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ELEMENTS OF MODELING DRAWN FROM QOHELETH: APPLIED WISDOM

Rowland Van Es

Modeling in Proverbs and Qoheleth

There is a sense in which it is correct to say that the book of Proverbs presents readers with theoretical wisdom to be applied with guidance from the clues to reading and understanding which are provided by the author-editor in the first nine, introductory, chapters. The book of Qoheleth [Ecclesiastes], in this regard, is much more a book of applied wisdom.

First of all, Qoheleth corrects a misapplication of wisdom by countering the idea that wisdom can be used as a key to the mastery of life. Then Qoheleth sets about presenting the correct framework for applying wisdom. One is to find joy in his portion, accepting such joy as gift from God in the midst of each moment of life.

This is done as one traverses the ordinary course of life, eating and drinking, in the daily pattern of affairs. In this effort, one does not hope for some sudden breakthrough into the deep mystery of life, which will bring in some entirely new element making life meaning-filled in a way never before anticipated. In this effort, one stays with a basic and simple lifestyle but remains open and alert to the joy God offers.

Qoheleth then seeks to apply wisdom's counsel to the specific situation of those young people who are considering taking some part in an incipient revolution. This bring him to consider the possibilities from various aspects. He must raise the proper questions — the causes for the movement, the motivations of the participants, the tensions between their various loyalties, the dangers involved, and the potential results, as well as the correct objectives for such an action. This is all done quite covertly, because of the tyrannical conditions under which they live and in which he provides his counsel.

After this, it only remains for Qoheleth to draw out specific elements of the modeling for ministry which he provides.

Since it has been claimed that Qoheleth is in basic harmony with the outlook and approach of the book of Proverbs, it is well to consider first a comparison of his modeling with that found in the former book.

Modeling as steering for life is a large emphasis in Qoheleth. He contrasts this idea sharply with the distortion he has found in the contemporaries who follow the spirit of Job's

friends and "Solomon," in that they seek to master life, to control their world, and thereby deify themselves.

Modeling the gaining of wisdom as a process is emphasized as an agonizing decision process (gone through in this book itself) especially in contrast to a visionary experience. Human responsibilty is strongly emphasized in this way.

Modeling the responsible shaping of one's humanity is expressed in his lifestyle of disciplined reflection and action, which he insists can bring one to find joy in life. Qoheleth assumes that one can accomplish this to the point that he can urge the following of one's heart's desire and eyes' delights as God's trusted creatures.

In modeling the primacy of human relationships, the judgment on the present regime in Qoheleth's time falls right here. This is the key failure of the regime, i.e., the failure to retain this primacy through its structures and policies. On this count alone, Qoheleth finally tilts in favor of some kind of action to initiate change in the government. In reviewing the actual climate cultivated in the current situations he becomes extremely anti-materialist, which the other side of the coin of the primacy of human relations.

Modeling growth in wisdom and a recognition of limits: the latter are disproportionately emphasized. So taken up with the problem of those that want to master life is he that he must emphasize almost exclusively the limits of wisdom. In fact, the mysteries of life and God's part are brought out clearly as a foil to those who seek guaranteed success on the basis of their righteous wisdom. The balance between growth and recognizing created limits has not been properly maintain by the community, according to Qoheleth's analysis of the current situation. For him, the real sign of valid growth is to fully and correctly recognize wisdom's limits.

Modeling in Counsel to Young People Considering Revolution

1) The counselor remembers the interrelationship of life.

J.W. Gasper (1947:20) reminds us that in Israel, especially in the Wisdom Literature, "obligations of justice cannot be divorced... from religious, social and moral behavior, all of which find their fulfillment in the positive will of God." By the same token, it is imposible for the sage to consider the problem of political revolution as an isolated, compartmentalized, purely political question. The web of life is woven too closely to allow for such specialization in problems. One cannot leave social problems to sociologist, psychological problems to psychologist, economic problems to economist, and political problems to politicians as if there were no interconnections among these and all of life.

There are therefore no simplistic answers, no formulae that can be applied to situations for developing answers that conform the correct principles so that they yield proper responses when accurately adapted. There is, however, a proper used of wisdom, and Qoheleth seeks to model that as he struggles in the decisions process, using the applicable values reflects deeply on known standards and present actualities. The considerable ambivalence that can be felt concerning a political revolution should be understood not as a wavering on principles but as a definitive struggle to do what is the wise and therefore righteous thing in this matter for which guidance can never be patently clear.

This atmosphere may be somewhat frustrating to those who are used to dealing with the prophetic style of "Thus saith the Lord". But the style of Wisdom Literature is always, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." One must take his own choice. The counselor helps clarify the issues and brings in the relevant questions. The counselee must supply the will and the response.

2) **The counselor models reflective coolness.**

The cool man is the sage who keeps his head in emotional crises. He does not evidence a hot spirit. His reflective responsibilities force him to carefully evaluate the situation as it develops and to weigh choices before acting. This style applies to a sage who is counseling revolutionaries as well, as Qoheleth exemplifies. He must not let enthusiam for a "righteous cause" carry his counselees away from their good judgment and clear insight. A sage will advise his counselees as well not to be swept away with dreams and visions (5:3,7). They are often self- induced, and they are often just projections of what one wants to have confirmed — even if a prophet be induced to mediate them. By the same token, one must take care not to really try to manipulate God in any way. One must counsel coming to him to listen and not to inform him in an attempt to get God to bless what they have already decided to do (4:17, 5:7). This latter course partakes of the same self-serving self-sufficiency as is found in all commercialists, in or out of power.

This reflective coolness keeps one from being rushed into a popular uprising of people who are basically merely malcontents (7:10). There is no end to the complaints and vague desires of malcontents who simply seek the "good old days". These are never sought in wisdom. Those who would accuse sages of simply conserving the status quo must seriously consider this counsel.

3) **The counselor urges moderate alternatives to rebellion.**

Recognizing that there may be some bona fide grievances, Qoheleth helps his counselees seek some valid alternatives to an all-out revolution (8:5). It is not possible to work within the present system responsibly, and thus work the necessary changes? One must posit that here Qoheleth has the ear of some of the present officials. His wisdom value of constancy shines through as he challenges them to look at their oath sworn before God (8:2).

Certainly court wisdom would remind them of this, too. But within that framework a wise man could "know a time and way" — i.e., he could work within the framework of the king's command to counteract ill effects of an evil command. There are, contra to court wisdom, no absolutes expressed by wisdom sayings about always obeying a king's commands, just as the "law of retribution" is not an absolute to be idolized.Perhaps if their use of court wisdom could be revised they could still humanize the present regime, as they carried out orders with proper motivations, values and goals.

4) **The counselor helps the young people recognize valid and invalid grounds for revolt.**

The fact that Qoheleth airs so many grievances against the current atmosphere of commercialism in the land and connects it with the ruling powers indicates that he recognizes some legitimate grounds for action to promote positive change. The mere airing of grievances, giving articulation to the actual evils, is in itself a call for change. One must not underplay the fact that the intelligentsia giving articulation to their perception of current situations is a very significant factor in public perceptions — although Qoheleth himself distrusts public response to the expressions of the wise (9:15), because they tend to go along with military might rather than wisdom.

The grounds in this case, expressed by Qoheleth, are rampant injustice and oppression — expressed in the crucial passage 3:1- 4:4. This situation is bad enough, but it is made worse by the fact that it is sustained by officials who, as Qoheleth expresses it, protect each other in their corrupted practices to gain personal advantage and wealth (5:7).

In addition, Qoheleth sees the regime as under the control of debauched officials who induce sloth among themselves so that the interest of the people are genuinely endangered (10:16-18). The rampant commercialist-materialist atmosphere of the dog-eat-dog social expressions in the land are exacerbated by the materialist stupor of the debauched, slothful officials who feel money answers everything (10:19). Cannot the counselees appeal to the processes of law? "In the judgment place I saw wickedness, and in the seat of justice, iniquity" (3:16 NAB). In these circumstances, appealing to the process of law is impossible.

The one who counsels that joy is to be found in the basic life of each man as he goes about his toil articulates the fact that under the present conditions, set up by the powers that be and submitted to by the people, life is difficult and depressing. He submits that the most that can be said for it is that it is one step ahead of death (9:4,7,10). As a philosophy this is hardly tenable. But if one sees it as a commentary on misappropriation of power and its effects on people, it is a powerful statement giving articulation to the need for change—by revolution if all else fails. The beautiful exultation in youth has the following phrase: "Remove vexation from your heart and put away pain from your body" (11:10). If conditions

are such that it is inconceivable to do this, then, the counselor implies, they may have to think toward revolution. There is no such thing as innocent poetry.

5) **The counselor warns about the structure of monarchy and its effects of personnel.**

This point complements the fourth. Kings, in the experience of Qoheleth, tend to play at the role, and they see it in very personalistic terms rather than in democratic terms. The "study" in chapter two seems to be carried out by a king very willing to "play" at his post, and he ends up unhappy because even the efforts he does make may only be inherited by an "unworthy" successor. Qoheleth could well be making a reflection on the attitude of the present rulers. Their well-being and success comprise the scope of their "national" view. This constitutes further grounds for working for change.

But it also gives pause to consider the whole structure, and the possibility that a change in personnel will change anything at all is thrown into question by the illustration of the young king who comes into office with plenty of popular support but leaves office with no remembrance (4:13-16). The revolutionaries will have to seriously consider whether the personnel they are seeking to bring in will in actuality be any better. Will they really be an improvement, or will it simply mean that power (and corruption) will be in different hands benefitting different people? This is an agonizing question for those who see "nothing new under the sun". Again their values and motives and objectives are called up for review. They cannot be mere enthusiasts.

Perhaps the change called for really entails a change in structure and philosophy of government. One where the whims of personnel cannot play such a dominant role. Qoheleth can be understood to imply that the young king also falls out of popular favor for very good reasons (4:16). The revolutionaries face here a very agonizing reality that they must deal with now, at this point. They cannot simply hope things will turn out for the best or that they will straighten themselves out as the revolution takes shape.

6) **The counselor formulates hard questions: about the people.**

The young people who have come to Qoheleth to consult about their situation have heard him help them articulate the correct understanding. Now, they also hear him formulate difficult questions and challenges about the practical situation which, with all their idealism, they will have to deal with in setting their course.

In dealing with people, the counselees must remember that people do not always have the right outlook. The commercialist- materialist profit-seeking set of life is not limited to the rulers. There is no wild-eyed euphoria about Qoheleth that indicates poverty teaches people the right values or that poor people have automatically the correct approach to life.

The materialists are in ascendancy throughout society because the people would have it that way (6:7-9). Therefore, there are many malcontents who would delight in revolution, but for the wrong reasons (7:10).

Nor do people tend to follow wisdom, necessarily, even when it is taught them (9:15). They more often are swayed by brute force. In addition to this, they are fickle and quick to turn on kings, even those who have come into power through popular support and overthrow of the predecessor (4:16). Their evaluation of leadership personnel is grossly inaccurate, so their judgments cannot be taken at face value. In echoes of retribution logic, their contention might be expressed, "success breeds success".

This idea comes to the fore in the experience recounted by Qoheleth in 8:10-13. Apparently the people admire the man who can get away with his wickedness and make it pay for him without his having to pay for it. Right in the place where he has taken advantage of people he is praised — even by the religious leaders! Money talks, and money answers for everything! The body politic is difficult to deal with.

Qoheleth warns that the fact that people may be ready to join in with his counselees' righteous cause does not make them righteous themselves. They must beware the motives and objectives of those who join in with them (9:17-10:1). This is double reason for not joining "lightly into a base plot (for overthrow)" (8:3). Perhaps they should not join in with a movement in progress, but should set up their own. Always there are plenty of self-righteous people around. But self-righteousness is a trap (7:16). It means that they also will be no longer open to advice nor will they be able to see their own false motives.

In any case, when dealing with the public, the revolutionaries must keep their appeals short and sensible (10:12-15). Qoheleth is not positively impressed with the public's ability to follow good thinking. If wisdom will get through to them it will have to come in short sentences.

7) **The counselor forces the counselees to anticipate the difficulties of the revolutionary process.**

The process of revolution, so Qoheleth indicates, is extremely vulnerable. There are always internal problems to deal with. The problems regarding the people at large and the "joiners" have already been mentioned in connection with the preceeding part (6). Wisdom can help stave off problems. It can anticipate the realities that will be met, but a little folly can undo much wisdom in a revolution (9:18-10:1). That folly can well come from within the movement itself. They will have to keep their ranks clean and free from the "single slip (that) can ruin much that is good" (9:18 NAB).

Besides these slips to worry about, there are the spies (particularly women) who are always so numerous and omnipresent in the realm of oligarchs who are determined to

maintain their advantage and wealth (there is nothing new under the sun!) (10:20). Spies would present enough of a worry, but there are also those from within who might be enticed away and betray them (7:26-29). Money answers everything! These are some of the reasons why revolutionaries have to be so careful about the motives, goals and values of the people they join together with.

Still, Qoheleth can claim that wisdom is better than force, if possible (9:16). But if all else fails, or the people fail to follow wisdom, or force is the main threat against them they may be assured that wisdom is superior and can overcome force (9:17). But they will have to be extremely careful (10:8-9), and they had better have, in their wisdom, plenty of contingency plans ready to enact (11:2).

8) The counselor helps young people anticipate needs in the new government.

The failure of many revolutions is that the revolutionaries are unable to think beyond the overthrow. The task is far from complete at that point. Qoheleth alerts the counselees to the need to have people with skills appropriate to government ready to perform when needed (10:10). The act of governing men is not something that can be done haphazardly. One of the problems with the present regime is that they have not used personnel skillfully. Qoheleth, by pointing this fact out (10:5-7), urges the revolutionaries not to make the same mistake. So it is that he gets the young revolutionaries thinking beyond the excitement of the overthrow.

In concluding this discussion about counseling young people concerned about government, several things need to be pointed out. One thing is that Qoheleth models a ministry that recognizes the need to help people deal with their world. Withdrawal in face of all these problems is not the answer. The sage deals with the daily encounter with the world. That is important.

Another thing that needs to be pointed out is that in all this practical dealing with the problem of the need for change in governement no appeal is made to nationalistic or ethnic sentiments. These are terribly important considerations. In all likelihood, Qoheleth speaks in the midst of conditions which led eventually to the Maccabean Revolt. The Hasmonean leadership certainly appealed to every ounce of energy that ethnic and nationalistic sentiments could provide. In doing so they followed the lead of the Chronicler and Ezra and Nehemiah before them. All these felt that the need was so great that those means, in desperation, were justified.

Qoheleth wisely does not suggest this source of energy. He remains true to Wisdom's openness and universalistic ideals. He also seems to understand that using those means are never justified for good ends. The Maccabees would have done well to have followed his lead in this matter in particular. Revolutions, though seemingly successfully energized by such emotions, more often than not self-destruct on this shoal.

Qoheleth forces his counselees to see that transformation of society is the ultimate need and goal. Political revamping is but a part of a much larger picture.

Modeling a Freedom vis-a-vis the Culture

Qoheleth was raised in a cultural milieu which placed high value on posterity (meaning both progeny and a good inheritance with which to bless and keep them going). "A good name is to be valued above all" (7:1). The closest thing to continued life after death recognized by wisdom was a name continuing on, by which one would be remembered. Much energy and even acts of largess or daring were expended in developing such a "name", such a "remembrance".

But Qoheleth flatly denies any such remembrance. He denies it for anybody — king, pauper, wiseman, fool, rich benefactor. He discards a building block that the culture had used and cultivated for hundreds of generations. No remembrance! Unthinkable! But Qoheleth insists that it is true. One should not depend on it, nor should he use it calculating in a reward schema.

Culture and its nurture were important, but not sacred. If one finds a culture building block, be it a value or a reward system, that does not jibe with reality as the sage perceives it, then Qoheleth is prepared to discard that cultural refuse. Culture is not sacred. Wisdom does not always conserve what it inherits. It evaluates freely against the standard that its God- given perception of reality yields. It does so with integrity and courage. Wisdom is not trapped by culture any more than it is trapped by ethnicity or nationalistic zeal.

Modeling Readiness to Meet God at the Center of Life

Qoheleth was prepared to find God in the mysterious, the imponderabble, the irreconcilable, the mysterious. That mysterious was not, as one might expect, at the periphery of life, but the actual center of life. The mysterious was found in everyday events that did not fit the order as it was understood.

As Qoheleth perceives it, many were trying to create or secure their own *shalom*, their own joy. But this results in just the opposite. Man creates his own disorder by not accepting the joy in God's ordering as sufficient, while he searches for his own. As the writer in Genesis 2-3 points out, rather than trusting God's ordering, man tries to create his own disordering as well as the disordering of the culture created by the systemic disorders and the disorders created by other men (over him). Men overreach in commercialist desire for profit. Men overstep the limits which are a part of life.

Man needs to to come back to the point of trust in the order, eating and drinking and finding joy there in the midst of life and ordinary human experience.

Modeling the Securing of Creaturely Joys in a Life Style of Relaxed Acceptance

Since God is found at the center of ordinary life, the joys of life are secured within one's human lifestyle. One does not strain to secure his own future, scrambling madly over all others who might get in his way, nor does one strain for obedience. Rather, one simply relaxes in an accepting mode as he maximizes life and lives with abandon, trusting the good ordering, the positive orientation of life.

In this style of life one has a proper sense of human accomplishment and personal potential. For instance, one does not anticipate that he can set up some political system that will be perfect for all time and generations to come. He does what is right for now. He does not know, nor does he need to know, what comes after him in the world (6:12).

This basically simple lifestyle is more clearly perceived in the Gilgamesh Epic and Amenemope, Qoheleth feels, than it is in the lives of those caught up in the commercialist society around Qoheleth that is supposed to ber informed by Yahwism. This outside literature would encourage living with more abandon in light of the fact that the gods come tomorrow (Gilgamesh) or that the gods already approve (Amenemope). This, thought Qoheleth, is closer to truth than is the lifestyle that evidences one trying to scramble around securing his own future and that of his posterity.

Besides, the securing of one's own future puts him at odds with the community of mankind. Such a person sought a personalized, individualized *shalom* apart from the community and almost always at the expense of others. But one's *shalom* is built within community *shalom*, a fact that oppressors and tyrants tragically failed to recognize.

Community *shalom* cannot countenance embracing some people with excess (*ythrwn*) and others with want. Therefore, abundance, not excess, is to be sought. Qoheleth's examples have people tyrannizing to hurt, amassing wealth to hurt. These people are not living with abandon. They are living with the intent to store up for themselves treasures on which they can rely for pleasure, joy and life in the future. They will inhibit life (or others) now for wealth (theirs) in the future.

One must in the accepting lifestyle maintain a sense of humor, as Qoheleth does. This will help him see his own puny efforts realistically. It will keep him from a self-righteous evaluation that says he deserves much better than he has received, and therewith helping himself to more of the "better" he wants.

This lifestyle is not one of life-mastering. Life mastery leads simply to frustration and a sense of life's emptiness (*hbl*). That is the tragic conclusion of the experiments run on the premise of the house that Solomon built — the commercialist exploitation of wisdom. The one whose joy accepting life style concentrates on the joys therein contained accepts also

the ironic incongruities (*hbl*) in life and does not let them drain his passion for life. Rather he keeps moving among those incongruities and beyond them to whatever else mixes with the joy. His is a life of balance that holds nothing up in idolatrous fanaticism — not wisdom, not pleasure, not a good name, not accomplishments, nor obedience, nor anything. Whether *hbl* is emptiness or irony depends on one's life-set.

Modeling a Life Style that Prioritizes Human Relationships

There are two pillars to the priority of human relationships set up by Qoheleth. One is justice. The other is anti-materialism. These have been called out for description and elaboration because of the situation at hand. Of course, they are closely related.

Qoheleth is almost obsessed with the totally foolish materialist-commercialist sell-out by the people around him. The real stimulus for his writing is the need to counteract that sellout. He has a tremendous pastoral concern for the whole community of man which, as he sees it, is hurtling down the path to self-destruction on the speeding legs of consumerist values.

The profit motive, he exposes, makes people treat both things and people as mere commodities. People can therefore correctly related to neither things nor people. They lose the sense of the preciousness of life. Although things are at the same time divested of their divinity (a necessary thing), they are also completely drained of meaning (an unnecessary and intolerable extreme). Oesterley's description of the background of Proverbs, in this regard, is perhaps even more accurate for the book of Ecclesiastes: 'The taste for trade and commerce tended constantly to increase; the opportunities for amassing wealth by this means was a great allurement and attracted many away from agriculture with its hard toil and much slower process of earning money. This involved a great inlflux into the cities; and the Wisdom Writers, like the prophets before them, realized the dangers and evil influences of town life.' (Oesterly, 1929:246)

So there is an agrarian/urban tension at play here, but Qoheleth resists the urge to simplistically say that society should return to agrarian ideals and patterns. "Ask not why were former days better, it is not in wisdom you ask this" (7:10). Still, one can sense that agrarian ideals seem to be in fact closer to the acceptance ideals of Qoheleth than are those of the urban (or agrarian) commercialists. Perhaps it is the proximity of the people in an urban setting that makes displays of wealth so effective in developing desire that really is the fulcrum of the propblem. That and the devaluation of work as it was perceived in the two different communities and their life styles created disordering tensions.

When things no longer have value and are meaningless, people also are looked upon as commodities, and they lose worth as persons and vice-versa. But in the commecialist-controlled atmosphere this is the twin result. Ironically, when so much value is placed on acquisition, then there is acquisition-stimulated inflation, and both things and people lose intrinsic value in the system. A person is considered to be worth what he can acquire. Things

and people decrease in value. It is a vicious circle (or spiral, as the newly popular analogy has it). Qoheleth calls for a mighty halt to be placed on this spiral. But the debauched rulers are a cause and stimulus to this very devaluation. "Money answers everything!"

