¹²

"People" vs "Nation" in the Early Monarchy

By the time of the early monarchy, specifically during the days of David and Solomon, Israel had acquired

the characteristics of a *goy* which began to overshadow those of an 'am. Israel indeed became like the other nations. Yet, at the height of its economic prosperity and political stability during which imperialist expansionism launched by David flourished, there emerged prophetic voices who were responsible for the creation of the literary tradition in the Pentateuch known as the Jahwist or simply "J" (ca. 950 BCE).

One of the foundational materials found in "J" is the story of the call of Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3. There, in the setting of Abraham being given a covenantal promise of God for him to become a recipient of God's gift of land, to become the father of a great nation (*goy gadhol*), and to become a blessing to all other "families of the earth" (*mishpakbath haadamah*), Israel is mentioned by "J". Specifically, the text spoke of nationhood as Israel's destiny and future (underscoring added). However, this is a future being envisioned not only in terms of Israel's greatness as a *goy*, but

also in terms of being a blessing to all other peoples of the earth: "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Here, it appears that the well-being of Israel carries in itself some potential for the well-being of other peoples and nations as well. As Israel is to be blessed by God, she is not allowed to live in a vacuum. Israel must always live with, for, and among the others.¹³ That is, as a particular witness to and bearer of Yahweh's presence and lordship in all other communities and nations of the earth.

Thus, there is a very strong missionary intent in the call of Abraham. His call is not just for the creation, self-propagation, strengthening, and expansion of a nation-state even at the expense of conquering other peoples, tendencies which became very evident in the time of David and preserved by Solomon. The call rather is for the creation of a community whose existence will serve as a sign of God's activity and from whose witness will arise a means through which other peoples will find a

blessing. In short, as far as "J" is concerned, the emergence of a *goy*, the nation-state, can be justified only in the context of a collective missionary purpose and consciousness.

However, this thought is given a new twist in the tradition in Exodus which is identified with the strand of "E" or Elohist as illustrated in Exodus 19:5-6. There, Israel's being a *goy* is given a very particular qualification.

According to this strand, if Israel is to become a nation, (*goy*) it is only as a "holy nation" (*goy qadshob*). If Israel is to become a kingdom, it is only as a "kingdom of priests" (*mamlekbeth kohanim*), that is, within the context of the covenant offered by God to the people at Sinai: "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6). That is, Israel is called to live in a relationship which will reflect her uniqueness as a people set apart for the purpose of providing a distinctive wit-

ness to an alternative mode of existence God is offering to his people which will then serve as a model to other nations.

This alternative mode of existence is rooted in the people's concrete experience of liberation from the house of bondage to be led by God to a land that is His own gift to them. This alternative mode of existence is to be lived in a place where people are able to celebrate freedom in a radical, revolutionary, and egalitarian mode of managing the earth. There they are to live as a community of families brought together by a common experience of redemption and bound to a covenant relationship with their redeemer who, through the Law (Torah), is demanding a life of trust and obedience with compassion and respect for each other. This is also a way of living wherein all forms of power that will oppress and enslave are rejected.¹⁴

This is the kind of nation that will be known as God's people, "*am elohim*," a nation whose way of life is fueled by a powerful memory of a decisive saving event and

whose faith-response will be commensurate with the holiness of their covenant God. This is a people who will be known for their service among the nations the way priests are known to function in a society. It is a nation whose covenant responsibility encompasses her whole life, defining her relation to God and to her neighbors. The quality of her existence reflects clearly the kind of God she worships and serves even in the sight of other peoples. Although set apart, this nation will be called to minister even to other peoples.¹⁵

This assertion comes from the tradition of the Exodus but owing to its possible Elohist source, may be dated to about 850 BCE in the Northern Kingdom. Such assertion may have served as a prophetic reaction to the kind of development which took place about 150 years earlier at the moment of transition of Israel from the pre-monarchic, tribal stage to the monarchy itself. It could even be considered as a corrective to the strongly monarchic tendencies of the "J" tradition.¹⁶