In stark contrast to the concurrent society, the dominant theme in creation theology, on which Qoheleth relied, is relationship between God and man and nature. It is a harmonious, caring relationship. That which is the enemy of the *shalom* of creation is chaos — which threatens to invade the order. It is man who can and does introduce chaos, bringing the disorder of folly, fragmentation and meaninglessness. Men cause this fragmentation to obscure the vision of harmonious order, and men separate the elements of the ordering from the wholeness that God intended. (Birch and Rasmussen, 1978:103)

Qoheleth accepts the teaching of retribution as a motivation in educating young Jahwists in the art of steering through life, but he does not accept retribution as a doctrine by which to judge others or as a key to life-mastery that can be used to manipulate the order for one's bernefit. Certainly, Qoheleth felt that retribution thinking could not be used in such a way as to promote the attitude that God would directly and personally take care of wrongs by some kind of dramatic, personal intervention. Qoheleth mentions no examples of this kind of action on God's part. In contrast, he mentions many examples of cases where retributive justice just never occurred. This implies that the power that should have been creative toward better communion in the community, as God had intended it to be used in the creative ordering, was not being used correctly.

But, Qoheleth's analysis is even more devastating than this. Not only is the power not being used in its intended creative sense, it is really being used destructively, for a breakdown in the created ordering. Power, he says, is on the side of the oppressors. That is a symptom of systemic injustice in a society where one is supposed to understand that authority is meant to protect the widow, the orphan and the powerless. The meaning that is supposed to be found in perceiving the right ordering is obscured by fragmentation that is being caused and supported by the wrong use of power. While the whole community is designed to be in *shalom*, those powerful ones seeking their own profit and advantage destroy the possibility of *shalom* for any, "and there is no one to comfort them."

So Qoheleth models the primacy of human relationships particularly in articulating the odious results of the rampant commercialist-materialism and the injustices and oppressions which come, in this case, largely as offshoots of the same.

Modeling the Clarification of Values for mature Decisions-making: Living the Joy in Life

Qoheleth treats life as being very important — a gift to be enjoyed. One's portion was to be accepted and rejoiced in. The basic lifestyle, one might call it the simple life-style, was

meant to yield him pleasure. Therefore, one cannot just let life happen, but he must live it decisively. The gifts of life, joy, and wisdom blended into a whole that, although marked with incongruities, yielded one his goodly portion. But this life-style demanded specific values.

Qoheleth did not fly in the teeth of reality. He evaluated the realities cooly and soberly and with accuracy. That was his training. He saw in society around him tremendous distortions of the created order. Power was being wrongly used. But he saw through these distortions and their contradictory signals, and he struggled with them all without blaspheming the creator.

He was made aware that one must not absolutize any one doctrine or truth, and he maintained his basic trust in the order. One must eat, drink and find joy in his toil. This stand brought him into conflict with those who did absolutize the "doctrine of retribution." This teaching had become distorted in his time primarily because of the commercialist atmosphere which wanted everything to yield a profit. The commercialists' values distorted their understanding of reality and their relationships within the order. While this atmosphere dominated, the response to oppressive measures that squeezed poor, powerless people and bloated the wealth of others was simply to say "men are that way." "It will even out later," was the only hopeful thing said from that perspective.

Qoheleth denies that "men are that way." He says, "Behold, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices." Life is a human enterprise, and therefore problems in life are human problems. It is those who lean back and accept disorder who are "making the crooked straight," by treating the straight as crooked. It is those who retain human values that are caught in the incongruity of accepting joy while observing oppression.

When men operate on human values, as Qoheleth and the sages clarify them, then they can be challenged to live life with abandon, to the full, folllowing their hearts' desires. Are the parameters of *shalom* reduced by Qoheleth? In the view of his opponents, yes. But Qoheleth is convinced his values are honest and right.

His stance, then, is not that of an elitist. He emphasizes the commonality of all the living ones in creation. It may sound morbid that death is the great leveler, but it made his point firmly and clearly. He did so from a broadly based pastoral concern. There was no one to comfort, except on this basis. He helped his counselees, who dealt with a starkly tragic situation, come to an understanding in which decisions could correctly be made. He brought them to an accurate assessment of the current realities and urged them to decide how their lives could properly fit into the ordering (which was currently manifested primarily in disordering). Whatever they were to do was to remain based and designed on human values. Death, in all its dimensions, ended life. One cannot tolerate death-producing systems or acts

or situations whatever their origin. Life cannot be properly assessed except in the light of death.

So Qoheleth counteracts the attitude toward injustices and oppression that the commercialists held. They did not recognize injustice or oppression for what they were. They happily invoked the cause-effect nexus as a doctrinal explanation of the current social ills. Everybody gets his due, they taught. If one is suffering now, then he must seriously heed the counsel to be diligent, work harder and search out why he is failing. Qoheleth drove those who express this attitude back to creation theology and the egalitarian ideals where he eats and drinks and accepts the joys of his portion, finding joy in his toil.

From the standpoint of the well-supplied oppressors, (who felt they were just enjoying their due rewards, not seeing themselves as oppressors), this stand of Qoeheleth's meant they had to reassess their values. From the standpoint of the oppressed it simply meant a further buildup of their level of frustration as they reflected on the fact that since the just ordering was designed so that one could eat, drink and find joy in his toil, somehow that was (unjustly) being denied to them. It was confirmed to the poor that the cause of their suffering was not necessarily of their own making. And the young counselees were left to make their own mature decision. If they insisted on searching *h'lm* they would be left with nothing. But if they would search out *h't* the results could be momentous. And there was no need to resort to the enthusiasm engendered by nationalistic or ethnic sentiments, which themselves can be most dehumanizing. They simply needed to enflesh the human values of God's good ordering.

Which values would be theirs, commercialist or human? What course would their lives take? The decision was theirs, in those times that were so out of joint and grinding on in their ceaseless round. He who has ears to hear let him hear.

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RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE THEOCENTRIC MODEL: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Victor R. Aguilan

In 1989 there were 4.9 billion people living on this earth. Of these, 309 million were Buddhists, 655 million were Hindus, 860 million were Muslims and 1.6 billion were Christians (The 1989 Almanac: 400). Contemporary theologians and philosophers of Religion have accepted that we live in a religious plural world. We can see from the figures just how much is at stake here.

Religious pluralism is an irreducible fact. We encounter people with different faiths in our own country, in our own hometown, in our factories and schools, and even in our own homes. How should we deal with this reality? Religious pluralism is not just a reality to be recognized, but a challenge to be met. 'Pluralism is today a human existential problem which raises acute questions about how we are going to live our lives in the midst of so many options. Pluralism is no longer just the old schoolbook question about the One-and-the-Many; it has become the concrete day-to-day dilemma occasioned by the encounter of mutually incompatible world views and philosophies. Today we face pluralism as the very practical question of planetary human coexistence', (Pannikar, 1979:217).

Everyone knows how much violence and death have been caused by religious strife. We know that the most fanatical and cruelest political struggles are those that have been colored, inspired and legitimized by religion. One need to recall Southern Philippines to realize what I mean. To say this is not to reduce all political conflicts to religious ones, but to accept the fact that religions share in the responsibility of bringing reconciliation and peace to our torn and warring land. Christians must come face to face with this reality. As a Christian what is my attitude toward these other religions?

The growing assumption in the ecumenical circle today is the pluralist position, Knitter, (1985). The basic assumption of this position is the need for a broader understanding of the word oikumene (the whole inhabited world) which include other religions. Mankind must unite or perish! There are two leading exponents of this position: Paul Knitter and John Hick. In the following paragraphs I shall discuss their views.

Paul Knitter and John Hick call their position toward other religions as the THEOCENTRIC MODEL (Knitter, 1985: part 3; Hick, 1982: 289). This model has three basic assumptions. Both scholars accept the reality of religious plurality but it is not absolute pluralism: there is at least the concept that there is single TRUTH or REALITY towards which different religions point. They view Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and other religions

as variants of something larger and more comprehensive reality. This is their first assumption.

Dr. John Hick, taking a historical approach, sees the problem of religious pluralism as related to man's historical development and differences in circumstances. He writes: 'Now the possibility, indeed the probability, that we have seriously to consider is that many different accounts of the divine reality may be true, though all expressed in imperfect human analogies, but that none is "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." May it not be that the different concepts of God, as Jahweh, Allah, Krishna, Param Atma, Holy Trinity, and so on; and likewise the different concepts of the hidden structure of reality, as the eternal emanation of Brahman or as an immense cosmic process culminating in Nirvana, are all images of the divine, each expressing some aspect or range of aspects and yet none by itself fully and exhaustively corresponding to the infinite nature of the ultimate reality?' (Hick, 1982:284).

Hick proposes a "new map for the universe of faiths." In describing his map, he speaks repeatedly about the Divine Spirit, Divine Reality or same ultimate reality behind all the religions. He also implies that the differences are only historical and cultural adaptations. He continues: 'It is possible to consider the hypothesis that they are all, at their experiential roots, in contact with the same ultimate reality, but that their differing experiences of that reality, interacting over the centuries with the different thought-forms of different cultures, have led to increasing differentiation and contrasting elaboration - so that Hinduism, for example, is very different phenomenon from Christianity, and very different ways of conceiving and experiencing the divine within them' (Hick, 1982:289).

Knitter, a Catholic priest, asserts that this single reality common to all religion must be accepted only as a hypothesis. But it is an important hypothesis since it creates the basis for interreligious dialogue. If we do not have something in common how could we begin the dialogue. In his book "No Other Names?" he writes: 'Dialogue must be based on the recognition of the possible truth in all religions; the ability to recognize this truth must be grounded in the hypothesis of a common ground and goal for all religions. . . . Without this deeper sharing in something beyond them all, the religions do not have a basis on which to speak to each other and work together. . . there must be the same ultimate reality, the same divine presence, the same fullness and emptiness — in Christian terms, the same God — animating all religions and providing the ultimate ground and goal of dialogue', (Knitter, 1985:208).

But there are dangers that we have to consider when we take the theocentric position or the common ground and goal view according to Knitter. We can easily impose our own definition of that reality on another religion. That is why he proposes that the common ground and goal for all religions must be taken as a hypothesis. 'As a hypothesis, it must be used cautiously; partners in dialogue cannot verify it or truly grasp its contents outside the process of dialogue. This means before engaging in dialogue, one will be hesitant to define the

common ground as either God or emptiness; and in dialogue, one will be open to the necessity of expanding or reforming one's one notion of what the ultimate really is,' (Knitter, 1985:209).

It is a hypothesis because the ultimate reality is unknowable. Even Hick asserts that the "one ultimate reality" behind all the religions is beyond the grasp of the human mind. He writes: 'Let us begin with the recognition, which is made in all main religious traditions, that the ultimate divine reality is infinite and as such transcends the grasp of the human mind. God, to us our Christian term, is infinite. He is not a thing, a part of the universe, existing, alongside other things; nor is he a being falling under a certain kind. And therefore he cannot be defined or encompassed by human thought. We cannot draw boundaries round his nature and say that he is this and no more. If we could fully define God, describing his inner being and his other limits. This would not be God. The God whom our minds can penetrate and whom our thoughts can circumnavigate is mere a finite and partial image of God', (Hick, 1982:283).

Hick asserts that it is impossible for man to comprehend the wholeness and totality of the one absolute reality. In that article, he even borrowed a parable told by Buddha to drive his point. '. . .there is the parable of the blind men and the elephant, said to have been told by the Buddha. An elephant was brought to a group of blind men who had never encountered such an animal before. One felt a leg and reported that an elephant is a great living pillar. Another felt the trunk and reported that an elephant is a great snake. Another felt a tusk and reported that an elephant is a sharp ploughshare. And so on. And then they all quarrelled together, each claiming that his own account was the truth and therefore all others false. In fact of course they were all true, but each referring only to one aspect of the total reality and all expressed in very imperfect analogies', (Hick, 1982:284).

In another article, Hick (1981: 46-47) distinguishes the "Eternal One in itself as the infinite Reality which exceeds the scope of human thought, language and experience," from the "Eternal one as experience, thought and expressed by finite human creatures." He seems to be using the Kantian epistemology. This epistemology distinguishes the term 'noumena from phenomena. Noumena means that which is what it is in itself (external reality) and which gives to sensation but never wholly captured in perception. Phenomena means what appears in perception. We are able to know only the appearances (phenomena). The noumena, things as they are independent of our concepts, we can never know'. (Kant, 1950). Hick and Knitter assert that man will never know the one ultimate reality.

The ultimate reality of all religions can never be presented absolutely, that is, in terms of a system of thought which is unconditioned by the relativities of human thinking but always appears within the finite human thoughtsystems of its representatives. There is one Reality, the one reality must not necessarily be expressed in one system of thought, so there are numerous interpretations or expressions. The finitude and diversities (fragmentariness)

of the human situation cannot be avoided in order to present the ONE TRUTH or ONE REALITY is some "pure" form uncontaminated by human thought, and speech. There is thus a plurality of religious truths pointing to one reality. This is the theocentric view. This is not the result of insisting on the finitude of human mind and human understanding. But the limitations of human knowledge and of expression make way for a plurality of ways of expressing the one divine reality, even when those ways cannot be conceptually reconciled with each other.

The second assumption of the theocentric position is that Jesus Christ is not unique. He is not the final revelation of God. Therefore he is not the norm for all religions. This is the most controversial (threatening?) assumption. Hick admits that 'this must be the most difficult of all issues for a Christian theology of religions,' (Hick, 1973:148).

Their main argument is based on the need to reinterpret the idea of incarnation. For Hick, it is a metaphorical or mythological idea, (Hick, 1981: 46-47). For Knitter, he views Jesus uniqueness as relational uniqueness. 'It affirms that Jesus is unique,but with a uniqueness defined by its ability to relate to — that is, to include and be included by - other unique religious figures,' (Hick, 1981: 46-47).

Thus, their concept of salvation in relation to this assumption is that all religions are different paths leading to salvation. Christianity is not the only road leading to salvation. There is salvation outside Christianity. Salvation is God's work. It is presumptuous to judge others that they are not saved or will not be saved. Only God can ultimately judge them.

The third assumption is the question of norms or criteria. Hick (1981:463) acknowledges that there are different expressions of the ultimate reality: but neither are all "concept of God or of the transcendent is valid, still less equally adequate."; "some mediate God to mankind better than others." Plurality does not mean equal validity of all religious claims. The problem, then, is what criterion or criteria to use to judge whether a particular religion actually does mediate or express the ultimate reality; or whether one religion is performing a good job of interpreting this One Absolute Divine Reality than others.

From his study of the major religions, Hick suggests that in trying to evaluate a religious tradition, one should ask: "Is this complex of religious experience, belief, and behavior soteriologically effective? Does it make possible the transformation of human experience from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness?' (Hick, 1981:462; 465-467). Hick believes that all religions have a common "soteriological structure." Religions seek to transform the human situation that they consider to be in need of salvation. They believe that salvation is possible if their followers would transcend their self-centeredness. But again the criteria must be applied with caution. (Knitter, 1985: 223).

Paul Knitter suggested five ways of evaluating religious traditions, as follows: 1) Personally, does the revelation of the religion or religious figure — the story, the myth, the

message — move the human heart? Does it stir one's feelings, the depths of one's unconscious? 2) Intellectually, does the revelation also satisfy and expand the mind? Is it intellectually coherent? Does it broaden one's horizons of understanding? 3) Practically, does the message promote the psychological health of individuals, their sense of value, purpose, freedom? Especially, does it promote the welfare, the liberation, of all peoples, integrating individual persons and nations into a larger community? (Knitter, 1985: 201).

The criteria suggested by both scholars are moral values. Human welfare, unity and justice are ethical concepts or moral values. Both authors seem to be appealing to morality to provide the norms or criteria to evaluate a religious tradition. These are the three assumptions of the theocentric position.

Some comments have to be made vis-a-vis the theocentric model. My first comment is an observation on the ongoing inter-religious dialogue. Through the centuries, Christianity flourished in a religiously plural world. What is more, it is still largely Christian-inspired. Why this should be so is surely an interesting point. The very fact that Christians sit down with others to contemplate their mutual existence is an index of the unusual situation.

Could this be the work of the Holy Spirit not discounting the sociological factors? What could have motivated the Christian theologians, pastors and lay people to carry this endeavor? Could there be a religious factor? Answers to these questions will help us appreciate more the contribution (unique?) of Christianity to world peace and unity. I believe that our purpose in dialogue should not be the elimination of our differences, but to appreciate each other's faith, and cooperate with one another in overcoming violence, war, and injustice in the world.

Another comment is with reference to the question of salvation and norms. Salvation is the work of God. No one should arrogate to oneself the authority to judge who will be saved and who will not be saved. This is the assumption of the theocentric theologians. I agree. But it is neither an excuse to avoid the question of salvation nor to dilute the Gospel,i.e., the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ. Can we reduce salvation to ethics? Does salvation mean good works? Is it more than good works or moral values? Christians in history have affirmed that salvation has been made possible because God has acted in history and fulfilled His saving act in the historical person of man Jesus. Can we make this confession without limiting to Christians the saving work of God? Can we remain faithful to Jesus even though he is no longer unique? For Knitter it is possible and healthy. He compares it to a married man admiring other women, (Knitter, 1985:201).

This leads to a third and last comment. The problem of diverse claims made by the different religions must be confronted. Can the theocentric position provide us a way to confront the problem of diverse truth-claims? The attempt at making different (and competing) religious traditions compatible by postulating the existence of One Ultimate Reality

which is the source of all revelation would, however, depend on identifying this reality with another. Can such identifications be justified?

Let me give a simple example. What justifies in saying that the Christian and Muslim worship the same God? As far as the concepts and practices go, the Christian God and Allah are different. The Christian worships Christ as the Second Person in the Trinity. He is the incarnation of God. These are elements not present in the Muslim understanding of Allah. Their God is not simply the One, but the only One. Compared with the Triune God of the Christian, the God of the Muslim is indeed a God without mystery. The classic formula expressing the oneness and uniqueness of God is found in a short sura (No. 112) that is always quoted by Muslims as a kind of credo:

"He is God, One,
God, the Everlasting Refuge,
Who has not begotten, and has not been begotten,
and equal to Him is not any one."

It is a polemic against the "begotten, not made" of the Nicene Creed. Muslims clearly reject the Trinity of the Christians.

Thus conceptually the Christian God and Allah are different. The scholars who make the statement "The Christian and the Muslim worship the same God" presuppose the existence of a single God for both Christians and Muslims. What is the vantage ground from which this claim comes from? What higher concept of God do they have which enables them to reconcile the incompatible concepts of the Muslim and Christian about their God (Allah)? In brief, the main problem of the theocentric position is the problem of identifying the religious ultimate.

Hick and Knitter assert that man will never fully know the one ultimate reality. But they assert (hypothesize) that there is one ultimate reality for all religions. From what assumption do they assert this common ground and goal for all religion? This question must be answered satisfactorily both theologically and biblically. Christians claim that this transcendent reality was fully revealed in Jesus Christ. This claim is found in the scripture. The early Christian affirmed by faith that Jesus Christ is the "fullness of God", "but did not claim equality with God but emptied himself." (*Colossians 1:10; Philippians 2.*)

The problem of diverse truth-claims made by different religions is one problem that must be confronted. The pluralist position is attractive but it is doubtful whether it could resolve the problem of truth-claims considering the present state of religious awareness, because it is an assumption in itself. What can be certified is the incompatibility (at present) between religious claims. It is a further question as to the criteria for resolving question of truths. At the moment, we must accept that every religion has a given starting point, each unique. Even a theocentric theologian will have to begin from his faith.

But the theocentric model I am certain can broaden our understanding of our faith and make us more humble when we do mission work in the world. They show us that religious pluralism is a reality. And the problem of diverse claims made by different religions can be resolved (temporarily) by postulating the notion of the existence of One Eternal Reality behind all religious truth-claims. Thus, their position is not for an absolute pluralism. Against absolute pluralism, this model asserts that we do know the truth. We are not absolute ignorant of ultimate transcendent reality, because the ultimate has revealed its nature in all religions. It is a false humility, a rejection of the act of one divine reality to take refuge in agnosticism and respond to all ultimate questions with a "who knows?" We know.

Against the arrogant claims of religions (Christianity?) that this-world human knowledge is absolute, to the logical framework of which all claims to speak of ultimate truth must be subject, they insist that all knowledge of whatever sort is incomplete. It must correspond to what is seen in the moment of revelation. We know in part. Christian humility is made indispensable.

Considering all the questions which have been raised regarding the theocentric position, are we ready to set aside our differences particularly in doctrines and practices in the interest of human welfare, compassion, unity and justice? Setting aside our doctrines and practice does it mean they have no value in the struggle for justice, peace and unity?

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THE PASTOR AS PIONEER OF THE FAITH

Renate Rose

Over the past decades, many mainline Protestant seminaries and divinity schools in the U.S. have felt uneasy about their respective curricula and their ability to educate future pastors for the global context of the world in which the Church is found today. Many experiments with newly ordered or expanded curricula were made. Few have led to satisfactory solutions. As a contribution to the discussions, John Cobb and Joseph Hough from the Claremont School of Theology put together a small book, *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Scholars Press, 1985), which contains their reflections on the matter and a concrete proposal for a new curriculum. In October, 1987, the Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion in Chicago organized a conference, inviting several renowned scholars to respond to the proposals and reflections. The addresses were collected in *The Education of the Practical Theologian* (Scholars Press, 1989), which includes a revised curriculum by Cobb and Hough.

I read both books with great interest, and wish to present to you my own response, which has been greatly influenced by my visits to various places in the Philippines, especially those with Basic Christian Communities. Since the publication of *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*, by Stanley Karnow, it occurred to me that much of what you do here might consciously or unconsciously also be a copy, in some way, of theological education in the United States. Therefore, you might be interested in what Cobb and Hough have to say, as well as in some response to their work. Within the time at my disposal, I can, of course, give you only some small excerpts, very simplified and abbreviated. But it might be enough to stimulate your curiosity and imagination.

In the first part of my remarks, I will summarize the historical development of certain "ministerial types," as the authors see them in U.S. history. Secondly, I will briefly point out how Cobb and Hough relate this development to the need for a new Christian identity. Thirdly, I will present some aspects of the critique of Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza and John Pawlikowski. In my concluding remarks, I will give some suggestions of my own to continue the dialogue.

I. The Pastor as Social Character

What was a minister supposed to be in the 17th and 18th century? The minister as a social character arose in relation to certain theological concepts of the Church in the Christian tradition. Those concepts were influenced by the Church's socio-historical locations.