Decisive Transition in the Days of Samuel

The evolution of Israel from a pre-monarchic society generally identified as an *'am* to a monarchic state known as *goy* did not come about without any tension. Tradition attributes the transition to that momentous event in the days of Samuel when the people of Israel, led by their elders, in a riotous assembly demanded and petitioned the aging judge-prophet at that time to appoint for them a king "who will govern them and lead them in their battles against their enemies, so that we may also be 'like the other nations'" (*kikbol bagoyim*, 1 Samuel 8:19-21). This took place despite Samuel's warnings that the king and the monarchy itself, once they are established, will only take away the people's basic freedom as well as their livelihood. They will be enslaved and their properties subject to taxation and confiscation, their sons subject to conscription, their daughters subject to forced labor (1 Sam 8:10-17). And in that day, says Samuel, "You will cry out be-

cause of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you on that day."

In his speech, Samuel portrayed the monarchy as one that will always take whatever can be taken from the people. To him, the monarchy was a parasite sucking away every thing of value that can be taken from the people, a virtual "taker", a taker of people's freedom, livelihood, and dignity.¹⁷ The king will take "*your daughters, ...the best of your fields and vineyards and give it to his officers and servants. He will take the tenth of your grain...He will take your men servants and maidservants, and the best of your cattle and your asses. He will take the tenth of your flock and you shall be his slaves.*"

This graphic description portrays the very nature of a monarchy as one existing by means of confiscation and concentration of wealth and land even as it also "lives for the sake of such a concentration".¹⁸ Its logical consequence is also clearly invoked by Samuel: slavery [underscoring added]. When Israel decided to

have a king, she also consigned herself to the destiny of becoming slaves anew, just like what they were in Egypt. In his condemnation of the monarchy, Samuel was unrelenting. Yet, as the story shows, the people insisted on their demand to have a king in order for them to be like the other *goyim*. Samuel could do nothing but to give in to the popular demand.

But Samuel was also articulating the sentiments of those who had always regarded the monarchy with much suspicion and even fear. These were people who had always felt the security and protection provided by the old pre-monarchic tribal arrangements, especially in the area of land distribution and management on a periodic basis. Samuel voiced the anxieties of those who had become much more rooted and attached to the old economic relationships provided for in the tribal days, who feared they were bound to lose the land assigned to them and the benefits derived from it. In short, that assembly which led to the transition of

Israel from a tribal confederacy to a monarchy must have been a very divisive one. There were those who continued to lobby for the institutionalization of the kingship and its bureaucratic governmental and military systems. Among the most avid supporters of this new system were the Jerusalem priesthood as well as the emerging nobility of the land. Nevertheless, there were those who continued to be wary and even critical of the institution of the monarchy itself. Among such group were the prophets.

The passage in I Sam 8, especially, verses 6-7, which says, "But the thing (the people's demand for a king) displeased Samuel... and Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel: 'Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.'" In the writer's view, this event marked the day when the people rejected Yahweh as the king over them and instead pinned their hope and security on a person and on a new system rather than

trust in the power and reliability of their covenant God. From this perspective, the monarchy appears as the historical expression of the people's rebellion or turning away from their God. It is to be seen as a drifting away from the essential calling of Israel as a partner of God in an eternal covenant relationship.

The "J" tradition in Gen. 12 tried to recover for the people and especially for the king the memory of the original calling of Israel even as it provided some justification for the establishment of a nation-state in the form of a monarchy. The "E" tradition in Exodus with its root in the covenant laws tried to endow a legal and ethical expression on such calling. In the view of the Elohist, which serves as a corrective to "J", the covenant community of Israel, with its religious and ethical laws, was actually older and more fundamental than the political dynasty of David in Jerusalem or the more recently established northern kingdom.¹⁹

Viewed from this perspective, the history of the

monarchy may be seen as a history of the continuous turning about of Israel, her turning away from her calling to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, and to be a blessing to other nations. Instead, Israel, with her kings, began to believe that her future and security lay in becoming like the other nations in terms of relying either on her armaments or on foreign powers to protect her and insure her survival.