Cobb and Hough have identified five social characters for the past, and call for a sixth one for the future. These are: (1) the Master, (2) the Revivalist and Pulpiteer, (3) the Builder, (4) the Pastoral Director, (5) the Manager, and (6) the Practical Theologian or the Reflective Christian *Bricoleur*.

Needless to say, these characters overlap and cannot be separated into neatly defined periods. But a general trend is visible. Let me briefly characterize each type and period.

A. The Master

During the 17th and 18th, and perhaps even most of the 19th, centuries, the dominant character of the pastor, particularly in the Reformed Churches, was "the Master." Who was the Master? He was the authoritative teacher, whose image was rooted in the sages of the Orient and the rabbis of ancient Judaism. A Master was a learned person of classical education who achieved holiness by the study of texts, ancient languages, scripture, history, philosophy, logic, etc. With ideas imported from Germany, the American minister was to have a classical education and master a kind of theological encyclopedia of sacred literature, dogmatics, church history and practical theology. In many theological schools, this image of the professional minister as master of sacred texts and classical education remains a dominant force.

As science and technology developed in the 19th century, universities were divided into "disciplines" and produced what was later called "professionals." Humanistic learning, crowned by the study of divine things, was also pressured into change. The university developed specialized disciplines for the study of religion. Some of the new disciplines were only remotely related to the work of the minister.

In the U.S., the arrival of *religious pluralism* contributed to the decline of the Master character. A variety of "traditions" were now in open competition with each other in a free market place of religious ideas. Churches, no longer parishes, became voluntary organizations. Membership was based on the consent of the individual believer. The minister, now challenged by different teachings, felt he had to base his authority on his ability to persuade the congregation of the importance (or even superiority) of his own teaching, compared to the teaching of others. Oratory replaced instruction as the dominant mode of clerical activity.

B. The Pulpiteer [the famous preacher] *and Revivalist*

The 19th century is famous for a number of "princes of the pulpit"; consequently, the minister was often thought of a "preaching." I am told that that era was more or less closed with the retirement of Harry Emerson Fosdick, of New York City, in 1946. We still have Billy Graham as a revivalist, for whom preaching also is the primary activity to convert sinners. But with the demise of some of the TV preachers in the U.S., that chapter may also be closed soon.

Most ministers in the U.S. in the 19th or the early 20th century did not possess the oratorical skills of the Pulpiteer or Revivalist. What did they do?

C. The Builder

This majority established and built new churches as the nation expanded. They organized many new churches, and by the beginning of the 20th century, it was the Builder, the organizer and motivator of organizations who emerged as the dominant ministerial character. As science and technology became the driving force in society, and with it the belief that the new techniques could be used to build a this-worldly heavenly city for humanity, the call for "professions" and "professional ministry" became more urgent.

For Builders of churches, that meant to adopt the new model of "solving problems." Just as engineers, so doctors and ministers now wanted "to solve problems" rather than "to heal." However, theological educators resisted. They were unwilling to give up the four-fold pattern of mastering sacred literature, dogmatics, church history and practical theology.

But the pressure of society demanded some concessions. So they conceded to transform their pattern into "disciplines." The latter were unable to respond to the social character of the ministry. Confusion resulted. The addition of psychology, sociology of religion, counselling, etc. increased the demands on the student. The result was not satisfactory.

D. The Pastoral Director

A new ideal emerged at the end of World War II, namely, the Pastoral Director. This person was not going to expand the institution, but to maintain it. He/she was to do counselling, edification, and management; the traditional functions of preacher, teacher and priest receded in importance.

The Pastoral Directors of the past four decades hoped for a growing consensus about the purpose of the Church. But the theological consensus did not emerge, because congregations have vastly different expectations. How are ministers to find an authoritative basis for their profession, if there is no consensus on what the master is to teach, or what the builder is to build, on what theological basis the pastoral director is to counsel and edify?

Cobb and Hough point out that if it is up to the individual minister to discern for himself/herself what will motivate participation in the goals of the congregation, such a mode of functioning lacks any special *Christian* character. The minister will be tempted to use the dominant model of society for developing his/her style of leadership.

E. The Manager and the Therapist

That dominant model is today the Manager for the organization, and the Therapist for the individual. The problem with this model, however, is that managers and therapists do not engage in debates about *goals*; they deal only with *means*. Most Protestant Churches in the U.S. today want their ministers to manage well and to counsel effectively. But if a minister or anyone else in the church raises theological questions on the purpose and mission of the Church, the peace is disturbed and tension results.

That tension is also felt in seminaries and in the task of theological education, because somehow the theological faculty holds on to the ideal of the Master, whereas the churches want Managers and Therapists. Many students, as far as I know, would like to be both or neither; others could not very well define what they really see as their option or as their goal. So the confusion continues. It is a fact that many ordained pastors in the U.S. try to please their congregation so that they are not fired. Some feel hypocritical about this situation, but do not know how to survive otherwise. Can seminaries and divinity schools help?

II. Christian Identity and the Church

Cobb and Hough believe that the confusion could be overcome if we had more clarity about who we are as Christians today, if we had a clear **Christian identity**. Now, Christian identity has always been a matter of ambiguity and will probably remain so. But in the past, there seems to have been some consensus among Protestant churches about the purpose and mission of the Church. There is no such consensus today, and therefore there is no *Christian* identity in most churches in the U.S.

It is not that churches do not do good things. There are soup kitchens, 12-step programs, counselling and visiting of shut-ins, day-care centers, and pre-schools. But these are *human* endeavors which *any* community should do and can do. They are rarely shaped as a specific Christian endeavor. In doing these "good things," the Church does not face the global situation of creation and of the earth in which we find ourselves. The Church does not question and analyze *why* we are where we are. It tries to help cure the symptoms, but it does not face the hard questions of systemic economic inequalities, of militarization and exploitation of the Third World.

Facing these questions would require profound changes in the way in which the Church operates, and in the goals to be proclaimed. Cobb and Hough call for a "world-historical approach," by which the Church would be informed by a heightened awareness of the current global situation. That implies an understanding of the socio-economic-political global context in which we live. It implies that the Church must acknowledge the innumerable sins of the churches in the past and in the present, such as the persecution of Jews and Muslims, the extent of its anti-Jewish teaching, its misogyny, its internalization of Enlightenment individualism and dualism, and its implicit connections to the ruling powers.

Cobb and Hough deplore that the principle content of preaching is now psychological rather than theological. They acknowledge that Christian tradition is still being controlled to a large extent by the interests of whose who live well, who give alms and charity but refuse justice, who believe that the Church's life is primarily for the sake of persons, not for the sake of society at large. The Church must learn to see that salvation is *corporate liberation*, as the Basic Christian Communities in Latin America and in the Philippines have shown. Nothing like that seems possible in North America, according to Cobb and Hough, unless new images for the Church are developed: the Church as a human community, in which life is shared, creation cared for, and a mutually sustaining web of inter-dependence with the whole world is acknowledged.

Cobb and Hough say that since the Church today has no *Christian* identity, then it also has no *integrity*. The call for today is for a leader who is a Practical Theologian, one who is able to think in practice or reflect while practicing, enabling the community to participate in this practical thinking. Practical theology is critical reflection on the Church's practice *in view of the dangerous memory of the passion of Jesus* (Jean Baptiste Netz). The minister of the future should nôt be identified in terms of specific *roles*, but he/she should engage in *diverse activities* without trying to segregate them from one another. Pastoral care, teaching, spiritual direction, leading in social action should be connected through practical thinking and theological reflection done in community.

What does this mean for the seminary? According to the authors, the seminary should not be an extension of the university. The seminary should teach the story about how God has acted in the world creatively and redemptively. This means that ministers need to know the story of Israel as transmitted through Jesus Christ and the apostolic faith in him.

Bible and church history are the bases, according to Cobb and Hough, of theological education, because they are where the Church's future leaders learn who they are as Christians. But the past should be taught as internal history in a critical manner: this means that new history books need to be written which recognize the faults of our former heroes, the shameful actions of the Church, the Christian tendency to self-deception and exaggerations of its successes. The new books would include the life of ordinary people during former centuries and the contribution of women. They would acknowledge the narrowness of the traditional selection for remembering, and the fact that history and theology have been written by *men*, as if they were the real agents of history and of church history in particular.

Christian identity can no longer be non-Jewish or anti-Jewish. We should imagine what it would have meant for world history had Christianity remained a Jewish reform movement up to this day.

Seminaries should present in their curricula a serious assessment of the global world crisis in which we live. Cobb and Hough recommend that students spend some time living

with the poor, to experience poverty first-hand, whereas seminary teachers should spend sabbaticals in Third World countries and participate in activities of the World Council of Churches. Both should learn to think globally as Christians about the issues of the day, which means *giving up the separation of theology and ethics.*

The abolition of disciplinary boundaries would be a first step toward liberating seminary faculties to consider the most important issues facing the Church today: its mission to the world's poor and to the oppressed.

Cobb and Hough propose that *the churches* assume the major responsibility for education in reflective practice. Instead of field education, one or two years after the M.Div program are recommended, during which students would be "probationary ordinands" with pay but guided supervision and regular assessment and critical reflection. Students should learn, with the help of a new arrangement between church and seminary, to which extent the social setting of a congregation affects its self-understanding of Christian living. They should learn how to evaluate conflicts and power relationships, and how to prioritize actions in ministry.

The suggested (revised) curriculum tries to overcome the boundaries of rigid "disciplines," and instead divides courses into *four broad areas*, each offering six courses, as follows:

— the heritage that shapes our identity
(Bible, church and Jewish history);
— religious experience and expression
(imagination, formation of "religious worlds," myth and ritual, types of religious leaders like prophets, priests, gurus, etc.);
— issues for practical Christian thinking
(the global context of our lives, relations to other religions, liberation theology, environment);
— professional preparation for parish ministry
(preaching, liturgy, models of ministerial practice).

The theological vision and goal of the undertaking of Cobb and Hough is well summarized in the following statement:

'What is becoming clear is that intolerable structures of injustice can no longer be rationalized by sentimental appeals to individualistic love that imply passivity in the face of that oppression. In a conflict, there is little middle ground. One is either for or against those who are protesting in injustice. The church is confronted with the unsavory record of its past and must begin to think in new ways about its current practices in the face of the world-wide protests against exploitation and repression.' (Hough and Cobb, 1985: 39).

But the authors are somewhat in a dilemma: they also do not want to rock the boat of present seminary structures. They believe what they suggest can be implemented without radical systemic changes and without profoundly affecting the American lifestyle. The Church could perhaps become a Church *for* the poor, but not a Church *of* the poor.

III. Critical Responses

In the short time available for this lecture, I have chosen two responses which I find particularly challenging:

A. Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza

She starts her response by expressing some surprise at the fact that in spite of the authors' strong emphasis on justice, they would not understand the primary task of theological education as similar to what the "Mud Flower Collective" has stated in *God's Fierce Whimsy*, as follows:

'So strongly do we believe that justice is the foundation of human life well lived that we understand the primary theological and educational task of the churches to be the work of justice in the world. ... It does not mean that no seminary teacher or student, regardless of his or her discipline, interests or skills, is excused from the accountability to human well-being. ... The scholar who is indifferent to justice is not an excellent scholar.' (Browning et.al., 1989:2)

One might add here that the pastor who is indifferent to justice is not an excellent pastor.

This goal of furthering justice cannot be achieved, according to Fiorenza, as long as the aim of Cobb and Hough remains to be professional preparation for pastoral ministry. *Rather it should be theological education for the discipleship of equals, (Browning, et. al, 1982:2).* She points out that feminist voices have called for "praxis-oriented intellectual centers in which all persons have equal access to and equal participation in the theological enterprise." This would require a systemic change, a new paradigm of theological education. Inclusivity, so much wanted by Cobb and Hough, cannot be achieved by simply putting a few women and minorities on the faculty.

She takes up a suggestion advanced by James Gustavson, an ethicist, who would like the theological seminary or school to become *the intellectual center of the Church.* This center as a *community of critical theological discourse* should be open to all, not only to clergy. All members of the Church interested and called to either full-time or part-time ministry in church or society should be enabled and empowered to think and act theologically in a critical and constructive way.

The center would need to be both intra-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. Since all professions and research institutions should become 'conscious of the values they embody and the interests they serve, students in *Religionswissenschaft* ("history of religions"), as well as in theology must *engage in critical reflection on imported societal assumptions* and the public values promoted by their intellectual disciplines.' (Browning, et. al, 1982:5) *italics supplied*). The curriculum for "intellectual ecclesial centers" should not focus on an encyclopedia of knowledge, but "teach intellectual-practical skills for critical analysis and constructive communicative praxis." (Browning, et. al, 1982:5)

If the first is *true inclusivity* in theological education, the second is this: Biblical scholars must free themselves "from the pretensions of apolitical, detached and value-free academic scholarship, in order to articulate their own theological self-understanding as freedom for critical solidarity." Scholars have always tried to be free from dogmatic and ecclesiastical controls and pietistic bias. But this is not enough, says Fiorenza. *Freedom for critical solidarity* must replace the concept of historical truth as "what actually happened" (which in most cases we do not know). Biblical theology as "what should be remembered" must choose between different types of historical witness, visions, goals and practices. It must engender a consciousness of justice and a praxis of justice rooted in history and in the Bible.

'Such a new self-understanding of biblical studies engenders a new theological hermeneutics of *critical solidarity* that can preserve the historical distance between the present and the past, and at the same time share the faithful memory of the sufferings and struggles ... as liberating visions of the biblical past for the future. *It does not locate revelation in texts but in the struggles of people for justice and well-being*. If the process of inspiration is located in the historical struggles of God's people for freedom, dignity and justice, then it is historical in character. This process is not closed but ongoing, and it looks to the future of liberation and salvation of all creation." (Browning, et. al, 1982:8) *(italics supplied)*.

With such an approach, biblical history becomes a critical memory and theological vision for the present and for the future. The Bible then is understood as a prototype of Christian faith and community, not as an archetype to be repeated in every generation.

Cobb and Hough see the "Christ-event," i.e., the event of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, as the *one center* of Christian internal history. Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza points out that the Christ-event is not historically accessible to us, but must be reconstructed anew in every historical situation.

B. John Pawlikowski

Pawlikowski analyzes the impact of the Holocaust on Biblical studies and theological education, and believes that the Holocaust does not only represent "the external evidence of Christian pride and arrogance," but also shows that as long as students are not immersed

into the spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian theological student is "left with a truncated vision of Jesus' message and hence an emaciated version of Christian spirituality."(Browning, et. al, 1982:39)

Pawlikowski points out that the *permanent link* which exists between the Church and the Jewish people "affects the church at the level of *fundamental identity*," (Browning, et. al, 1982:43) God-talk and Christ-talk cannot remain the same after the reality of the Holocaust. How was God present in the concentration camps? How was Christ the victor when millions of women and children were put to death? Where was the might of the "Almighty, ever-living God" when they cried to "Him"? In view of the Holocaust, it is not enough to revise Christian theology with regard to Judaism. Christian theology *itself* must be reconstructed.

C. Rosemary Ruether and Tom Driver

Rosemary Ruether and Tom Driver have been the most courageous in this respect In an article of 1972 in *The Ecumenist*, as quoted by Pawlikowski, Ruether states that given the past and present atrocities, we can hardly claim that the Messianic Age has been fulfilled with Christ's coming. As she goes on to say:

'From the standpoint of the faith of Israel itself, there is no possibility of talking about the Messiah having come [much less of having come two thousand years ago, with all the evil history that has reigned from that time to this] when the reign of God has not come,' (Browning, et. al, 1982:48)

Since Judaism cannot envision a separation between the coming of the Messiah and the appearance of the Messianic Age, we can no longer assert that evil has been overcome once and for all through the Christ Event 'What Christianity has in Jesus is not the Messiah, but a Jew who hoped for the kingdom of God and who died in that hope,' (Browning, et. al, 1982:48).

Gathering up various other voices which have struggled with the inherent anti-Judaism of Christian, Pawlikowski points out:

— that the Holocaust cannot be used as a "theological metaphor" for all human suffering, but must be named in its political particularity (E.S. Fiorenza). [The Holocaust which is going on in Negros and elsewhere in the Philippines through the forced and brutal evacuation of thousand of mountain people driven from their homes must also be named in its particularity.]
— that the Church must once and for all give up the longing to be saved from history (J. Pelikan).
— that the Church's failure to challenge the Nazis

effectively is symptomatic of how the Church has dealt with other manifestations of evil (F. Heer).

Pawlikowski calls for regular encounters of Christian students with Jews and Judaism, to be organized by seminaries and the American Jewish Committee.

Already in 1926 a famous German-American rabbi, Kaufmann Kohler, had the vision of a future reunion of Judaism and Christianity, "blotting out hostility and prejudice forever, while rebuilding humanity on the foundation of faith in the one and only God of justice and of love. He believed that just as the message once came to Ezekiel: Son of man, take on stick and write upon it: For Judah; and then take another stick and write upon it: For Joseph; and join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand" (37:15), so another seer will arise to announce the message of reconciliation of Judaism and Christianity. He saw it as our task to bring both ever nearer to this goal through mutual understanding and openness, remembering our common origin.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The questions which theological education raises in today's world are endless and complex. There are no easy answers. The dialogue which Cobb and Hough have started must continue.

Given my own faith journey up to this point, I tend to agree with Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza that theological education should not center on professional preparation for pastoral ministry, but on education for the discipleship of equals in open centers of critical theological discourse. For me, this implies that we should get away from the idea of educating "leaders." Leaders too easily have a position or a status to defend. Disciples, however, have a "right relation" (Carter Heyward) to each other and to the world, because they are accountable to human well-being of the poor and the oppressed. Disciples are willing to share the lot of the oppressed, until oppression is overcome. To be a disciple and witness of Jesus, in the midst of oppression, takes faith. Disciples are *pioneers of the faith.*

There is a statement in Romans 3:25-26, which has been wrongly translated in the RSV. Paul speaks of God's righteousness, i.e., of God's right relations to us in Jesus Christ. In Jesus, God made Godself *equal* to human beings showing that God does not want to be "above us," but "among us," as Emmanuel, as the "God with us" as our companion. Paul says that God liberates the one who has the "faith *of* Jesus." Our Bibles say: God saves/redeems/justifies the one who has "faith *in* Jesus." The Greek cognitive is translated as "in" instead of "of."

The historical Jesus, scholars tell us, did not ask for faith in himself; he asked for faith in God.

In Hebrews 12:3, Jesus is called "the pioneer of the faith" to whom we are to look in our journey to bring justice to the world.

I therefore suggest that pastors should be educated as *pioneers of the faith of Jesus.* Pioneers of the faith are fearless in the struggle for justice. The faith of Jesus is a strong faith willing to take the risk of challenging religious structures and societal structures in the pursuit of justice for the poor. *Pioneers* find new ways of serving God appropriate in our time. They are not imitators of Jesus, because there are many problems today which Jesus did not have to face. Pioneers find new, untrodden paths in the wilderness of life. Pioneers of the faith have a conscience of the heart, which discerns the possibility of life even under the worst of circumstances.

In the midst of the struggle for life, they find God as a companion, not as a victor. Pioneers see the naked truth and analyze the many faces of evil; they confront the devil without fear. They do not cover up any problems, and they do not withdraw from the world.

The 86 clergymen in Negros Occidental in central Philippines who serve the BCC-COs (Basic Christian Community — Community Organizations) and signed a statement in 1989 *against* their new bishop who wanted to throw out the evacuees from the church-grounds in Bacolod, are pioneers of the faith. They confront the government and speak the truth to their own church. They have analyzed, in a critical manner, the global context of the last coup attempt against Aquino in December 1989. They live among the poor and know that their courageous stand might lead them to the cross. But they have *the faith of Jesus* that God is on the side of the poor.

The pastor as pioneer of the faith encourages ordinary people to create community, care for one another, and care for their environment. As a disciple of life among equals, the pioneer of the faith ministers, in cooperation with others, to all of creation in critical solidarity and ethical accountability. Pioneers of the faith know that *life is change*; they serve life and are not afraid of change, because being afraid of change means being afraid of life itself. "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32). This means that God is life among us. God's passion for life is a passion for justice, so that peace may reign forever.

Seminaries and churches in Negros (in fact, everywhere whenever the Church is ready to become a Church of the poor) may have to become Basic Christian Communities, where solidarity for justice is practiced. An intrinsic relationship between churches and institutions of theological education must be created, so that the scholar is held accountable to justice and the disciples are taught critical analysis of their particular and global situation. "Church" could mean, as in the black church for decades, an all-day Sunday (or even weekend) event, full of learning, discourse, ritual and celebration of life. The book of Psalms and the feeding stories in the New Testament are nearly all that one needs from the Bible in order to construct a new Christology of the living Christ.

The future pastor, it seems to me, must be made aware that faith cannot be taught but only practiced and be developed in struggle. In the struggle, God is found as a companion who celebrates life with us.

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GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL (1770-1831): A PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Clementino N. Balasabas Jr.

Introduction

Philosophy of History as a subtopic of general historical inquiry is further divided into two headings, namely, analytical and speculative philosophy of history. It is the speculative class that is our concern here, and which G.W.F. Hegel may amply represent. In other words, the speculative philosophy of history may be considered as the philosophers' philosophy of history. It specifically refers to the subject matter of history, or to the historical processes themselves, the purpose of which is to attain some comprehensive view of the historical process as a whole.

R.F. Atkinson rightly observed that the philosophers of history 'conceived themselves as synthesizing or generalising in a grand manner on the basis of detailed data supplied by more workaday historians, to whom they stand in somewhat the same relationship as do biologists, with their theory of evolution, to natural historians,' (Atkinson, 1978:8).

It is precisely on account of this theoretical character of speculative philosophy of history that we may consider it as analogous to the theoretical physicists' speculative view of the physical universe. For whatever purpose it may serve, it is clear that 'without the guidance of generalizations and general concepts, the historian would be trapped and bogged down — drowned if you will — in the welter of concrete particulars,' (Nadel, 1965:14). Since historical analyses are first and foremost interpretative in character, historians or philosophers of history must be able 'to spell out the linkages of causation and of influence between events, and this can only be done in the light of connecting generalizations,' (Nadel, 1965:11).