Jeremiah Revisited

When Jeremiah called on the exiles in Babylon to build houses there—not temporary dwellings—and live there in anticipation of a prolonged sojourn, to plant gardens, raise families, pray for and seek the welfare of the city where God had sent them in exile, he was actually referring back to the old calling of Israel, and seeing in it a golden opportunity for the people to become a real blessing in the midst of other peoples (Jer. 29:5-7). He was envisioning Israel—even though humbled in the situation of exile—to become a sign that their God

Yahweh is present even in a foreign land. He was envisioning that Israel's eventual restoration would come about as a result of her own humble and penitent transformation, that her being humbled would become one basic ingredient for her being restored into a new covenant relationship. For even in the land of their exile, according to the prophet, they can become God's people again even if they may have lost their nationhood (underscoring added). They can be restored to a new and eternal covenant relationship with God even if their own political institution (Davidic monarchy) has been shattered for good. They can still become one family bonded together by a common memory and common religious and social obligations even if they may have lost their own home territory.

Conclusion: The Prophetic Alternative

Transforming now the prophetic critique into a prophetic paradigm for an alternative consciousness, we go back to the prophet Jeremiah.

Here we find in Jeremiah the parameters and features of a possible paradigm. The key word, however, is "transformation" which involves the basic experiences of repentance, the acknowledgment of a totally new social reality to which we are being summoned, the emergence of a new liberating, covenant-based and pro-people consciousness, a recommitment to such new consciousness, and a trusting mode of life characterized by faithful obedience and witness.

For Jeremiah, the issue that Israel had to confront was not the end of the exile, but the people's rebellion against their God. It was not about the restoration of the Davidic monarchy and the return of the old ruling elite. It was about the restoration of their commitment to a relationship with God and each other which called for a truly alternative way of living. It was about being just to one another. It was about protecting the weak and the marginalized such as the orphans, the widows, the poor, and the aliens from oppression. It was putting social substance

to the cultic and ritual rejection of idolatry as Jeremiah himself declares it so powerfully: "For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever" (Jer. 7:5-7). Such were the things that bound a people together into one "holy nation."

These are the things that remain essential in living as a covenant partner of God. As Jeremiah reminded his people: "Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man glory in his strength, nor the rich man glory in his riches; but rather, let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love (*chesedh*), justice (*mishpat*), and righteousness (*zedakah*) in the earth, for in these things I delight" (9:23-

24). For people to claim to have a special relationship with God, they must first establish a social arrangement in which the will of God for justice, steadfast love, and righteousness becomes a living reality itself. These are realities which form the foundations of being a people of God.

For prophets like Jeremiah, the concern for the integrity and freedom of one's nation can only be but part of the greater issue of the integrity and wholeness of the life of the people who are called to live as a family, as a community in covenant with their creator and redeemer God. The cry for freedom by the elite leaders of a nation cannot be set apart from the cry of the poor and the marginalized for redemption from their plight. God's will and desire for justice, steadfast love and righteousness cannot demand less. Otherwise, it will only be the freedom of the elite and for the elite and the likes of Hananiah that we shall be envisioning and even struggling for. The cry for freedom from foreign intervention cannot be set

apart from the cry of the peasants to be freed from the bondage of feudal exploitation and to be able to live as a community in a truly alternative, self-reliant mode of economy in our lands and farms.

In the more contemporary sense, the cry for an independent foreign policy vis-a-vis the superpowers of this world cannot be set apart from the cry of the powerless and voiceless sectors of our society for a responsible and meaningful participation in law and policy making which will insure that such process will not be a monopoly of a privileged few for their own vested interests. The cry for a cultural revival inspired by the centennial year cannot be set apart from the need for a comprehensive religious and social renewal among the people. This will involve a new experience of and a new perspective about God and God's demands on us. This will also involve the emergence of an alternative, community-oriented consciousness among us and the rejection of the idols of colonial mentality, uncritical reliance on foreign powers,

unmitigated and cutthroat competition, corruption, and greed.