Though the speculative philosophy of history may be outmoded and defunct due to the recent rise to prominence of the analytical philosophy of history, its merits cannot be under-estimated. For instance, even if philosophy of history may lie outside the professional concerns of historians, (Atkinson, 1978:4) its worth for philosophy and philosophers remains significant. As a philosopher of history has recently put it, 'it is part of the task of philosophy to look at history and try to place it in relation to other fields of enquiry and concern,' (Atkinson, 1978:6). This will therefore enrich both philosophy and history.

For its part, the analytical philosophy of history corresponds 'closely to those asked in philosophy of science; indeed, philosophy of history, whatever may have been the case among its first practitioners, is nowadays most commonly conceived, on the analogy of the philosophy of science, as the philosophic study of a distinctive and rich field of intellectual enquiry,' (Atkinson, 1978:4).

It is due to the influence work of Hegel, titled *The Philosophy of History*, that the analytical philosophy of history arose as a form of rebellion against the sweeping generalizations of this particular speculative brand of thought. The Marxists, the Positivists, and the Analytical Philosophers all sprang up in defiance to Hegel's work. It is thus worth our while to look into Hegel's work, if only to gain understanding and knowledge as to what the rebellion was all about, and what its proponents were rebelling against.

Let us start by considering the philosophy of history as a distinct intellectual field of enquiry.

Philosophy of History

Strictly speaking, we may regard philosophy of history as the philosophers' interpretation or analysis of historical processes and historical occurrences. For historians like Arnold Toynbee, the philosophy of history would be an historians' philosophical consideration of history. On the other hand, the American poet-philosopher George Santayana defines philosophy of history 'as an effort on the part of a philosopher to scrutinize the past in order to abstract from it 'whatever tended to illustrate his own ideals, as he might look over a crowd to find his friends,' (White, 1965:240). For an historian, 'there can be no denying that what a historian writes is dictated to some extent by his position on determinism, on the propriety of making moral judgments at all, and on the connection between moral judgment and voluntary action,' (White, 1965:12).

Atkinson sees at least two ways in which history might have implications for philosophy. Firstly, 'if it makes sense at all to think of criteria for assessing a purportedly total philosophical view, which might be conceived as embracing all criteria, then one criterion will presumably be that a view gives some account of history. ... The second way in which history might have implications for philosophy would be if practising historians themselves developed an idea of what philosophical views made sense in relation to the practice of history.' (Atkinson, 1978: 93). Apparently, a philosophical view of history may prove significant, if it not indispensable, in providing meaning and sense to history as an interpretative mode of intellectual analysis.

It is in this sense that philosophy gains practical significance, because philosophy itself is concerned with what is practical and actual. Alfred North Whitehead has noted that 'philosophy is at once general and concrete, critical and appreciative of direct intuition. ... It is a survey of possibilities and their comparison with actualities. In philosophy, the fact, the

theory, the alternatives, and the ideal are weighed together. Its gifts are insights and foresights, and sense of the worth of life, in short, that sense of importance that nerves all civilized effort." (Whitehead, 1933:98).

Considering further the relationship between Science and Philosophy, it must be said that they 'mutually criticize each other, and provide imaginative material for each other,' (Whitehead, 1933:146). Thus, Whitehead goes on to say that a philosophic system "should present an elucidation of concrete fact from which the sciences abstract. Also the sciences should find their principles in the concrete facts which a philosophic system presents, (Whitehead, 1933:146). Thus, in this light, it might be said that the history of thought is the story of the successes and failures of the joint enterprise of Science and Philosophy, (Whitehead, 1933:146).

Ultimately, it will not be the philosophy of history, but (as pointed out by Hegel in closing his philosophical system) the history of philosophy, that engulfs or encloses the whole phenomenon. Initially, we may maintain, according to Hegel, that "the most general definition that can be given, is that the Philosophy of History means nothing but the "thoughtful" consideration of it, (Donogan A. and Donogan B., 1965:53). Historically speaking, the history of the world is 'none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom, a progress whose development according to the necessity of its nature, it is our business to investigate.' (Donogan A. and Donogan B., 1965:65).

At this point, I hope I have provided the necessary background to the intellectual concerns of philosophy, history, and science as a whole, which should be able to aid us in appreciating Hegel's philosophical work on history.

Hegel's *The Philosophy of History*

Like most speculative thinkers of history, Hegel believed that history has a pattern, and hence he sets to attempt to reveal the pattern and changes in it that come about from time to time. As a philosopher, Hegel takes off to prove that the process of history is, in fact, the process of knowledge. Conversely, the process of knowledge is to him the actual process of history. Philosophically, it has to be understood that Hegel's scheme attempts to deduce historical laws from epistemology, i.e., the theory of knowledge. Inasmuch as Hegel believed that history has a pattern and was bold enough to reveal it, it should be nevertheless kept in mind that a sound critique of Hegel should also take into account 'his remarkable restraint; he did not attempt to play the prophet and was content to comprehend the past,' (Kaufmann, 1960:113).

The central idea of Hegel's philosophy of history is that 'History is the story of the development of human freedom,' (Kaufmann, 1976:250). Indeed, it is on the basis of the idea of "freedom" that Hegel develops his philosophy of history. Anything that is free must

not have any other attribute than itself. For anything that has an attribute other than itself is not free, because it is dependent on an attribute that is not itself. With this in mind, Hegel proceeds to demonstrate that there exists something which is absolutely free and thus is the universal attribute of everything. This something which is absolutely free is what Hegel posits to be the first indeterminate universal in his *The Science of Logic*. This something is what he calls *being*.

According to Herbert Marcuse, Hegel reasoned that 'we cannot define being as something since being is the predicate of everything. In other words, every thing *is*, but being *is not* something. And what is not something is nothing. Thus, being is 'pure indeterminateness and vacuity; it is no thing, hence, nothing.' (Marcuse, 1941: 129).

To further describe the character of being, Marcuse goes on to say that 'everything *is* only so far as, every movement of its being, something that as yet *is not* comes into being and something that is now passes into not-being. Things are only in so far as they arise and pass away, or, being must be conceived as becoming.' (Marcuse 1941:130).

At this point, let us consider the religious implications of *being* as posited by Hegel. This universal being is what Hegel considers to be the universal Spirit (German *Geist*), which reveals the religious undertone of Hegel's philosophy of history. Commenting on Hegel's view, Alan and Barbara Donagan state: 'The rational aspect which history presented to Hegel was providential. Universal history belongs to the realm of Spirit (Geist); and Spirit, being self-contained existence, is essentially free. History, therefore, as Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of itself, is the story of man's working out the knowledge of freedom. ... It is not each man's freedom to do as he likes (for Hegel, that would be merely 'subjective') but 'the union of the subjective with the rational will.' Each man must recognize, believe in, and will what is common to the socio-political whole to which he belongs. Hence, Law, Morality, Government, and they alone, (are) the positive reality and completion of Freedom.' (Donogan, A. Donogan, B., 1965:10).

With this idea of the progressive process towards the realization of the knowledge of freedom, Hegel divides history up to his time into three periods or epochs. The first was the Oriental World, where the idea of freedom is known only to one, the despot. The second was the Graeco-Roman World, where the idea of freedom was known and experienced by some, namely, the Greek citizens and the Roman freemen. The third was the contemporary Germanic World of his time, where the idea of universal freedom was made known to all through the 16th century Reformation.

Characteristically, Hegel optimistically hoped, if there is any reason and purpose at all to man's existence, that universal and absolute freedom will eventually be attained. In his view, 'the question of the means by which Freedom develops itself into a World, conducts us to the phenomenon of History itself. Although Freedom is, primarily, an undeveloped

idea, the means that it uses are external and phenomenal; presenting themselves in History to our sensuous vision.' (Donogan, A. and Donogan, B., 1965:56).

In other words, 'each form of consciousness that appears in the immanent progress of knowledge crystallizes as the life of a given historical epoch,' (Marcuse, 1941:95). Hegel thought posits a rational world order and man's ability to understand it. For him, human life is not "a tale told by an idiot;" and history is not merely, although it is indeed also, a succession of tragedies. Rather, history has an ultimate purpose, which is freedom, and it is this ultimate purpose which furnishes a standard for historical judgment, (Kaufmann, 1960:110).

It is on account of this very notion of rationality and consciousness that Karl Marx radically objected to Hegel. For Marx, it is not man's consciousness that determines his material conditions; rather, it is man's material conditions that determines his consciousness.

Hegel and the "State"

Since Hegel believed that it is the realization of universal freedom that is immanent and constitutes the actual process of history, it follows that for him the progress of freedom culminates in the institution of the State. In *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel points out that "the self-conscious subject attains his freedom not in the form of the "I" but of the "We," the associated We that first appeared as the outcome of the struggle between lord and bondsman. The historical reality of that We 'finds its actual fulfillment in the life of a nation.' (Kaufmann, 1960:118). Hegel considers the State to be supreme over all human institutions, because all such institutions are subordinate "to the highest spiritual pursuits," and because Hegel believes that such highest spiritual pursuits are possible only in the State. (Kaufmann, 1960:112).

If we consider the fact that the world is in fact composed of individual State, then Hegel's idea inevitably points to the evolution of one universal World State, if the universal Spirit (*Geist*) is at all to come to realization.

By "the State," Hegel means one in which freedom is realized, and in which a human being counts "because he is a human being." Thus, Hegel would consider rational the conscientious objection of an individual, who a century later would oppose the policies of Hitler, recognizing his own absolute right to make himself free from any dictatorship and in that way realize his inalienable rights. (Kaufmann, 1960:111).

Since the whole argument posits deep religious implications, it is not difficult to understand Hegel suggesting that the whole purpose of life or the realization of the universal Spirit as the progress towards Freedom, is none other than the incessant quest for Truth. For, as a later interpreter would summarize Hegel's view on this point, 'truth is the Unity of the

universal and the subjective Will; and the Universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth ... only that will which obeys law, is free; for it obeys itself — it is independent and so free.' (Kaufmann, 1960:61).

Hegel and the "Great-Man" Theory

It is to be observed that in past history, there had arisen men of great influence and power that in one way or another moved and influenced the course of events. These are the "great men" of history. In Hegel's view, the "great man" in history is that man who has attained that degree of self-consciousness where he identifies his individuality (by negating it, in fact) with the universal "I," which is the "We". Thus, this individual is not only attuned to the currents and pulses of the universality of individuals, but also to that of the universal Spirit (*Geist*), which is constantly at work through individuals for its self-realization. It is in the attainment of that self-consciousness that the individual recognizes the actuality of the universal Spirit working in him and in all other individuals — for it is common to all. In this way does the "great man" gain the power to influence other people, and thus, also the course of history.

But the "great man theory" need not imply that great men do all the work. It implies rather that "their presence and their individual characters make a tangible difference. And not only do great men have this power, but so do men of small or middling stature when occupying the seat of authority.' (Barzun and Graff, 1977:160) In line with this consideration, Kaufmann says: 'Hegel found that world-historical individuals are always propelled by some passions ('Nothing in the world has been accomplished without passion') and that their motivation is rarely entirely disinterested. The latter point he (Hegel) expressed in terms of 'the cunning of reason.' The individual may be motivated not only by profound insights but also by 'private interests' and even 'self-seeking designs.' (Kaufmann, 1960;121).

Hegel also maintains that 'progress depends on man's ability to grasp the universal interest of reason and on his will and vigor in making it a reality. (Marcuse, 1941:231)." This is because 'only a being that has the faculty of knowing its own possibilities and those of its world can transform every given state of existence into a condition for its free self-realization. True reality presupposes freedom, and freedom presupposes the knowledge of the truth. The true reality, therefore, must be understood as the realization of a knowing subject.' (Marcuse, 1941:154). Hence, the great man of history is the man who necessarily brings reason to the world, 'to a form in which the reality actually corresponds to the truth,' (Marcuse, 1941:156).

But these great men of history are not the actual subjects of history. They are simply 'the executors of its will, the agents of the World Mind, no more. They are victims of a higher necessity, which acts itself out in their lives; they are still mere instruments for historical progress,' (Marcuse, 1941:232). In any case, they are free. For by the realization of the Wil

of the Will of the 'World Mind,' which is the true subject of historical progress, the great man who actualizes the potentialities of the 'Idea,' acts not according to the dictates of Universal Reason but voluntarily obeys the Universal Will by fully recognizing its necessity, and thus attains freedom and realizes freedom not only for himself but for all individuals who could voluntarily recognize the same necessity. Truly great, indeed, is the man who recognizes and actualizes the necessity of Freedom, which is the Truth of the Universal Will and Reason.

Conclusion: Hegel's Method of Exposition

Since Hegel deduces his historical generalizations from epistemology, it is but natural for him to utilize logic heavily as a tool in exposing his general thesis. His logic, however, radically parts from what has been used up to and since his time. Hegel is, in fact, 'commonly credited with having sought to invent a new dialectic logic of the reason which would supersede the barren logic of the understanding,' (Atkinson, 1978:92) which utilizes the traditional Aristotelian logic. More significantly, Hegel's change from traditional to material logic marks 'the first step in the direction of unifying theory and practice,' (Atkinson 1978:102). Thus, his protest against the 'fixed and formal truth of traditional logic is in effect a protest against divorcing truth and its forms from concrete processes; a protest against severing truth from any direct guiding influence on reality. (Atkinson, 1978:102).

In developing his ideas on history, Hegel starts his explanation with his work entitled *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807). Here he maintains that sensual experience is the first instance towards the acquisition of knowledge. An individual, according to this work, gains knowledge first from sense experience, but, sense experience will be meaningless unless the individual comprehends the form of experience that is had. Objectivity, therefore, is but the objectification of the comprehending subject and 'a priori' knowledge is completely precluded.

In line with this view, Marcuse notes that 'if man pays strict attention to the results of his experience, he will abandon one type of knowledge and proceed to another; he will go from sense-certainty to perception, from perception to understanding, from understanding to self-certainty, until he reaches the truth of reason. (Marcuse, 1941:93-94). Self-certainty is that stage when an individual comes to know his spirit, which is essentially free, its realization being the truth of reason. Thus, the truth of reason is the realization of the spirit, which is essentially free; and the process towards the realization of the freedom of the spirit is the same process that transpires in history — the realization of freedom.

From the knowledge of the truth of reason, Hegel proceeds to support his contentions by scrutinizing the logic that works within reason itself, or the logic of reason. in his *The Science of Logic* (1812-1816). He opens his argument by pointing to indeterminate universals, such as being and nothing, and the interplay between them. Unlike his *The Phenome-*

starts where the former ends. Hegel argues that thinking in its quest for the truth behind the facts 'seeks a stable base for orientation, a universal and necessary law amid the endless flux and diversity of beings, (Marcuse, 1941:128).

Such universals, if they are to be the basis and the beginning of subsequent determinations, must themselves be indeterminate, for they will neither be the first nor the beginning. Thus, being came about as the first indeterminate universal, in which everything is dependent upon. But being cannot be defined as something, and that which is not something is nothing. Being therefore is nothing.

This marks the Hegelian "negative logic," that is, that there is an inherent contradiction in everything which makes man restive and prompts him to overcome his given external state. The contradiction thus has the force of an "ought" (*Sollen*) that impels him to realize that which does not yet exist, (Marcuse, 1941:135).

Hegel sees this law operative in all beings. As he puts it, 'the highest maturity or stage which any Something can reach is that in which it begins to perish, '(Marcuse, 1941:137) and by this Hegel cannot have meant an infinity apart from or beyond finitude. For him, 'the idea is actual and man's task is to live in its actuality, '(Marcuse, 1941:162). The incessant perishing of things he sees to be a continuous negation of their finitude, and this perishing is an infinite process. As Hegel goes on to say, 'thus it passes beyond itself only to find itself again. This self-identity, or negation of negation, is affirmative Being, is the other of the Finite ... is the Infinite. The infinite, then, is precisely the inner dynamic of the finite, comprehended in its real meaning. It is nothing else but the fact that finitude 'exists only as a passing beyond itself,' (Marcuse, 1941:138).

Accordingly, there is only one world in which finite things attain self-determination through perishing. And as Hegel says, 'their infinity is in this world and nowhere else,' (Marcuse, 1941:139). To this effect, Hegel remarks that self-consciousness is the nearest example of the presence of infinity. He goes on to say that 'reflection is not primarily the process of thinking but the process of being itself.'(Marcuse, 1941:143).

This process of being, as emphasized, is the process of history, which is man's notion as apprehended by philosophy. Thus, essence and existence are actually interrelated in philosophy, and 'the process of existence is a return to the essence,'(Marcuse, 1941:99). From here, Hegel proceeds to expound on the idea in his *The Philosophy of History.*

It can rightfully be said that Hegel's conception of the historical process is both spiritual and philosophical. Although he succeeds in unifying universal and particular categories with the dialectic exposition and in plausibly proving the identity of being and nothing, finitude and infinity, he fails to provide concrete categories which could verify his bold generalizations. Nevertheless, the value of his study on the philosophy of history cannot

be under-estimated. For one, it provoked Karl Marx to come up with his own dialectical materialism and to devise (or revive) 'praxis' from Hegel's unification of the universal and particular categories. On the other hand, Hegel also provoked analytical philosophers, such as G.E. Moore and Rudolf Carnap, to become vigilant in scrutinizing the meaning of terms philosophers or historians alike use in their explanations.

We can say that such works as Hegel's *The Philosophy of History* is valuable in providing the general orientation, if not a theoretical framework, in the analysis of concrete phenomena. One can always start with anything anyway, and proceed to prove or disprove not only what one comes to seek but also what one uses as a point of departure. It can be said that Hegel's work is novel in its own right, as any truly great work is.

We can therefore close this discourse with Walter Kaufmann's comment in comparing Hegel with Marx: "Hegel's philosophy of history illuminates Marx's philosophy of history far better than Marx's own. The reason: 'Hegel's philosophy of history is at its best when applied to philosophies and things spiritual, but is hardly helpful for economic analysis, while Marx's philosophy of history is at its worst when it is used — as it often is — to deal with philosophy, religion, art, and literature,'(Kaufmann, 1960:152).

To this, we can say that Hegel and Marx are just but two sides of the same coin, and one cannot get a full and comprehensive understanding of the worldview of one or the other, unless one considers them both.

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PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF KARL MARX'S RADICAL CRITIQUE OF RELIGION

Melanio L. Aoanan

"For Germany the criticisms of religion is in the main complete, and the criticism of religion is the presupposition of all criticisms."
"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world and the soul of the soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people ..."
"Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself. ... The criticism of heaven is thus transformed into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics."
—Karl Marx (1844)

Introduction

The preceding paragraphs were written by Karl Marx in 1844. They appear in "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," where he proclaims the radicality of his critique of religion. They are Marx's kerygmatic paradigm, or the magna carta of his materialist, atheistic philosophy. As such, they are of pivotal importance in our attempt to understand Marx's philosophical basis.

This paper seeks to present a compact picture of Marx's critique of religion in the context of his formative philosophical milieu. It also seeks to show that Marx's preoccupation with religion or its repudiation is not peripheral to his thought; rather, it is fundamental, a continuing concern that pervaded and permeated his entire intellectual career. This central concern is reflected in the writings of the so-called "young Marx" as well as the "mature Marx." Therefore, a correct understanding of Marx's critique of religion gives us a key to comprehend his philosophical system. Finally, this paper presupposes that only by confronting Marx's critical assessment of religion, or his rejection of religion, can we begin to construct a theology that takes seriously the challenge of a dynamic movement in contemporary culture and history.

The explication of the philosophical roots of Marx's critique of religion is based on his three works. These are: Marx's letter to his father, dated 10 November 1837 (Marx Engles

Collected Works or CWI, 1975:10-21); his doctoral dissertation entitled *Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, completed in March 1841 (CWI 1975:25-105); and the article "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," written at the end of 1843 and early 1844 (See end note 1). Indeed, if there is a peculiar thrill in diving and waving "into the sea" of Marxian texts, there is far more thrill and pleasure in the successful act of bringing "genuine pearls into the light of day." (CWI 1975: 18).

Religion in the Context of Marx's Critique

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to clarify our definition of religion in accordance with the kind of understanding which Marx himself presupposed. Undoubtedly as presupposed in the Marxian quotation at the beginning of this paper, what Marx had in mind was the religion of his contemporary Germany. It was, writes McLellan, 'a religion dominated by a dogmatic and over-spiritual Lutheranism,' (McLellan, 1973:89).

Moreover, it was a religion that emphasized the quality of transcendence and dichotomizes the supernatural and the natural, the *other* world and *this* world. Ultimately, the religion which Marx sought to repudiate is the religion that was promoted and protected by the Prussian state, a religion which in turn was legitimized, sanctified and perpetuated by the socially and economically exploitative Prussian state.

In a sense, religion is a form of an "inverted world-consciousness" produced by a society or state that was an "inverted world." In the typical, stinging Marxian statement 'Religion is the general theory of that [inverted] world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual *point d'honneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its universal source of consolation and justification ... The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a fight against *the world* of which religion is the spiritual *aroma,'* (CWI, 1975:175).

A careful textual analysis of Marx's early writings up to 1844 would provide us with three distinct stages in the development of his attitude towards religion.

The first stage was that of conventional acceptance of Christian ideas as transmitted through Marx's family and the dominant Christian culture. This is clearly seen in Marx's "gymnasium" days, particularly in two of his final examination essays, namely, "Reflections of a Young Man on a Choice of Profession," and "The Union of Believers with Christ According to John 15:1-14, Showing its Basis and Essence, its Absolute Necessity and its Effects." (CWI, 1975: 3-9; 636-639).

The second stage in Marx's attitude towards religion was diametrically opposed to the first: an outright rejection on philosophical grounds of Christian and all theistic beliefs. This attitude was developed during Marx's studies in the universities of Bonn and Berlin. It was

a thoroughly atheistic attitude. While at Berlin University, Marx could not escape the seductive appeal of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel had been a professor there till his death in 1831. The influence of Hegel continued to be a very strong through his young and radical disciples who were known as left-wing Hegelians.

The third stage in Marx's attitude towards religion is seen in his radical critique of the use of religion by the state. Coupled with this radical critique was Marx's profound socio-economic analysis of the interests represented by the state. This stage is seen in his work as a journalist in 1842 and lasted for the rest of his life.

Marx's Philosophical Patron Saints

We will now have a detailed textual analysis of the three Marxian primary texts mentioned earlier. By doing this exegetical exercise, we hope to draw out the identity of the philosophical patron saints whose names Marx invoked in his elemental revolt against religion. In the "Foreword" to his dissertation, Marx cited the words that Aeschylus put into the mouth of Prometheus: "I hate the packs of gods." The resolution decision not to give up his having been chained to a rock in exchange for the offer of servitude to "Father Zeus" earned for Prometheus, according to Marx, the singular accolade of "the most eminent saint and martyr of the philosophical calendar." (CWI, 1975:31).

Let us begin with Marx's letter to his father. This unusually lengthy letter (10 pages) gives us a glimpse of Marx's philosophical and spiritual pilgrimage.

One of the most characteristic features of Marx's life and thinking, even at this early stage, was an intense sense of history. This is immediately obvious in the letter to his father. The first paragraph states: 'There are moments in one's life which are like frontier posts marking the completion of a period but at the same time clearly indicating a new direction. (CWI, 1975: 10).

This tremendous sense of history, which pervades in most of Marx's writings, points to a convergence of world history in an individual's biography. This certainly is a Hegelian notion which Marx had recently been absorbing in his studies. As Marx put it: "Individual life, like a movement of world history, reveals the inner activity of the spirit. The essence of objective and subjective reality is action."

During these formative years of his academic career, Marx sharpened his sword of reason and engaged himself in intellectual fencing with prominent philosophers. He was driven by an unrestricted desire for knowledge, as he continuously made excerpts of literary-historical and philosophical works, until he became completely exhausted in body and mind. He fell ill. His doctor prescribed a long rest in the countryside.

It was there, while recovering, that Marx 'got to know Hegel from beginning to end, together with most of his disciples,' (CWI, 1975:19). Marx recognized his being ever more firmly bound to the modern world of philosophy, from which he sought, unsuccessfully, to escape. The invigorating taste of Hegel's philosophy allured him 'to dive [deeper] into the sea... with the definite intention of establishing that the nature of the mind is just as necessary, concrete and firmly based as the nature of the body. My aim was no longer to practice tricks of swordsmanship, but to bring genuine pearls into the light of the day,' (CWI, 1975:18).

His launching into the deep resulted in a 24-page work — "Cleanthes, or The Starting Point and Necessary Continuation of Philosophy" — which united art and science. This work gives a "philosophical-dialectical account of divinity ... as religion, and nature, as history." Marx referred to this work as "my dearest child, reared by moonlight," which had caused him endless headaches 'until for some days my vexation made me quite incapable of thinking.'(CWI, 1975: 18).

Marx continues his report to his father by mentioning the names of philosophers and legal luminaries whom he had been studying. Among them, besides Hegel, were Feuerbach, Aristotle, Kant, Kessing, Fichte, etc. He concluded the letter with the mention of domestic family affairs and a request for fatherly forgiveness on account of 'my much agitated state of mind ... overwhelmed by my militant spirit,' (CWI, 1975:21).

In assessing the import of this revelatory letter, I would like to cite two reliable Marxian literary guides. One, Father Joel Tabora, who, after thoroughly dissecting the letter in the original German, discovers "a temporal dichotomy in Marx's thought between the real and the ought." Marx himself recognized the untenability of the dichotomy and sought to overcome it by interpreting the "side of the ought to be emergent from the side of the real." Tabora concludes that the philosophical thought of the young Marx could be described as 'dialectical realism or dialectical materialism [which] must yet unfold in detail. But the seeds that are to unfold are, uncannily, already recognizable in this letter,' (Tabora, 1983:21).

Another reliable guide says that the letter reveals Marx's state of mind which is "torn between two contradictory ideas and passions." It embodies the inextricable entanglement of Marx's 'philosophical reflections, artistic enthusiasm, and the ardour of a consuming love. It is this particular mixture which makes the letter a true revelation of Marx's inner development.' (See end note 1 esp. Van Leeuven p.64).

Marx's encounter with Hegel's philosophy as reflected in the letter leads to an intimate "conversion-story with a depth of a confession of faith." This encounter, says Van Leeuven, 'is permeated by all the blissful and terrifying features which make the water symbolism such a striking expression of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum*, the tremendous and fascinating mystery of religion,' (See end note 1 esp. Van Leeuven p.65). In brief, there was both fear and fascination felt by Marx. Fear, because the strong impact of Hegelian thought threatened his own freedom of thought; fascination, because he was challenged to dive

deeper into the sea (Hegel's thought) in an heroic effort to bring the "genuine pearls" of truth into the light of reason.

Seeds of Atheism in Epicurean Philosophy

It is at this point where Marx's dissertation would concern us. His diving and immersing himself into the ocean depths of Hegel's philosophical system culminated in the precious pearl of truth contained in his dissertation.

The work was completed in March 1841, and his degree was conferred on him *in absentia* a month after by the University of Jena. The dissertation provides us with a key to understanding the philosophical foundations of Marx's thinking, its methodology and its structure. It is unfortunate that not the whole manuscript is preserved. What is preserved, however, gives us an adequate profile of Marx's philosophical thought, specifically his critique of religion. Happily, seven books of exercises filled with notes on Epicurean philosophy, which Marx used in preparing the dissertation, have been preserved.

Marx announces in the Foreword that his dissertation had solved a particular problem in Greek philosophy. It is obvious that Epicurus stands out prominently among Marx's philosophical patron saints.

Marx begins by asserting that Epicurean theory of the heavenly bodies and their movement is radically opposed to the postulate of Greek philosophers as a whole. Then, he launches an attack on "the religious attitude of the Pythagoreans, Plato and Aristotle." Worship of the celestial bodies is a cult practiced by all Greek philosophers. The system of the celestial bodies is the first naive and nature-determined existence of true reason [*Vernunft*], The same position is taken by Greek self-consciousness in the domain of the mind [*Geist*]. It is the solar system of the mind. The Greek philosophers therefore worshipped their own mind in the celestial bodies. (CWI, 1975:66).

Marx then makes a detailed presentation of the conflicting positions of Aristotle and Epicurus, and ends with the judgment that those who fail to recognize the contradictions between the two positions are greatly confused. Then with his mastery of juxtaposition, he declares: 'Aristotle reproached the ancients for their belief that heaven required the support of Atlas who ... with his shoulders [supports] the pillar of heaven and earth. Epicurus, on the other hand, blames those who believe that man needs heaven. He finds the Atlas by whom heaven is supported in human stupidity and superstition. Stupidity and superstition also are Titans,' (CWI, 1975: 67-68).

Marx cites the letter of Epicurus to both Pythocles and Herodotus as supportive of the Epicurean position against Aristotle who held on to certain absolute "axioms and laws" in explaining the reality and movements of heavenly bodies. Epicurus insisted that the "myth

[i.e., heavenly bodies are eternal and immortal because they behave in the same way according to Aristotle] be removed." Marx argues in support of Epicurus:

'The great number of explanations, the multitude of possibilities, should not only tranquillise our minds and remove causes for fear, but also at the same time negate in the heavenly bodies their very unity, the absolute law that is always equal to itself. These heavenly bodies may behave sometimes in one way, sometimes in another; this possibility of conforming to no law is the characteristic of their reality; everything in them is declared to be impermanent and unstable. The multitude of the explanations should at the same time remove ... the unity of the object,' (CWI, 1975:69).

Marx's exposition of Epicurean philosophy closes with the following revolutionary statement as far as philosophy of nature is concerned. 'Since eternity of the heavenly bodies would disturb the ataraxy of self-consciousness, it is necessary, a stringent consequence that they are not eternal. The heavenly bodies are therefore the atoms become real,' (CWI 1975:70).

This conclusion, says Marx, is the apex, the culminating point of Epicurean philosophy of nature. It is this conclusion that led Epicurus to oppose "the most glaring contradiction," and thus "turns vehemently against those who worship an independent nature containing in itself the quality of individuality." It is at this point where Epicurus achieved the "profoundest" knowledge of his system, the point where he, finally, resolved the contradiction between essence and existence, between form and matter. Here follows Marx's magisterial formulation of the materialist philosophy of nature based on Epicurus: 'Matter, having received into itself individuality, form, as is the case with the heavenly bodies, has ceased to be abstract with individuality; it has become concrete individuality, universality. In the meteors therefore, abstract individual self-consciousness is met by its contradiction, shining in its materialised form, the universal which has become existence and nature. ... Thus as long as nature as atom and appearance expresses individual self-consciousness and its contradiction the subjectivity of self-consciousness appears only in the form of matter itself. Where, on the other hand, it becomes independent, it reflects itself in itself, confronts matter in its own shape as independent form,' (CWI, 1975:72).

Thus Marx acclaims Epicurus as "the greatest representative of Greek enlightenment," another patron saint in the atheistic calendar. He quotes the poem of Lucretius and ascribes it to Epicurus:

> 'Fables of the gods did not crush him
> nor the lightning flash and the growling
> menace of the sky. ...
>
> Therefore, religion in its turn
> crushed beneath its feet, and we by his
> triumph are lifted level with the skies.

This is a powerful poem that makes the last summative paragraph of the chapter appear anti-climactic.

Marx's Kerygmatic Paradigm in Paradox

We shall now come to the third work, "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," a work which contains the sharpest expression of Marx's critique of religion. Written in early 1844, this article is the distillation and culmination of a decade of intense intellectual praxis. For as Professor Van Leeuven says, 'at the root of Marx's critique of religion, as this took shape during his ten formative years between 1836 to 1846, there is a fundamental paradox.' (See end note 1 esp. Van Leeuven p.184).

Marx's critique of religion as articulated in the 1844 work is a paradox in two senses. First, in the context of the entire Marxian literary works, it is both a point of arrival and a point of departure. Secondly, it is a paradox in the deeper sense, because while he considers criticism of religion as already completed, he is still impelled to undertake it in his work as a journalist.

Being the editor of *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842, Marx made a remark about his intention to criticize religion by criticizing political conditions rather than vice-versa. He gives three reasons for this. First, it is in keeping with the character of the newspaper and the need of enlightening the public. Second, it is because religion "draws its life from this earth and not from heaven and will disappear of its own accord, once the perverted reality whose theory it represents is dissolved." Third, "one should flirt less with the idea of atheism and do more to acquaint people with its meaning." (See end note 1 esp. Van Leeuven p.185 and also Hans Kung, *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today,* 1980:221). These remarks seem to indicate that, for Marx, the critique of religion is a futile exercise.

Towards an Exegetical-Hermeneutical Exercise

What follows is an exegetical and hermeneutical attempt at three of the Marxian statements on critique of religion.

I. "For Germany criticism of religion is in the complete, and the criticism of religion is in the presupposition of all criticism."

In this statement, Marx is referring to Ludwig Feuerbach, who had completed the task of criticizing religion in Germany.

Feuerbach is the philosophical and theological father of Marx's criticism of religion. Fourteen years older than Marx, Feuerbach spent his whole life working on the critique of religion. He is considered as one of the most influential philosophers of the 19th and 20th

centuries. In his famous work, *The Essence of Christianity*, he explains religion by way of psychology. He uses "projection theory" to explain the phenomenon of religion. This could be illustrated by means of a slide projector, where the image in a small slide could be projected and enlarged on a wide screen.

Similarly, God is seen to be nothing other than the image of man and his attributes projected and enlarged onto the celestial screen. To Feuerbach, God is the expression of the essence of humanity, stripped of all earthly limitations. Feuerbach's basic thesis is as follows: 'Religion ... is the relation of man to himself, or more correctly to his own nature ... but a relation to it, viewed as a nature ... apart from his own. The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective — i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature,' (Feuerbach 1957:14).

In this major work, Feuerbach consistently reduced divine attributes to human qualities. He did this to all the central creedal affirmations of the Christian faith. For instance, the statement "God created man in his own image" is reversed as "Man created God in his own image." Or the statement, "God is living-in-community" is transposed into "Living in community is godly." In other words, theology is reduced to anthropology, whereas anthropology is elevated to theology.

The substance of Marx's critique of religion is derived from Feuerbach. Marx, writes Hans Kung, 'was firmly convinced that with Feuerbach the critique of religion has been completed and atheism solidly established. Marx as a critic of religion does not really go beyond Feuerbach [so] the reasons that had to be cited against Feuerbach's atheism are valid also against Marx's atheism.' (See end note 1 esp. Kung, 1980:244).

The second part of the statement means that criticism of religion is of pivotal importance in Marx's philosophy. In fact, it is the foundation stone of the entire Marxist edifice which contains economic, political, legal and all other Marxian critiques. Klaus Bockmuehl comments that this statement is 'valid in terms of his biography, his methodology and his motivations. The phrase is true in the sense that atheism is already a fact before the philosophy of dialectical materialism is born. Marx was an atheist before he became a dialectical materialist,' (Bockmuehl, 1980:51).

Another meaning of the statement is that atheism has a methodological priority in the philosophy of Marx. All other critiques are methodologically preceded by the critique of religion. It provides the needed push and pressure for all other critiques. Thus, for Marx, the elimination of religion is necessary for the development of true humanity. Atheism and critique of religion are integral parts of Marx's philosophical system, the abrogation of which is tantamount to the dismantling of its historical materialism, its anthropology, its eschatology and ethics.

II. "The foundation of irreligious criticism is this: man makes religion; religion does not make man. ... Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual *point d'honneur* ..."

This paragraph stresses the centrality of man in Marx's philosophy. It is man that makes religion. Man here means the world of man, the state, society; man as the ensemble of social relationships. It is this state or society that produces religion, a perverted world-consciousness derived from a perverted world.

There are two distinct aspects of this religion: one stresses the theoretical and philosophical aspects; the other deals with the ethical and emotive element in religion. Under the first aspect, religion is characterized as general theory, as encyclopedic compendium, as logic in popular form, as spiritual *point d'honneur*. Whereas under the second aspect, religion is characterized as "the enthusiasm of a perverted world, its moral sanction, its solemn completion, its universal ground for consolation and justification." The mentioning of these characteristics leads to the conclusion that 'the struggle against religion is therefore the fight against the world ... of which religion is the spiritual aroma.' (See end note 1 esp. Leeuven p.190).

Furthermore, all these have reference to Hegel's view of religion as "a representation of absolute philosophical truth in a popular form." Essential to Marx's description is the focus on "the relationship of religion and the world of man, state, society. This is the only relationship in which he is interested. In so far as religion has reality, it owes its reality to this world." (See end note 1 esp. Van Leeuven p.190).

While Marx is critical of Hegel's dialectical philosophy, he could not disengage himself from this philosophy. It was like an ever present shadow which followed Marx wherever he went. Therefore, an adequate understanding of Marx's critique of religion must start from his critique of Hegel's philosophy as a whole. This, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

III. "The criticism of religion disenchants man in order to make him think and act and shape his reality like one who has been disenchanted and has come to reason, so that he will revolve around himself and therefore around his true sun. Religion is the illusory sun which revolves around man only so long as he does not revolve around himself."

Anyone who is familiar with Immanuel Kant's idealist and metaphysical philosophy could immediately detect the influence of that 18th century philosopher on the above quoted Marxian declaration. There is an obvious parallelism between the succession of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, followed by his *Critique of Practical Reason*, and Marx's transition from *theory* to *practice*.

Marx's entire intellectual effort — critique of religion and philosophy during his earlier years and the critique of political economy which absorbed him for the rest of his life — is founded on the whole understanding of the essence and meaning of critique. "Marx had recognized Kant's philosophy," observes Van Leeuven, "as the German theory of the French Revolution, as contrasted with the historical school of right, which he characterized as the German theory of the French *Ancient Regime*. Marx's *Critique Towards Hegel's Philosophy of Law* is basically a devastating critique of the anachronism of the German state of affairs in 1843, which had not yet arrived at the stage equivalent to that of French history in the year 1789. (See end note 1 esp. Van Leeuven p. 13).

In a closer analysis of the passages quoted above, two Kantian fundamental principles are discernible. First, Kant's famous notion of a "Copernican Revolution" is alluded to by Marx when he describes religion as the illusory sun which revolves around man until man learns to revolve around himself, which could happen when man is brought to a sense of reality by the critique of religion.

The second principle has something to do with the Kantian "categorical imperative," which is arrived at the transition from theoretical critique to praxis. Marx formulates this profound principle this way: "The critique of religion ends with the teaching that man is the highest essence of man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable essence."

Before bringing this paper to a close, let me point out that Marx's article of 1844 written in Paris is really a turning point in his life and thought. In the word of the perceptive Dutch professor Van Leeuven, this article represents "a transition from the critical philosophy to a critique of political economy" in the evolution of Marx's thought. "It was an attempt to reap the harvest of his formative years and at the same time contained the seed of his maturity."

Concluding Statement

We have traced and analyzed the philosophy roots of Marx's radical critique of religion. Our investigation focussed on three of Marx's important works that have bearing on his critique of religion. We did not only explicate the extent of the influence that Epicurus, Kant, Hegel and Feuerbach had on the evolution of Marx's thought. We also focussed on some selected statements in Marx's writings and tried to draw out shades of meaning, not so much as abstract ideas that could neatly explain or describe the reality in our world but as potent, dynamic truth that could, in the right moment and place, transform our history and society.

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_____. *Collected Works, Vol. I.* New York: International Publishers, 1975 pp. 10-12 Henceforth, this work shall be reffered to simply as *CWI*.

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End Notes

1 I am particularly challenged and motivated to "wade through" these Marxian primary text by the example of my mentor (Father Joel Tabora, S.J.), whose admirable adeptness with the German language enabled him to write his doctoral dissertation, *The Future in the Writings of Karl Marx* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1983), based on the "primary German sources." In writing this paper, I was greatly helped by three secondary sources, namely, 1) Father Tabora's book, 2) Han Kung's *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today* (1980), and 3) Professor A. Th. Van. Leeuven's two-volume Gifford Lectures series, entitled *Critique of Heaven and Earth* (1972-1974).

2 Marx's dissertation is part of a general research project on the history of Greek philosophy, which he planned to undertake as early as 1839. This project has not been carried out, except the collection of these seven notebooks on Epicurean, Stoic and Skeptic philosophies. CF. CW I, P. 29, 401-509, 734-735. For the purpose of this paper, I focus on Chapter 5 — "The Meteors" — Marx's discussion on the movement of the heavenly bodies has bearing on Marx's critique of religion and theology. Relevant also is a fragment included in the Appendix, entitled "Critique of Plutarch's Polemic Against the Theology of Epicurus," Cf. CW I, 102-105.

THE QUESTION OF GOD: AN EXPOSITION OF MOLTMANN'S ESCHATOLOGICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Armando L. Tan

In the sixties, when the current theological orthodoxy seemed threatened by the "death of God theology", a young German scholar wrote his now famous book, *Theology of Hope,* (Moltmann, 1967) which has replaced much of the tragic meaning attached to God. With Moltmann's **hope** and its theologico-political implications, a new reflection on the question of God was born.

In what follows, I shall try to present one important aspect of Moltamnn's theology as it seeks to comprehend the meaning of God with 'future as his essential nature' (Ernst Bloch).

The Logic of God's Revelation

In order to understand Moltmann's theological reflection on the question of God, it is important to discuss his theology of revelation, for this constitutes the basic perspective from which he based his critical reading of the traditional proofs of God's existence, and even beyond that, his political hermeneutics.

In addressing himself to the question of God, Jurgen Moltmann links the concept of God's revelation with the language of promise. For him, the revealing of God is combined with the statement about the "promise of God". God reveals himself in the form of promise and in the history that is marked by promise, (Moltmann, 1967:42). The event of God's "uttering his word of promise" then constitutes the biblical affirmation of God's revelation, (Moltmann, 1971:17). In this sense, revelation is not simply self-disclosure, but disclosure with a future purpose. Promise implicitly presupposes God's purpose in revealing himself.

Moltmann equally understands God's revelation in Jesus in the context of divine promise which reveals not only who Jesus was, but also who he will be. In Jesus' resurrection, the promise of the inevitable "not yet existing reality" is announced and with it the revelation and future of God. God's revelation in the resurrection then has a promissory and eschatological character,(Moltmann, 1967:84).

If God's revelation is seen from the eschatological perspective of promise, then the rational proofs of God, both of Greek metaphysics and the existential proof, can have no

place in the question of God. For these ultimately cannot speak of the biblical God of hope, but only of the god of epiphanies. To interpret the revelation in terms of the proofs of God is, in Moltmann's view, to reduce the reality of God's revelation to the problem of knowledge, and thereby lose all its essential content, (1967:42)

On this basis, he rejects any "epiphany" type of biblical understanding that assumes the eternal presence of God, (1967:43). This leads him to a critical dialogue with mainline Protestant theologies of revelation.

Proofs of God

The assumption that the reality and knowledge of God can be made certain on the basis of the experience of some dimensions of reality cannot be the presupposition, says Moltmann, of the Christian view of God. This perspective leads him to a critical reflection on Bultmann's existential interpretation, Pannenberg's cosmological argument, and Barth's ontological reflection with regard to the problem of theological epistemology.

Accordingly, the logic of the existential proof is centered on the correlation of existence and transcendence. It presumes an anthropological starting point in which the knowledge of man becomes the ground for the knowledge of God. God can be understood only as "expression of our existence itself, (Moltmann, 1971:8-9). God proves himself in the existential understanding of man's self. (Moltmann, 1967:45).

Here, however, God's reality has become a matter of "kerygmatic-involvement" so that man's decision in the internal human-divine confrontation becomes the decisive factor in the interpretation of history whose meaning, unfortunately, is limited to the individual concerned.

While Rudolf Bultmann speaks of God's revelation on the basis of the questionableness of human subjectivity, Wolfhart Pannenberg accordingly speaks of God's revelation on the ground of the questionableness of reality as a whole. 'Every statement about God is at the same time a statement about the world as a whole, and vice versa.' (Moltmann, 1971:7). Here, the reference point is the recognition of historical facts as "acts of God" which express something, though indirectly, about God himself. (1971:7).

The full revelation of God, however, takes place in the whole of reality conceived as "universal history". This view takes history as God's revelation when it is finished (Moltmann, 1967:78). In Pannenberg, the crisis of kerygmatic involvement in Bultmann has explicitly become the crisis of "historical facts". This is a **post factum** or an **a posterior** argument for God's existence.