The cry for our nation to be truly free and respected in the community of nations will only become meaningful if, instead of just dreaming of becoming like the other more advanced nations, we are able to strive for what can be the unique contribution of our people in the upliftment of other peoples. The campaign for nationalism in the centennial year will only become relevant if we ourselves are able to be part of a larger internationalism of all

other oppressed peoples and nations struggling for genuine liberation. Perhaps this solidarity can somehow enable us, in spite of our unworthiness, to become a sign of God's redeeming presence in those places, an instrument of God's grace, and a channel of God's blessings. Otherwise, amidst the din of nationalist rhetoric in this age of internationalization and globalization, we will be consigned to the fate of Israel, struggling always to be "like the other nations" while forgetting all about becoming a people of God.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ The issue includes major articles such as, Letizia Constantino, "The Katipunan's Legacy: A Vision of Social Spirituality or, 'Bonifacio, the Inconvenient Hero,'" pp. 16, 21-30; Victor Aguilan. "The Other Side of Our Heritage: Protestant Mission and American Imperialism," pp. 10-12.
- ² The July-Aug., 1997 issue of *NCCP Newsmagazine* also featured a number of articles on the theme of the centennial with essays by Louie Baclagon and Nidia A. Liu, "The Iglesia Filipina Independiente: How Revolution founded a New Faith", pp. 23-25; Ellery P. Ortiz, "American Methodism and the Filipino-American War", pp. 26-30, and a reprint of Aguilan's SMM article
- ³ Renato Constantino, *The Past Revisited* (R. Constantino: Manila, 1975), pp. 246-251, also, L. Constantino, "Recalling the Philippine-American War,"

- Education Forum* (TAP, vol. VIII SM 150, Jan 1989).
- ⁴ Renato Constantino, *ibid.*, pp. 3-11.
- ⁵ Renato Constantino, *ibid.*, pp. 242-243.
- ⁶ e.g., the response of Senator Ernesto Herrera to then anti-Bases advocate Senator Wigberto Tanada in the heated debates preceding the senate rejection of the US Bases in 1991: *You want to bar foreign investment; we want to welcome them. You think ill of exports; we believe they are critical to our industrialization. You believe in overprotecting our industries...we believe in a fair amount of protection, not in a policy of perpetually betraying the interests of the consumers... You believe in withdrawing from a global economic order dominated by the Americans and the West. We believe in becoming an important player in that arena... You believe in non-alignment even when this has lost all meaning because of the end of the Cold War. We believe in close partnership with the democratic nations which now include the USSR...*, Jovito R. Salonga, *The Senate that Said NO*, (University of the Philippines Press, 1995), pp. 245-246.
- ⁷ Cf., Renato Constantino and Letizia Constantino, *The Continuing Past* (Foundation for Nationalist Studies: Quezon City, 1978), p. 344.
- ⁸ cf. *New Illustrated Webster's Dictionary*, (PMC Publishing Co.: New York, 1992).
- ⁹ Francis Brown, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (APA, Inc., 1978), R. Laird Harris, et al., eds. *Theological Wordbook of the OT*. vol. 2 (Moody Press, 1980).
- ¹⁰ G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. vol. II, (W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Michigan, 1975), pp. 426-428
- ¹¹ cf. Norman Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, (Orbis Books, New York, 1979), pp. 241-242.
- ¹² R. Laird Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (TDOT) vol. 2 (Moody Press: Chicago, 1980), p. 676.
- ¹³ Cf. Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation: Genesis* (John Knox Press: Atlanta:1982), p.119.
- ¹⁴ Norman Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*, (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1985), p. 350; see also his major work, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, (Orbis Books: New York: 1979), pp. 584-587.
- ¹⁵ Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus: The Old Testament Library* (The Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1974), p. 367.
- ¹⁶ Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, p. 138.
- ¹⁷ cf. Walter Brueggemann, "I and II Samuel", *Interpretation*, (John Knox Press: Louisville, 1990), pp. 63-64.
- ¹⁸ Brueggemann, *ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Gottwald, HB, 138.