With Karl Barth, the reference point for the Christian "talk of God" lies in the very concept of God itself. This means that Barth has shifted the question of God from the category of subjectivity and objectivity to the question of the identity of Word and Being.

Accordingly for Barth, God's revelation of himself is expressed in his name and as such must be understood in the context of **Deus dixit**. "No one reveals God but himself alone". This is to argue, in other words, that with respect to God's revelation, the conception of God (which is expressed in his Word) necessitates the conception of his existence. The process of knowing God is, for Barth, from God to man rather than from man or the world to God. Moltmann calls this line of thinking as the "proof of God from 'God'. (Moltmann 1967:279).

Moltmann's Critique

Moltmann's critical assumption with respect to the revelation of God understood in terms of existential, cosmological, and ontological theism begins with the idea of the impossibility of subjecting the biblical God of the Exodus and the Resurrection within the framework of the logic of Greek metaphysics. The intellectual objectification of God, besides being unbiblical in its essential presuppositions, can neither demonstrate the reality of God nor can it provide a 'future' for God. It can only, at most, show the necessity of raising the question of God simply because of the 'radical questionableness' of certain aspects of reality. (1967:272).

Accordingly, if we take Bultmann's 'man coming to himself' as the governing view of revelation, then there will be no hope and meaning for the future, because here 'revelation does not open up a future in terms of promise'. It leaves the hope for the future of God empty. (1967:67-68).

This critique shows that the social dimension of the question of God has not been taken into consideration. Existential theology provides no *weltanschauung* (world-view) that can become the ground of the movement towards the realization of a real social future, (1967:67). It fails, therefore, to understand theology as eschatology.

Similarly, for Moltmann, Pannenberg's view is only a replacement from the subjective to the objective scheme of verification. The idea of historical verifiability of God's revelation at the end of the 'revealing history' provides our recognition of God's temporary and provisional character. For here the divine self-disclosure depends on the historical process moving towards the end of history, the point at which God would be fully God.

Moltmann emphasizes the fact that if we accept this 'retroflexive' method of understanding God, then we have to alter the concept of the 'historical,' which is at odd with the biblical, view of the historical redemptive revelation which has the character of promise. (Moltmann, 1967:80).

As for Barth, Moltmann maintains that ontological theism can only be the 'canon of interpretation for a fixed reality'. For if we take God's revelation in Jesus as the real ground for an understanding of God and his future, then Barth's reflection of the ontological proof

must radically be altered, for this cannot deal objectively with the biblical reports about th historicity of Jesus of Nazareth.

Because the three proofs of God, on the whole, are unable to consider the question o God on the basis of its biblical foundation, Moltmann thinks that they are in danger o becoming forms of the 'epiphany' religion, rather than the 'apocalypse of the promise future'. As Gustavo Gutierrez puts it, for Moltmann, the biblical revelation of God is not, a it was for the Greek mind, the 'epiphany of the eternal present', which limits itself t explaining what exist. (Inda and Eagleson, 1973:160).

Instead, Moltmann proposes a knowledge of God in terms of the dialectical proces of knowing. This means that for the Christian faith, God's true revelation is experienced i the contradiction of the Cross and the Resurrection. With this view, the question of God n longer arises from the question of existence, reality, and word, but from 'concrete history understood dialectically and eschatologically. This provides universal significance for Go since revelation in the 'paradox of the cross' applies to all men. (Moltmann, 1971:3).

In summary, Moltmann's hermeneutical starting point with regard to God's revelatio takes the promissory history as the event and content of the revelation in which the christia hope for the coming God is based. In this way, the future is given a **content realit** objectified in the word of promise and manifested in the reality of the raising of Jesus fro the dead. Thus, over against the interpreters of the God-question, Moltmann assumes th the biblical God of revelation cannot simply be conceived in terms of the logic of a divin concept, neither can it be presented within the framework of the reflective philosophy o transcendental subjectivity either of God or man, nor can it be guaranteed by a cosmolog which takes the whole of reality as universal history.

What is obviously lacking in all these approaches is the eschatological dimension o history understood as promise and hope and in which the future of God is announced. An conception of God that does not speak of the eschatological dimension of faith, especiall in the context of the suffering and dying humanity, does not speak of the future of the Go of promise and hope. It does not possess, in the last analysis 'an eschatological epistemology or better still the 'hoping knowledge of God', (Meeks, 1974:). Such is the seeming optimisti conception of God in Moltmann's theological epistemology.

The Resurrection Question

Of central importance to Moltmann's understanding of eschatology as it relates t the idea of promise and hope in the New Testament is the question of the Resurrection. Fo him, Jesus' resurrection constitutes the first fruit of God's faithfulness to his promise in th New Covenant. Thus, the Easter event is interpreted not only as the fulfillment of the Ol Testament expectation, but also as the beginning of the fulfilment of the future, i.e., th coming kingdom of God. Its importance is seen in the eschatological horizon of God'

promise given in this event. Moltmann believes in the reality of the Resurrection, though its historical verifiability remains a controversial question, (Moltmann, 1967:44). Because God has acted in Jesus' resurrection, the Christian hope for the promised future of God is made certain. It is finally this event that validates the promise in the Christian gospel and the hope it holds for the future without which there can be no meaning for the present. With this, Moltmann states the central thesis of his hope-theology, (Moltmann 1971:165).

Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God.

The attempt to give meaning and truth to the literal understanding of the resurrection as a historical factual event poses a problem to the spirit of rational criticism. It is difficult to overcome the problem of knowledge posed by modern consciousness, most of which is culturally conditioned by the objectifying tendency and criterion of historical criticism. But Moltmann rejects the historical concept of verification that is based on the objective 'factuality' of historical events. Instead, he injects the idea of 'eschatological verification' into the problem of the historicity of the Resurrection, so that the historical objectivity of the past is dissolved into the 'not yet' objectivity of the future. (Moltmann in *Harvard Theological Review*, 1968:137). As he puts it, since the historian cannot work with the world as a whole as his subject matter, but only with the part of the world one calls the past, we could add that this resurrection of Jesus is not historically verifiable as yet. It is therefore subject to eschatological verification. (Moltmann, 1969:51).

With the concept of historical verification as the new category of history, Moltmann reverses the order of knowledge by shifting the factual basis of history in which the empirical approach is grounded to the possibilities of the future.

The truth content of the resurrection as an 'event,' therefore, does not lie in the past, but in a 'real anticipation of the future of history in the midst of history', (Moltmann, in *Theology Today,* 1968:376). Because the resurrection is based on the promise of God given in this event, it implies eschatology.

Moltmann is especially critical of Ernst Troeltch's "all pervading power of analogy" as the objective canon of historical reality. He maintains that this event is not historically possible when view from the perspective of the historical method of analogy and anthropocentric consideration. For here, human experience cannot become the "measure of historical probability". Because the resurrection defies the typical, regular, and similar occurrences in history, there can be no theology of the Resurrection. The method of analogy falsifies the historicity of the Easter event, simply because it does not preclude a "common core of similarity" which is supposedly the basis of verifiable history. Besides, the historial method is itself subject to question.

In a similar vein, Moltmann questions the existential understanding of the form-critical approach to the resurrection talk. Accordingly, the form critic stresses the importance of the historical event of the **experience** of the "Easter faith of the first disciple". This interpretation, however, sacrifices factual to existential truth. It is, for Moltmann, devoid of the past and future implications of the Resurrection.

Moltmann thinks that the knowledge of the historical character of event is grounded in its meaning for the future. In other words, the Resurrection must be interpreted from the perspective of promise, i.e., eschatologically. Its significance lies not in the historicity of the past, but in its eschatological implication, that is, the future that the promise holds. In a statement that reflects the eschatological nature of the resurrection, he writes: 'The raising of Jesus is then to be called "historic" not because it took place **in** the history to which other categories of some sort provide a key, but.... because, by pointing the way to the future events it makes history in which we can and must live.' (Moltmann, 1967:181).

Hence neither the existential understanding nor the positivistic, objectifying historical approach can provide meaning and significance to the event in terms of its possibilities for the future of God.

Central to Moltmann's understanding is the concept of contingency as a necessary presupposition of the nature of reality as a whole. If we can assume a contingent world where God creates something new out of his promises and **ex nihilo**, then it is possible to speak of the Resurrection as "God talk" in the context of the coming new creation of God. While skepticism rejects the view of the physical resurrection on the basis of analogy and the human experience of reality, Moltmann opts for a new historical perspective that is able to recognize the contingent nature of reality and links this concept of contingency to the category of the **novum** in the Christian eschatological understanding of the world and history. Thus he proposes what we may consider as the fundamental or central thesis with respect to the resurrection question: 'Only when the world can be understood as contingent creation out of the freedom of God and **ex nihilo**- only on the basis of this **contingencia mundi** does the raising of Christ become intelligible as **Nova creatio,**'(Moltmann, 1967:179).

Conclusion

We can say that Moltmann's reflections on the question of God constitute a significant advance over the ontological, cosmological, and existential interpretation. Indeed, the God whose presence in history claims objectivity in the Exodus and the Resurrection cannot simply be subjected to a metaphysical intellectualization of absolute reality. Here, and especially with respect to the question of resurrection, its theological importance seems to be that it provides a powerful corrective to the objectifying tendency of the modern Enlightenment epistemology.

While the interpretation of the 'proofs of God' creates no theological objections, Moltmann's appropriation of the question of the Resurrection with his conceptualization of eschatology as the interpretative primary category of history is not without serious difficulty. If, as he argues, the power of the **future** derives its central meaning through a grounded expectation, that is, the resurrection of Jesus, and not simply a "postulate of a utopian desire", then he must have a very strong or objective case for the **historicity** of the Resurrection event. But by simply ignoring seriously the historical-critical question of the resurrection event, Moltmann fails to make his case for the physical objectivity or reality of the Resurrection event, and therefore has no absolute basis and logical justification even for the shifting of the primary category of objectivity to the future through his concept of 'eschatological verification'.

One wonders, therefore, whether or not in Moltmann's theology of promise and hope, 'myth more than history shapes the promise'.

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ON KNOWING X KNOWS THAT p, AND THE QUEST FOR RATIONALITY

Peter A. Sy

One of the major preoccupations of modern epistemologists from Descartes to present positivistic "belief philosophers," is the setting of standards or criteria for knowing what. "How do we decide, in any particular case, whether we know?" Or, "how do we know that we know what?"

Let us then, call or label such attempts at providing grounds for epistemological claims as, with due apologies to Wittgenstein, "knowledge name-game", the rules of which are thought to contribute a web of stipulations on the possibility of rational discourse. The question whether one is justified in asserting that he knows something is, to these epistemologists, necessarily tied up to the idea of rationality. If one wishes to engage in a rational discourse, he must be prepared to intellectually warrant his statements. Indicating p as a cognition assertion, assuming a definite cognitive meaning, is, therefore, not only showing the grounds on which p is cognitively meaningful or epistemologically justified but also, in effect, making rational discussion an intelligibly rewarding business or pursuit. In modern epistemology, rationality is, in short, equated with justifiability.

The stake of the question on the ultimate explication of how one knows p cannot, however, be overemphasized. Regarded as the end-all and, perhaps, itself the *raison d'etre* of modern epistemology, it is a ticklish or exacting query, which almost every theorist of knowledge has sought to resolve once and for all. As to when and how it is going to be finally resolved remains unknown. What seems only clear at the outset is that everybody, by reason of profession or otherwise, in one way or another, had engaged himself in the business of correctly naming something "knowledge".

This paper then hopes to discuss the issue of knowledge and rationality via a critical explication of "X knows that p". How do we decide whether X knows p and can we possibly point to the necessary linkage between our knowing "X knows that p" and rationality? Can we decide as well whether knowledge has any essential foundation?

I

Traditionally, knowledge is thought to be "justified true belief" or something of that sort. If X claims to know p, then p must be true, X must believe that p and X must have some grounds for p. In other words, this justifiability principle states that:

X knows p, if and only if (IFF):

(a) **p** is true,
(b) **X believes** that p,

and

(c) X is **justified** in believing that p.

X is said to possess a certain knowledge p only when he is able to meet the subjective and objective, as well as the "evidence" requirements of knowledge, viz., X believes what he asserts, X has warrant for what he believes to be true, and p is indeed true.

However, Gettier (1963: 121-123) in his article *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?* which has initiated a flurry of discussion (Clark, 1963: 46-48) and controversy among epistemologists, has come to challenge the traditional explication of knowledge, of X knowing p. He wants to refute the traditional definition of knowledge by showing the inadequacies of traditional analysis of "X knows p". Taking on the necessary and sufficient conditions (namely, propositional truth, belief, and justifiability of the belief), which traditional epistemology has practically held canonical, Gettier presents cases in which such conditions are true for some propositions, though it is at the same time false that X, the knower, knows the knowledge claim. In each case, a proposition which may in fact be true is believed on grounds which are false.

Take Gettier's first counter-example.

(1) Jones is the man who will get a job, and Jones has ten coins in his pocket. Suppose Smith, who, like Jones, applied for the same job, has strong evidence for believing that (1). Suppose further that Smith's evidence for (1) is that the president of the company has assured him that it is Jones who, ultimately, will get the job and he, Smith, has counted the coins in Jones's pocket earlier. So Smith in this sense has "knowledge" of (1), in the traditional sense of the expression.

Moreover, proposition (1) entails

(2) The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket.

Then let us also suppose that Smith sees the entailment from (1) to (2), and let us accept (2) on the basis of (1), for which Smith is "justified". Is Smith also justified in believing that (2)? What if, unknown to Smith, Smith himself has ten coins in his pocket and will the one who gets the job? Proposition (2) is true, but statement (1), from which Smith has deduced (2), is false.

Certainly, in this case, Smith cannot be said to know (2) with certainty. That Smith believes (2) is true, and that Smith is warranted in believing that (2), are matters of fact.

Although Smith is not aware that he himself will get the job, nor does he know about the number of coins his pocket contains, statement (2) is true in view of the later stipulated circumstances. But Smith's belief that (2) is on the account of the number of coins in Jones's pocket. The basis is simply mistaken! Smith falsely believes Jones to be the man who will get the job.

There is no gainsaying, however, that the first counter-example appears to expose one alleged major inadequacy of the traditional definition of knowledge. That is, it is possible for X to believe that p, for p to be true and for X to have a warrant for this belief, by X's basis is utterly wrong — and therefore, X cannot be said to possess knowledge of p at all.

This counter-example, however, falls short in showing that knowledge is not "justified true belief." If we are able to show that people may have some "justified true belief" but still do not possess "knowledge," does it necessarily rule out the possibility that knowledge is some kind of a warranted belief? Does it mean that "knowledge" does not involve any justification whatsoever of our truth claims" (Gettier, however, does not explicitly state in the paper that his intention is to show that knowledge rules out the possibility of justified truth claims, and therefore, Gettier may be immune to possible absurd consequences which are attributed to this position). In other words, can it be shown, on the basis of the possibility that X believes that p, p is true, X has good grounds for believing that p, and yet, X cannot be said to possess "knowledge" — that the traditional conception of knowledge is altogether dispensable or utterly false?

Also, if we come to think about the entailment from (1) to (2), in the light of the later stipulations on factual circumstances, (1) is untrue and therefore may, logically speaking, entail anything, either true or false. In the strictest sense, Smith can never be justified at all in his belief that (2)! He does not, in the traditional meaning of the expression, possess any "knowledge" of (2), because — in the first place — he has no basis (true basis, that is) for it.

Some foundationalist theorists of knowledge are quite quick at providing an ad hoc qualification to the traditional definition of knowledge in avoiding the kind of objection or confusion Gettier's first case raises or creates. That is,

X knows p IFF:

(a) p is true
(b) X believes that p,
(c) X has the right evidence for p.

But as we shall see later, this, too, has problems. For some moment, let us defer our discussion on this qualification as we continue to account for Gettier's counter-examples.

Consider then this shortened version of Gettier's second counter-example:

(1) Jones owns a Ford, and
(2) Smith has a very strong evidence for (1).

Smith's evidence is that Jones has always owned a Ford, Smith has always seen him riding on a Ford and that, while driving a Ford, Jones has just offered Smith a ride. Then Smith also has another friend Brown the whereabouts of whom Smith is totally ignorant. So choosing a place at random, Smith constructs the statement

(3) Either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Paris.

Seeing (1) entailing (3) (i.e., by Addition), Smith infers that (3) is true, of course, on the basis of his evidence for (1). (That is, if p is true, "p v q" is always true). Is Smith's evidence for (1) valid as his evidence for (3), in view of the entailment? Suppose Jones does not own a Ford, he has just rented one when he offered Smith a ride and, by sheerest coincidence, Smith is in Paris — does it mean it possesses any "knowledge" of (3)? While (3) may be true and that Smith believes that (3) may likewise be true, Smith, to Gettier, does not know (3).

Similarly, in his first counter-example, Gettier gives us an ersatz situation where we are forced, supposedly, to admit that X does have strong evidence for "p or q" but, as a matter of fact, does not "know" it.

In other words, the second counter-example is: Suppose X believes, with strong evidence, that p from which in turn he infers, by Addition, "p v q". But, unknown to X, "~p . q". Allegedly, he counter-example is able to show that indeed X believes that p on good grounds, and that p is true, but still it is impossible on our part to say that X knows p.

But here lies the crux of the matter. The factual basis of (3)'s truth is no longer Smith's evidence for (1), but the fact that Brown is in Paris. That (3) is logically necessitated by (1) or that (3) is "true" on the basis of (1), is actually a matter of logic. And one should not confuse logical truth with empirical truth. For (3) to be an empirical assertion or be factually true, it must have a factual or empirical basis of its own. Parenthetically therefore, one has to make a distinction between "factual or empirical knowledge" and logical truth.

Upon casual inspection, Gettier appears successful in refuting the traditional conception of knowledge. But on closer analysis, Gettier's counter-example qua counter-example is not diametrically opposite to the traditional formulation. It only stipulates on the possibility of X having to believe that p, claiming to have some evidence for it when actually X has no correct justification for his belief; X is merely guessing. Logically speaking, Gettier's

counter-example is contingent with the traditional conception of knowledge; hence, as such, it does not (and cannot) rule out the possibility of knowledge involving some "justified true belief."

Furthermore, at a glance, Gettier's second counter-example would seem logically consistent. But on closer look, it is not. Statement (1) is false. This is the reason why Smith cannot possibly know (3). What is earlier assigned as the condition fo validating the knowledge claim of Smith is rendered inconsistent in view of the contradictory fact, viz., Jones does not own a Ford at all! This fact, of course, renders the earlier claim tha Smith has always known Jones to have owned a Ford and has strong evidence for it. Which really is which? (The problem with suppositions is that one can appear to state contradictions which seem unharmful to the entire contention. But the point is, in the case of Gettier's second counter-example, either Jones owns a Ford or he does not; it cannot be both. If (1) is false, why make it as the basis for asserting (3) in the first place? What makes (3) true, however, is the fact that Brown is in Paris. This has nothing to do with Smith's belief that (3) there obviously is no logical connection between the fact that Brown is in France and Smith's believing that (3), except of course when Smith also has a separate evidence for believing that Brown is in France. But that is another story.

Again, either of the two counter-examples amounts to a contigency. It, therefore, fails to logically negate the traditional definition of kowledge. What we demand from genuine counter-examples is the cogency to completely rule out any position to take knowledge as a kind of "justified true belief." It must be able to show an instance where X's justified belief that p leads to a contradiction or an absurdity. A truly opposite alternative conception of knowledge should not just be another contingent formulation that does not logically rule out or complete negate the traditional epistemological construct.

II

One of the justificationist proposals (Clarck, 1963:46) to elude Gettier's counter-examples involves the addition of a "good grounds" clause. Hence, the traditional definition of knowledge comes

X knows p IFF:

(i) p is true
(ii) X believes that p
(iii) X is justified in believing that p, and
(iv) it is **on good grounds** that X believes that p.

In this regard, Clark (1963:46) suggests that the good grounds for X's belief for p must be true and it, too, must be justified. But what if X believes on good grounds, say on his

friend's account but his friend, despite being believed by X to be the epitome of honest and reliability, is wildly guessing or simply speculating at one case? Certainly, his friends' wild surmise or speculation can in no way induce X with "knowledge," (Sounders and Champawat, 1964: 8-9).

One, however, can argue that, in the first place, X's basis for believing that p is not at all reliable and therefore not "on good grounds," i.e., his friend, however righteous, is not infallible but at times makes wild guesses and commits mistakes.

If we have simply failed to show that knowledge does not indeed involve justified belief, will we be able to reach grounds in trying to make our assertions rationally defensible and our knowledge claims fully justified? Will our justification ever be truly conclusive? There simply is no guarantee; complete justification still appears to be an impossibility. Everything now seems to amount to faith, to redound to theology of which philosophy is handmaiden.

To further argue the case, if we grant that a knowledge claim eventually reaches the "bedrock" of justificatory discourse, it implies reaching out the most fundamental or basic statements of all cognitive assertions. Suppose that the regress is not infinite and that ultimately one is able to arrive at a relatively coherent or conclusive account of the justifiedness of "X knows that p." The chain of beliefs on which p depends has to rest on some basic belief or beliefs. These basic beliefs or justificatory statements, in turn, confer justification on the rest of the beliefs in the chain but apparently need no justification conferred on themselves, or, if ever they do, they justify themselves **a priori**. This contention cannot, however, be defended without believing in some Absolute Essence, in some kind of Aristotelian Prime, or Unmoved, Mover. The basic statements are able to confer justification to all our knowledge claims but they themselves are not justified or justifiable; they are the Ultimate Justification, the Unmoved Mover, which may or may not cause motion to itself and defies every Physics of Motion. Again, this is theology.

III

Epilogue

This paper has thus far tried to show some inadequacies and curious aspects of Gettier's counter-examples to the traditional conception of knowledge vis-a-vis certain revisions or some recent ad hoc explication of knowledge as "justified true belief." Given the strong polemics against the old guards of epistemology, I suppose, what seems to pervade now in our quest for rationality is somekind of an "epistemic abyss" before which we stand seemingly undecided whether we dare jump into it and hope that we will make it to the touchdown, when most, if not all, epistemological questions are resolved without importing

any justificationist assumptions, or try to go back to our knowledge tradition and learn something from it.

This resistance before the "epistemological abyss," moreover, may be rooted in the fear of overthrowing the dyad of knowledge justification and rationality. For we have always equated rationalist with justificaionism. What we consider justified is rational. Its converse, howeve, is rather suspect. What may be rational is not necessarily justified. The best knowledge that we have, namely, Science, is not "justified"; science is even largely not a "justified true belief" and hardly do we call it "irrational." Many scientific inventions and discoveries popped out of sheer guesswork. The discovery of the Benzene Ring, for instance, was made possible through a comatose sleep of Friedrich Kekule.

What is queer about denying knowledge as "justified true belief" seems to be this. To paraphrase Wittgenstein, it is not possible for one to say, "I know but I don't believe it" or, in the light of the question of justification, "I know it but I don't have any basis for it; I just know it!" What seems apparent, however, is that where knowledge or rationality applies, belief or disbelief does not. Beliefs are illusory imports traditional epistemologists confer on knowledge but which onlyu discombolate the question. The issue of knowledge and rationality must, therefore, be freed from the "pyings" about beliefs.

But, of course, one may still raise questions. (In philosophy, we suppose, questions are more important than answers. And we are back practically to the same queries.) If our knowledge does not involve any justification whatsoever, on what basis or process can we make knowledge claim? (Is knowledge a matter of social convention alone?) Is there no more distinction of what we purport to know from conjectures, knowledge from mere opinion? Can there be such a thing as rational conjecture? If we do not justify our truth claims, how can we possibly rationalize our discourse of truth without giving any warrant to our cognitive assertions? Is knowledge a structure up there hanging in the air without essential foundations? Or, in the first place, is it a cognitive structure? ... **Who knows?**

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THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF THE EAST IN PERSIA (ca. A.D. 200-500)

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The tiny remnant of the indigenous Christian Church that today continues to exist in modern Iran and in a few other countries[2] has a history which dates back to the first centuries of the Christian era. Little known to the outside world, its identity is often shrouded in confusion, not the least because of the varying names with which it has been called over the centuries. It has been variously referred to as the East Syrian Church, the Assyrian Church, the Chaldean Church, the Assyro-Chaldean Church, the Syro-Chaldean Church, the Babylonian Church, the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the Persian Church, or the Nestorian Church. But the name it took for itself was simply "The Church of the East, "[3] an Asian, Syriac-speaking Christianity, which was distinct from the Greek-speaking Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Latin-speaking Church of Western Europe.

With its center at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the Church of the East by the 4th century A.D. had encompassed the regions of Mesopotamia, Persia proper, the Persian provinces of Elam, Media and Khorassan, the islands of the Persian Gulf, a few enclaves and Christian cities in the Arabian peninsula, and the Christian cities of Arabia, and the island of Socotra. By the early 6th century, if not much earlier, this Asian Christianity had also extended as far as South India and Ceylon.[4] By A.D. 635, its first known missionary to China had arrived at the T'ang capital of Ch'ang-an [modern Sian, in Shensi Province].[5]

The singular significance of the Church of the East for the history of Christianity in Asia lies in the fact that it served as a vigorous missionary center for early Christian missions to Turkestan in central Asia, Mongolia, China, and for a time, even Tibet. There is also evidence that it had mission churches in the Malay peninsula by about A.D. 650, Sumatra by the early 14th century, and perhaps also Java, Malacca, Ayuthia in Siam and Pegu in Burma.[6] There is also some evidence suggesting the presence of early Christianity in Korea by the 13th and 14th centuries, if not as early as the 7th century.[7]

Hence, the Church of the East played an important role in the early spread of Christianity in Asia, preaching a faith which was faithful to the doctrines and practices of the New Testament Church, but dressed in the local color of Asian culture, concepts and traditions, in much the same way that the Christianity in the Mediterranean world grew in the context of Graeco-Roman civilization.

The First Church at Ctesiphon

Persian Christian tradition ascribes the founding of the church at Seleucia-Ctesiphon [Koke] to the early missionary Mar Mari. The *Chronicle of Arbela*, however, dates the

beginning of a small congregation gathered at the Persian royal city of Ctesiphon to the third quarter of the 3rd century. No details are given as to how this church began, but its members reportedly included a high-ranking Persian military officer named Ganzqan. The *Chronicle* suggests that ecclesiastical organization had developed to an advanced stage in northern Mesopotamia, which had long-standing bishoprics at Edessa and Arbela, with new ones in the process of formation in Beit Zabdi, Nisibis, and Mosul, etc. About A.D. 280, the bishop of Beit Zabdi was one Mar Shabsa, and by A.D. 290 the first-known bishop of Nisibis was one Mar Yaqub.

Upon Ganzqan's invitation, Mar Shahlufa, bishop of Arbela (258-273), journeyed south to pay the little group of Ctesiphon Christians a visit. He arrived only months later, after escaping from Arab raiders who had kidnapped him and his party while en route.

Early Preaching in Ctesiphon

For two years, Mar Shahlufa reportedly labored among the small band of Christians, encouraging them in their faith and ordaining a priest to minister to their spiritual needs. The bishop preached that "Jesus, crucified by the Jews in Jerusalem, is God, son of God, and that He suffered only of His own free choice, and in order to deliver [men and women] from slavery to demons."[8] As will be seen later, the idea of the Crucifixion encountered serious difficulties in the context of Mazdaean religious concepts of justice and punishment.

In A.D. 280 Shahlufa's successor, Mar Ahadabui, and the neighboring bishop of Beit Zabdi, Mar Shabsa, also visited Ctesiphon. The former ordained five Persian priests, but after a year had to leave hurriedly as a result of a brief outbreak of anti-Christian animosity, resulting from the imprudent and over-zealous preaching of his companion.

Not long previously, the Persian monarch Varahran II (275-293) had suppressed, with no small measure of cruelty, a rebellion by the governor of Hedayab [Adiabene]. Unmindful of this political event, Mar Shabsa one day addressed a crowd and sought to convince them that one ought not to fear men who can destroy only the body, but rather God who can cast both body and soul into the fires of hell. Carried away by his own zeal and eloquence, the bishop sharply stressed the point, as the *Chronicle of Arbela* puts it, that "the victory of our Lord is really a victory, while what the kings of this world call victory is nothing but pride, pretensions, ills, torments, sufferings and death."[9]

While he was eloquently elaborating on this point, one man in the crowd hurried to report to one of Varahran II's ministers that the Christians were preaching that the emperor would be tortured and tormented by fire, and that his recent victory in Adiabene was nothing but a vain and empty enterprise. A zealous Christian preacher unmindful of the political affairs of this world and an eager informer who heard only what he was ready to believe nearly brought disaster to the early church at the Persian imperial capital.

Earlier on, Varahran II had shown some interest in Christianity,[10] as well as in Manichaeism, though he had since then changed his mind and was now an ardent advocate of the Mazdaean state cult. Not surprisingly, as soon as he heard the informer's report, he went raging mad.

The subsequent rumors of an impending royal persecution of the Christians sent the latter scurrying away to safety, some taking flight into the desert. It must have been at this time that Varahran II reportedly had one of his wives slain for being a Christian, as well as another Christian named Qariba, son of one Ananias.[11] Fortunately, the Christians had a friend in another of Varahran's ministers, a man named Radgan, whom they approached and asked to intercede on their behalf. Varahran was eventually soothed with the explanation of what Mar Shabsa really wanted to say; the misunderstanding was cleared and the matter laid to rest.

Thereafter, Christianity rapidly advanced in Ctesiphon, so that by A.D. 291 the adherents were numerous enough to be given their own bishop, a learned Syrian named Papa bar Aggai, who was consecrated by Mar Ahadabui, of Arbela, and Mar Haibi'el, bishop of Susa.[12] The new bishop proved to be a man of commanding personality and great administrative ability. He quickly earned the good will of imperial officials at Ctesiphon and himself became personally known to the emperor.

Persian Christian Apologetics

A subsequent account shows that in proclaiming their faith, the Persian Christians argued that Christ, the Son of God incarnate, was a risen Lord, in contrast to the inanimate sun and fire which the Mazdaeans worshipped. When the Magians [Mazdaean priests] insisted that the sun is alive, for it gives life to all things, and that the fire is likewise alive, for it can burn everything, the Christians countered that this could not be so, for a little shower suffices to put out fire, while the sun yields place to night. When the Magians rejoined that Christians worshipped a dead man who was ignominiously put to death on a cross, this gave the Christians an opportunity to expound on the mystery of the Incarnation, Resurrection, and Redemption.[13]

Growth of the Church in Persian Domains

No details are available on the manner in which Christianity spread in Persia. But from what can be pieced together from various bits of known information, it would appear that the church at Ctesiphon, located as it was in the imperial capital, served to encourage the growth of other churches in the provinces. By A.D. 310, bishoprics had been established in Edessa, Nisibis, and Beit Zabdi in the northwest, Susa in the southeast, Qatar and at least two other islands [Ardai and Torudu] in the Persian Gulf. There were also other bishoprics by that time in Amida [Diabekir], Batrana, Harbath, Gilal, Kerkuk [Karka d'Beit Selok], Shargerd, Dara, Lasom, Kashkar, and Basra [modern Bosra].[14] Thus, from the headwaters

of the Tigris to the mouth of the Persian Gulf, various Christian communities had begun to sprout and flourish by the early 4th century A.D.

In A.D. 260, whole communities of Christian war captives from northern Syria had been resettled in the Persian province of Susiana. The Christian faith made rapid strides in Persia, so that within a century the metropolitan see of Gundishapur (Jundishapur, or Beit Lapat] would rank second only to Seleucia-Ctesiphon in order of precedence.

Development of the Persian Hierarchy

Early in the 4th century, Mar Papa bar Aggai, as bishop (A.D. 310-317) of the church in the imperial capital, began to claim primacy over the entire Church in the Persian Empire, extending his jurisdiction to embrace the various ecclesiastical provinces into which the Church of the East was then divided, namely, *Adiabene,* encompassing the bishoprics of Arbela, Nineveh and Mosul; *Garamea* (Kerkuk); *Chaldea* (Seleucia-Ctesiphon); *Maisan* (Basra); *Susiana* (Gundishapur); and *Pars* (Rewardesir). Because the recurrent hostilities between Rome and Persia made it difficult and dangerous for contacts with the Churches of the West, Papa bar Aggai held a synod in A.D. 313 or 314,[15] which declared the Church of the East autocephalous. He also assumed for himself the title of "Catholicus of the East."[16]

This latter move, however, was seriously contested by other Persian prelates, notably the renowned Miles ar-Razi, Bishop of Susa, and even by some of Papa bar Aggai's own clergy led by one Shimun bar Sabai. An ecclesiastical revolt soon deposed Papa bar Aggai, and brought to office his rival, Shimun bar Sabai. At this point, the former's party appealed in writing to the bishop of Edessa and consulted with other "Western" bishops, i.e., those of Antioch, Aleppo, Tella, Diakebir, etc. in the eastern Mediterranean or northern Mesopotamia. These "Western" prelates intervened by deciding that Papa bar Aggai be restored to his see, and that only upon his death could Shimun bar Sabai (c.325-341) exercise his episcopal functions.

While this decision settled the immediate question of the primacy of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the implications of the appeal to the "Western" bishops would later cause trouble within the ranks of the Church of the East. Its resentment against its subordination to the Patriarchate of Antioch, would soon foster a gnawing desire to have the metropolitan see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon raised to an equal footing with the other ancient Patriarchates of Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome.[17]

Persecution of Christians in Persia

Under the early Sassanid emperors up to the end of Hormizd II's reign in A.D. 309, the Christians of Persia, who had never been more than a small minority of the population, suffered only petty though intermittent harassments, generally at the hands or at the instigation of the Magians. Under Shapur I (240-271), there was a genuine measure of

religious toleration. He extended support to Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, at least for a number of years. But when Varahran I came to power in 273, the new emperor accepted the Magians' insistence that none but Mazdaeism, the official state cult, be allowed to exist. Though Christians still enjoyed comparative peace up to the reign of Hormizd II (302-309), a rigorous persecution policy ensued during the reign of his immediate successor, Shapur II (309-379).

Identification of Christianity with the Roman Empire

The long reign of Shapur II had witnessed a resurgence of warfare between Persia and Rome, and uncomfortably caught the Persian Christians in the tight crush of that conflict. If the calculated conversion of King Tirdat III of Armenia in A.D. 298 already angered the Sassanids, the favor shown to Christianity by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 313 caused the latter to view with doubt and suspicion the growing number of Christians among their subjects. There was thus introduced a new, religious dimension into the perennial conflict between Persia and Rome.

By this time, the Christian faith had spread in all the provinces of the Roman Empire, except for northern England, Brittany, the Balearic Islands, Corsica, Sardinia, and Tingitana [now Morocco]. To the Sassanids, Constantine's espousal of Christianity had virtually identified the latter as a "Roman" religion. What caused serious concern to the Persian rulers was the not unfounded suspicion that Christians in the Roman East exerted a strong influence over their co-religionists in Persian domains, as was demonstrated by the "Western" bishops' support of Papa bar Aggai's episcopacy, though they foiled his aspirations for patriarchal standing.[18]

Political Reasons for Persecution

If previously the Christians in Persian domains were subjected to only sporadic and petty harassment, it was largely because they were considered an annoying though generally quite harmless minority whose chief fault was their unflinching refusal to acknowledge the official state cult. The occasional flights into Persia of heterodox Christians from the Roman Empire were not unwelcome by the Sassanid rulers of Persia. But the Armenian King Tirdat III's baptism in 298 and Constantine the Great's conversion in 313 completely reversed the Sassanids' view of their Christian subjects. Thereafter, to be a Christian in Persian eyes was practically synonymous to being a Roman, or at least with having pro-Roman sympathies.[19] Moreover, the open admiration with which some Persian Christians lauded Constantine's conversion promptly placed in question, as far as the Sassanids were concerned, the political loyalty of the entire Persian Church.

Constantine himself also may have adversely jeopardized the lot of Shapur II's Christian subjects, when he unwittingly took it upon himself to be their advocate by writing Shapur II in 333 a long letter, which reads in part:

> Imagine, then, with what joy I heard tidings so accordant with my desire, that the fairest districts of Persia are filled with those men on whose behalf alone I am at present speaking, I mean the Christians. I pray, therefore, that both you and they may enjoy abundant prosperity, and that your blessings and theirs may be in equal measure; for thus you will experience the mercy and favor of that God who is the Lord and Father of all. And now, because your power is great, I commend these persons to your protection; because your piety is eminent, I commit them to your care. Cherish them with your wonted humanity and kindness; for by this proof of your faith you will secure an immeasurable benefit both to yourself and us.[20]

The net effect of all these developments, especially after war subsequently broke out once more between Rome and Persia, was probably only to confirm in the minds of the Sassanids the uncertain loyalty and the potential threat posed by Christians in their domains. It could not have missed their attention that the largest concentration of Christians in Persian territory was to be found in those western provinces dangerously bordering with the Roman Empire.

At that time, the Christians were specially numerous in the provinces of Adiabene, and in what is now Kurdistan, Khuzistan and Luristan, where where there were many bishops and where each town of importance had churches with presbyters and houses of consecrated virgins.[21] Subsequently, these were the very places where persecution was most severe. In fact, what is surprising is that persecution by Shapur II did not immediately ensue.

When Constantine just before his death in 337 resolved to invade Persia, intending to take along with him bishops to pray for victory,[22] Persian animosity to Christians in their midst was thoroughly aroused. The situation was aggravated by the fact that Afrahat [Aphraates], one of the bishops in Adiabene and the most prominent prelate in Sassanid domains at the time, declared in a homily that God was on the side of the Romans and that the latter, under the leadership of the Christian Constantine, would surely come out victorious.[23]

Though the projected Roman campaign did not, in fact, materialize on account of Constantine's demise in May of that year, nevertheless, irrevocable damage had been done to the cause of the Persian Church.

General Persecution by Shapur II

In 339 Shapur II declared the profession of Mazdaeism, the official state cult, as the ultimate test of political loyalty in his domains. With this encouragement, it did not take long for the Magians, as well as the Persian Jews who seemed eager at this particular time to demonstrate their loyalty to their adopted sovereign, to instigate repressive measures against the Christians.[24] The Magians hurled the accusation that there was "no secret" which Bishop

Shimun bar Sabai, Metropolitan of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, did not reveal to the Roman emperor Constantine.[25]

Initial Limited Harassment

It would seem that some practical mind at first had simply thought it would suffice to impose intolerably oppressive taxes on the Christians, in order to force them to abandon their faith. As Christians in Persia generally were either merchants or artisans,[26] this measure was moved not only by purely political or religious motives, but also by expectation of financial gain. After Shapur II's first edict of persecution was issued in April 340, Mar Shimun bar Sabai was then promptly arrested, together with other bishops, priests and clerics. He had been portrayed by his persecutors as "the head of the Nazarenes, who live in our territory, but whose sympathies are with our enemy."[27] Christianity was pictured as a foreign religion inimical to Persian life and culture, and especially Mazdaean beliefs and practices.

In a contest of wills and fortitude, Bar Sabai and the other prelates were kept in prison until they agreed to collect from their people the prescribed financial levies. Despite torture, the prisoners remained firm in their faith, but churches were destroyed and altar vessels confiscated by the authorities.

Shapur II had regarded Shimun bar Sabai as a good friend, for the latter's family had been imperial dyers for about a century since the time of Shapur I, fulfilling an important occupation demanded by rulers for the production of the coveted royal purple dye [*purpura*]. But Bar Sabai's personal crime, as suggested by the Jews, was his successful conversion to Christianity of many of the leading Magi, and even more damnably, of Shapur II's own mother, who was Jewish by ancestry.[28]

This was the first general persecution throughout Persian domains, varying in intensity according to the zeal and imagination of the Magians and the particular disposition of local officials. The chief persecutors were Ardashir, governor of Adiabene, and the *Mobed* Adarnagushnap, and the *Mobed an-Mobed* [Supreme High Priest] Ardishapur.[29] It was particularly harsh in the province of Adiabene and the district of Nisibis, where it raged fiercely for six years.

Christians were accused of refusing to pay honors to the sun and to the holy fire, of polluting water through their ablutions, and of burying their dead in the ground, contrary to the venerable Mazdaean practice of exposing their dead to the birds of the air[30] — because the air is the domain of the Good Spirit Ormuzd, while the earth is under the dominion of the Evil Spirit Ahriman.

What seemed to have made Christianity seem more sinister and potentially dangerous was that at that time, it had made inroads into the highest places and positions of Persian

society, including the imperial court itself, which was found to have many Christians. The individual names of converts as recorded suggest that conversions were made among both ethnic Persians and the Jews.

Before long, the stiff measures against Christianity began to strike hard into Christians of wealth and distinction. A number of apostasies resulted, and prominent among the apostates was one Guhisthazad [in Greek, Usthazanes], reportedly Shapur II's own cousin and foster-father, and moreover, chief chamberlain of the imperial palace. The abjurations, however, were apparently not in sufficient numbers to satisfy the authorities, while the heroic steadfastness of the imprisoned Christian prelates and clergy caused much chagrin to the Magians and their partisans.

Martyrdom for Christian Leaders

It was at this point that Shapur II ordered the execution of the more prominent of Christian leaders. The first to be martyred seems to have been a group of three prominent laymen named Mahanes, Abraham, and Shimun, followed by the bishops Mar Shapur and Mar Izhaq, who, after refusing to sacrifice in the Mazdaean manner, were brutally slain in diverse ways.[31] For Christians in Persia, this was but the beginning of a long dark night of trials and tribulations.

The sufferings of the martyrs and confessors, however, particularly of Mar Shimun bar Sabai, struck sufficient guilt into Guhisthazad, who consequently repented of his apostasy and reaffirmed his Christian commitment. Aghast at this affront to his majesty, Shapur II thought it would strike special awe into everyone that he would not flinch to sacrifice his own foster-father and esteemed palace courtier, and thus promptly ordered Guhisthazad's death. Courageously facing his fate, the latter managed to convince Shapur II to concede to him one final request, namely, that it be proclaimed that he, Guhisthazad, was losing his head "for no crime or conspiracy, except for his attachment and his belief in the Christian faith."[32]

Guhisthazad's death, however, so grieved Shapur II, for the former had been "specially beloved" by the latter.[33] Thereafter, the emperor ordered a partial check on the indiscriminate slaughter of Christians, and reserved capital punishment only for bishops, priests, monks, deacons and the "sons and daughters of the covenant." The "Sons of the Covenant" [*B'nath Qyama*] and the "Daughters of the Covenant" were lay men and women who had consecrated themselves to a life of celibacy, which was an idea totally repugnant to the Mazdaean cult. When Shimun bar Sabai, after Guhisthazad's death, demanded for himself the crown of martyrdom, Shapur II at first hesitated, on account of their long-standing personal friendship, but ultimately was forced by reasons of political expediency to have the latter condemned to death.

Martyrdom of Shimun bar Sabai

On the fateful day of Good Friday, A.D. 341, which the Magians seemed to have deliberately chosen with calculated irony, Bishop Shimun bar Sabai was forced to watch the execution of some 100 bishops, priests, clerics (including two aged presbyters of his cathedral named Abdechalas and Ananias), and some prominent laymen. The faith of the Persian martyrs, however, held strong, many willingly choosing death rather than suffer the gnawing guilt and indelible ignominy of having denied Jesus Christ.

One good example was the courage of one Pusaik, superintendent of Shapur II's royal artisans, who for sometime had been a secret Christian. When Pusaik saw the presbyter Ananias trembling in fear as the preliminary preparations were being made for his execution, Pusaik, unmindful of the fatal danger to himself, spoke out comfortingly: "O old man, close your eyes for a little while and be of good courage, for you will soon behold the light of Christ." No sooner had he uttered these words, when he was promptly arrested, and having boldly confessed his Christian faith before Shapur II was summarily put to death, along with his daughter who was a consecrated virgin, or "daughter of the covenant".[34] Finally, Shimun bar Sabai himself was executed, though the emperor to the very last vainly pleaded for him to change his mind and abjure his faith.

Apparently, more than 200 Christians were put to death on that day, for the church historian Sozomen mentions a total of 300 martyrs.[35]

New Edict of General Persecution

These martyrdoms of A.D. 341 seemed to have served only to strengthen the faith of committed Christians. During the Lenten season of A.D. 342 (apparently after Christians persisted in holding religious services), Shapur II issued another edict of general persecution, ordering death for anyone who confessed to being a Christian. Not surprisingly, the Magians proved to be the most zealous minions of the imperial authorities in seeking out the Christians.

As in the Roman Empire, those who suffered most the brunt of this persecuting edict were, on the one hand, those Persian Christians of means and position, who stood out by virtue of their personal circumstances, and on the other, those from the lower classes whose lot did not count for very much in the eyes of the authorities. Christians from the lower middle classes were comparatively easily able to blend quietly into the general ranks of society,[36] though one should not also unduly dismiss the faithfulness and courage of many among them for whom martyrdom sadly became the ultimate test of Christian loyalty.

Among those who perished for their faith at this time were the sisters of Mar Shimun bar Sabai, both "daughters of the covenant" and *rabbanyatis* ["deaconesses"], namely, Tarbula, a stunningly beautiful and stately virgin, and her widowed sister. Both were ladies in waiting to Shapur's queen, who was persuaded by the Magians to believe that her illness

was caused by the sisters' dark dispositions and wicked witchcraft. Along with the two also died another Christian consecrated virgin, who was the widow's servant.[37] One particularly high-placed Magian high-priest had offered to save Tarbula's life, if she would only accept his sexual advances,[38] but she gave not one second to think of his offer.

The Mazdaeans could simply not understand why Christian women of marriageable age would deliberately choose a life of seeming loneliness instead of living a normal family life. In this particular instance, one sees in capsule form the pointed clash of Eastern Christianity and Mazdaean values.

Massacre of the Christian Hierarchy

As noted earlier on, the persecution was most harshly felt in Adiabene, for as Sozomen puts it, it was a region "in which many Christians were located."[39] Before this terrible scourge would abate, a good number of other bishops [of whom 23 are known by name — Acepsimus, Barbasymes, Paul, Gadiabes, Sabinus, Mareas, Mocius, John, Hormisdas, Papas, Romas, Maares, Agas, Bochres, Abdas, Abdisho, another John, Abramins, Agdelas, Sapor, Isaac, and Dauses] were slain for their faith. Along with "a multitude" of presbyters, including two named Aithalas and James, there also died a considerable number of deacons, two of whom were identified as Azad and Abdisho.[40] Also executed were the *chorepiscopos* ("country-bishop") Mar Abdas, who perished along with about 250 of his clergy,[41] as well as the renowned Miles ar-Razi, the old bishop of Susa, a former Persian officer who had abandoned his military career in order to become a Christian priest.[42]

The persecutions, which eventually were to span a quarter of a century, roared with special vigor and ferocity in the first decade, with mass martyrdoms recurring now and then. It was sufficient to declare the Christians as treasonous and deserving of death; after that, petty officials and their minions "simply fulfilled" their "responsibilities." For example, on Bishop Shimun bar Sabai's death, he was succeeded by one Mar Shahadost ["King's Friend"], who was arrested and thrown into jail in Ctesiphon late in A.D. 342, along with about 128 clerics, monks, and some nine consecrated virgins. About six months later, in A.D. 343, they were all beheaded at Gundishapur [Beit Lapat], metropolitan city of the Huzaye.[43]

After Shahadost's death, there was one more attempt to fill the episcopal vacancy in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and not long thereafter, a new bishop, Bar Barshemin, a nephew of the late Mar Shimun was elected. He in turn ordained new priests and consecrated other bishops, ordering them to disguise themselves as laymen in order to escape detection by the Magians. Bar Barshemin, however, was soon arrested by the authorities, and together with 16 of his clergy was martyred at Ledan, another city of the Huzaye, at the beginning of A.D. 345.[44] Thereafter, the metropolitan see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was bereft of a bishop until Shapur II's death in 379,[45] while many other bishoprics were unfilled, and congregations were either bereft of clergy or reduced to a shadowy existence.

Prolonged Tribulation in Adiabene

The persecution lasted the longest in the province of Adiabene. In Arbela in 345, the Mobed Adursag turned his special ire on a prominent layman named Hananiah, who was tortured to death with the "iron combs." A priest named Daniel and a deaconness named Uarda [Rose], after suffering imprisonment for three months, had their feet bored with irons, and then placed them in freezing water for five days. Still refusing to recant, they were finally beheaded.

Some 120 Christians from Adiabene, all ecclesiastics of various ranks except for nine consecrated virgins, were arrested. But to give them enough oppotunity to abjure their faith — which was what the authorities really desired most — they were at first only brought to Seleucia.

Yet this grim period of testing and distress continued to evoke heroic acts of courage, and, as will be seen shortly, also ignominious deeds of cowardice. Thus, at great risk to herself, a noble Christian lady in Seleucia named Jardundoeta, a native of Arbela, found means to succour the prisoners in their filthy dungeon up to the day of their martyrdom.[46]

At the same time, this period of tribulation also exposed the false, the weak, and the cowardly. Thus, when Narses Tamashpur ordered seized in the town of Casciaz five consecrated virgins named Meryem, Martha, another Meryem, Anna, and Thecla, the local presbyter named Rabban Paul, who was a rich man, abjured his faith to protect his possessions. Disappointed at losing Paul's property, Narses Tamashpur, thinking the man was a good Christian after all and would surely retract his abjuration, ordered him to execute with his own hands the five virgins, who, meanwhile had each been given 100 lashes.

But quite unworthy of the Apostle who was his namesake, Rabban Paul choose to save his own life and property, despite his victims' anguished cry: "Are we to be made a sacrifice by those very hands from which so recently we received that holy thing, the sacrifice and propitiation of the whole world?" As if fearful that he would break his revolve, Rabban Paul quickly beheaded each of the victims. As the apostate's conduct apparently scandalized even his persecutors, that same night Narses Tamashpur's guards broken into his prison and slew the unworthy presbyter.[47]

The following year, A.D. 346, Shapur II issued a fresh edict against Christianity, and again a great number perished in several provinces. In 347 a priest named Yaqub of Tell Salila aand his sister Mariam, a "daughter of the covenant," were ordered by the persecutor Narses Tamashpur to feed on a preparation of human blood. When they refused, they were ordered beheaded, the executioner being an apostate named Mahdad.

Shapur's Change of Heart

In his later years, however, Shapur II seemed to have mellowed and grown less intolerant of Christianity. When he took Nisibis from the Romans in A.D. 363, he sent for Mar Awgin, the abbot of Nisibis and founder of Eastern monasticism to come before him, and treated the latter with great honor, having heard much good report about the Christian monk. Probably instrumental in Shapur II's change of attitude was the story that shortly before, the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate, Shapur II's adversary, had passed by Nisibis in his advance against Ctesiphon. One of Julian's Christian commanders named Jovian, who was to succeed him after a military coup d'etat, had reportedly asked Mar Awgin to pray to God to break speedily the head of the apostate emperor. By a strange coincidence, Julian died soon afterwards, and this fact must have persuaded Shapur II to regard the Christian abbot with awe and respect.

When Mar Awgin and his monks also won a contest by fire against the Magians, Shapur II was so impressed that he asked the abbot to heal one of his sons, who was diagnosed as being possessed by an evil spirit. When the youth recovered his senses and Shapur II inquired of Mar Awgin as to how he was to be rewarded, the latter only asked that he and his monks be granted permission to build convents and monasteries in Jundishapur, in Khuzistan [Huzaye], and other places by the caravan routes, so that they might minister to travelers and strangers in need.

With a written *firman* [edict] from the erstwhile persecuting Emperor Shapur II, Mar Awgin lost no time in commissioning reportedly 72 of his monks to go and establish monasteries wherever God should lead them. At the same time, Mar Awgin's sisters Thecla and Stratonice also went out to establish convents for "daughters of the covenant."[48] Thus, in his latter years, Shapur II perhaps unknowingly permitted officially the founding of eventually hundreds of monasteries and convents throughout Mesopotamia and the rest of Persian domains, which subsequently served as the veritable evangelistic centers for the unprecedented missionary expansion of the Church of the East. But this new favorable condition was won only at a terribly great price.

In a sense, the persecuting policies of the Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate [though the period lasted but briefly] and the Christians' rejection of him, may have opened Sassanid eyes to the fact that Christianity was not necessarily equivalent to being a Roman, though it would take a few more generations for this to be firmly demonstrated.

Effects of Shapur's Persecution

In terms of the calculated ruthlessness of his persecution, Shapur II was unquestionably the Decius of Persia. What made it worse for Christians in his domains at this time was the fact that in the current wars, Persia was gaining the upper hand over Rome. In 363, Julian's successor Jovian, defeated in a fresh war with Persia, was forced to accept Shapur II's

humiliating conditions of surrender, by which terms Persia would have control of Nisibis, Armenia and Georgia.

After this submissive gesture on Jovian's part, Sassanid regard for their Christian subjects increasingly improved during the truce that ultimately would hold for about thirty years. A particularly awesome natural calamity also took place not many years afterwards, when a terrible earthquake in July 369 rocked the entire region of the eastern Mediterranean, Mesopotamia and Persia. The resulting tidal wave washed away many coastal cities and their populations. Nicaea was destroyed, as well as three cities in Persia. There was a general belief that this was God's punishment for the wickedness of men.[49] Apparently, both the oppressed and the oppressors were in different ways but in equal intensity deeply impressed by this event.

But by then, Shapur II's fierce persecution had already severely crippled the Church of the East, which would not be able to recover fully for at least one generation. How many Christians in Persia perished or otherwise suffered for their faith at this time can only be hazardously surmised. As might be expected, however, there were a good number who took the road of least resistance and apostatized.

Some Persian Christians apparently took flight and made it safely to places beyond the Sassanid empire. Thus, in A.D. 345 some 336 Persian Christian families, led by one Thoma Qnanaye [Thomas, the Merchant], often rendered incorrectly as "Thomas of Cana," arrived with some clerics at Muziris (Cranganore) in South India. Others apparently fled eastward in the direction of Central Asia, and may have been the first to proclaim the Christian faith to the various peoples of the steppes.

There is no question, however, that a great number perished during the decade of the 340's, and this is amply borne by the historical record. In closing his account of this Persian persecution, the 5th-century Greek church historian Sozomen says in his *Ekklesiastike Historia*:

> For my own part, I think that I have said enough of [Miles ar-Razi] and of the other martyrs who suffered in Persia during the reign of Sapor, for it would be difficult to relate in detail every circumstance respecting them, such as their names, their country, the mode of completing their martyrdom; and the species of torture to which they were subjected, for they are innumerable ... I shall briefly state that the number of men and women whose names have been computed to be *sixteen thousand*, while the multitude outside of these is *beyond enumeration*, and on this account to reckon off their names appeared difficult to the Persians and Syrians and to the inhabitants of Edessa, who have devoted much care to this matter.[50] [*italics supplied*].

So terrible was the persecution that a total of 230,000 martyrs are said to have died for their faith in Persia at this time.[51] Most of those whose names were recorded came from

the city of Ledan, where the records of the martyrs had been preserved. Though the historian Duchesne has claimed that "so far as appears," the apostates were "many fewer than in the Roman persecutions" of the previous century,[52] another modern church historian has opined that this Persian persecution under Shapur II may have surpassed in intensity and magnitude any similar trial and tribulation suffered by the Church in Roman domains during the 3rd century.[53] Judging from the calculated intensity and the systematic conduct of that persecution, latter's historical judgment may not be far from the truth.

Partial Relief and Toleration under Shapur II's Successors

Persecution, though less ferocious and severe, continued under Shapur II's brother and immediate successor, Ardashir III (379-383). But so unpopular was the new emperor that within four years, his troops rebelled and placed on the throne Shapur II's son, Shapur III (383-388). This seemed to have been the prince who was healed by the Christian abbot Mar Awgin. Not until then did Christians in Persia experience relief and peace, continuing through the reigns of Varahran V (388-399) and the very tolerant Yazdagird I (399-420).

Undoubtedly, a major factor contributing to better treatment by the Persian emperors of their Christian subjects in later years was the welcome peace with Rome, concluded between Shapur III and Theodosius I in 384 and ultimately lasting nearly four decades. Shapur III also saw himself as a practical man, and ordered the release of all Christians still in prison. He argued soberly that since most Christians were merchants and artisans of means, their payment of tribute was more beneficial to the state.[54]

The importance that the issue of religion had assumed in Persian-Roman relations by this time may also be seen in the fact that when war broke out anew in 420, it was on account of Roman protection to Christian refugees fleeing a renewed round of persecution in Persia.

Primatial Authority and Eastern Identity

It was during the generally peaceful period between 384 and 420 that the Church of the East not only embarked on vigorous theological activity, but was also able to further organize and strengthen its hierarchy. Because of cultural differences, the Church of the East from the start developed its theology along lines of thought quite different from those of the historic creeds of Western Christendom, which arose out of the doctrinal controversies dealt with by the first four oecumenical councils.

The separate theological stanch of the Church of the East [which was an orthodox parallel to that of the Church of the West, especially during the first four centuries of the Christian era], may be seen in the writings of Afrahat, a 4th-century monk and bishop [probably of Mosul], who was the first known Christian theologian of Persian descent.

Afrahat, the First Persian Christian Theologian

Afrahat was a comparatively voluminous writer. Between 337 and 345, he wrote 22 homilies, which were not sermons but actually a systematic exposition of Christian doctrine, the first word of each homily corresponding to one of the 22 letters of the Syriac alphabet. Afrahat began writing while the heat of the Arian controversy was still raging, with Athanasius in exile and Emperor Constantine lying on his deathbed. The last homily was composed while the fires of Shapur II's persecution were still alight. Afrahat, however, makes no reference to any of these, but is rather concerned, as it seems, with presenting the basic tenets of the Christian faith, which he forcefully portrays as being founded on Jesus the Messiah, the Rock upon which the whole faith is built.

After his praise of faith, Afrahat goes on to give a creedal statement as to what is this faith. As he puts it:

> For this is Faith: —
> When a man shall believe in God, the Lord of all,
> that made the heavens and the earth and the seas
> and all that is in them,
> who made Adam in His image,
> who gave the Law to Moses,
> who sent of His Spirit in the Prophets,
> who sent, moreover, His Messiah into the world.
> And that a man should believe
> in the coming to life of the dead,
> and believe also in the Mystery of Baptism:
> This is the Faith of the Church of God.
> And that a man should separate himself
> from observing hours and sabbaths and months
> and seasons,
> and enchantments and divinations and
> Chaldaism and magic,
> and from fornication and from reviling and
> from vain doctrines,
> the weapons of the Evil One, and from the
> blandishment of honeyed words,
> and from blasphemy and from adultery.
> And that no man should bear false witness,
> and that none should speak with double tongue:
> These are the works of the Faith
> that is laid on the true Rock,
> which is the Messiah,
> upon Whom all the building doth rise.[55]

This creed continued to be in use until A.D. 410, when the Church of the East adopted the Nicene Creed of A.D. 325. The fact that it does not contain a trinitarian structure, as in the Western creeds as a result of the various controversies, shows clearly the independent theological development in the East. Afrahat was a trinitarian, and spoke of "the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," and of baptism [which to him is the true circumcision] "in the Names of the three Persons of the Trinity."[56] But the Church of the East did not seem to have been deeply involved in the Arian controversy, which set the form and structure of the Nicene-Chalcedonian Creed.

In the ensuing controversies, however, on the question of the person and nature of Christ, the Church of the East would reject the Chalcedonian formula, and thus maintain the theologically independent direction into which culture and circumstances had led its thinking in the beginning.

The Primary of Ctesiphon in the East

The question of primacy was a complicated issue in the Church of the East, because of racial and cultural differences coloring the normal rivalry for prestige and influence among the various metropolitanates in Persian domains. The more important matter, however, was the question of apostolic foundation and the attending issues of order or precedence. While Seleucia-Ctesiphon was the largest and undoubtedly the most prestigious Christian center in the East, its traditional apostolic founder was St. Mari, a disciple of the Apostle St. Thomas. In the eyes of the churches in Persia proper, particularly those of Rewardesir and Gundishapur, whose forebears were originally from northern Syria and Iraq and who considered themselves as belonging to St. Thomas, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, therefore, stood lower in rank and precedence than their churches.

The tragedy arising from these rival claims of precedence is partly seen in the unsuccessful attempt to strengthen church organization in A.D. 345, a most crucial time when Shapur II's persecution was shaking the Church to its very roots. When Bishop Bar Barshemin tried that year to reorganize the whole Church under his leadership, the prelates of Persia proper held aloof. The nascent controversy was abruptly aborted only due to Bar Barshemin's arrest and ensuing martyrdom in 346.

This question of primacy on the basis of apostolic foundation, which dated from the time of Papa bar Aggai, was to break out anew in the 7th century, when Shimun, Metropolitan of Persia, refused to accept the primacy of Isoyabh, Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. It would crop up once more during the 9th century, with the schism of the Metropolitan of Rewardesir, who rebuffed the Patriarch-Catholicus Timothy I's pleas for unity with the sharp retort: "We are the disciples of the Apostle Thomas; we have no relations with the See of Mari."[57]

Fortunately, this was not always the prevailing spirit through the centuries. In A.D. 399, the Church of the East reorganized itself and once more took up the question of primatial authority, accepting in the end the primacy of Ctesiphon.[58]

But while the Persian Church might have been autocephalous, initially it was not really fully autonomous. Thus, there lingered long a latent resentment against its subordination to the West, particularly to the Patriarchate of Antioch. The desire for effective ecclesiastical independence not long thereafter materialized in earnest efforts to raise the metropolitan see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon to an equal footing with the Western patriarchates. The Church of the East would eventually achieve this goal, but not without costly pain and trouble.

Yazdagird I's Edict of Toleration

The restoration of peace between Rome and Persia in 384 led to closer links between the Church of the East and the Catholic Church in the Roman Empire, on the one hand, and to the issuance by Emperor Yazdagird I of an edict of toleration for his Christian subjects, on the other.

One man whose contributions on both counts was specially significant was Marutha, son of the Byzantine governor of Sophene in northern Mesopotamia and bishop of Maiferkat [Martyropolis], who had earlier on lived in Antioch, Constantinople, and Asia Minor. Twice sent as a Byzantine envoy to the court of Yazdagird I, first during the latter's accession in 399 and again in 410, Marutha had favorably impressed the Sassanid emperor by curing him of a violent chronic headache, which had troubled him for some time. The Magians tried to discredit Marutha through fraudulent artifice, but the exposure of two clumsy attempts toward this end only served to raise the bishop in the esteem of Yazdagird.[59]

Not surprisingly, Marutha easily succeeded in persuading Yazdagird I in A.D. 409 to issue a *firman* granting toleration to the Persian Church, and in particular, to allow Christians to rebuild their ruined church buildings and to worship freely and openly, to release imprisoned Christians, and to give liberty to the "Sacred Alliance" of the Christian clergy to travel about and preach without hindrance in Sassanid domains. This Persian *firman* of A.D. 409 was as important to the Church of the East as the Edict of Milan of A.D. 313 was to the Church in the Roman Empire.[60]

In seeking to forge closer links between the Churches of the East and the West, Marutha had to tread carefully on precarious ground. It was imperative that the Church of the East should show no more than fraternal, or better still, merely spiritual, links with the Church of the West. Moreover, the Persian Church had to eschew any political stanch or involvement that would cause Yazdagird I's suspicion or displeasure.

Somehow, Marutha managed to persuade the emperor to convoke a synod at Seleucia in A.D. 410, to be presided by none less than an imperial official, a *marzban* [provincial governor] who was probably also a Christian.[61]

The Synod of Seleucia of A.D. 410

It was at this synod of 410, attended by 38 Persian prelates headed by Mar Izhaq, "Bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Catholicus and Archbishop of the whole East,"[62] that relations which had previously atrophied due to lack of communication were temporarily restored between the Churches of East and West. Marutha presented a letter from the "Western" Fathers, namely, Porphyry of Antioch, Acacius of Beroea [Aleppo], Paqida of Edessa, Eusebius of Tella, and Acacius of Amida [Diabekir], urging the Persian prelates to accept [which they did] the creed and canons of the Council of Nicaea of 325, as well as the Western manner of appointing bishops and the regularization of the dates of the Christian festivals.[63]

In one session of the synod, two of the highest ranking imperial officials, namely, the Grand Vizier Khusrau-Yazdagird and one Mihr-Sabour [perhaps the army general known by this name] came to the assembled prelates and conveyed the following message in the name of the *Shah an-Shah* ["King of Kings"]:

> Previously there was a great persecution directed against you, and you walked in secret; now the King of Kings has granted you complete peace and tranquility. Thanks to he familiarity and access which the Catholicus Isaac has to the King of Kings, who has been pleased to establish him as head of all the Christians of the East, and particularly since the day of arrival here of Mar Marouta [Marutha], by the favor of the King of Kings, peace and tranquility are granted to you.
>
> Anyone whom you shall choose, whom you shall know to be fit to govern and direct the people of God, who shall have been established by the bishops Isaac and Maroute, will be head. No one must separate himself from these; whoever opposes them and flounts their will shall be reported to us, and we shall tell the King of Kings, and the malice of such a person shall be punished, whoever he may be.[64]

Moreover, Emperor Yazdagird I recognized Mar Izhaq as the "Catholicus and head of all Bishops of the East," the first time that this ecclesiastical title was attributed to the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[65] By decree of the Persian Emperor, this Christian prelate was to have primacy over the metropolitans of the five other ecclesiastical provinces of the Persian Church. By order of precedence, these metropolitanates were:

> Seleucia-Ctesiphon, for the patriarchate;
> Beit Lapat [Gundishapur], for the ecclesiastical province of Susiana;
> Nisibis, for the frontier province of Nisibis;
> Pherat [Basra], for the province of Maisan [Mesene];
> Arbela, for the province of Adiabene;

Karka of Beit Selok [otherwise known as Kerkuk, or Beit Garma], for the province of Garamea.

Under the Patriarchate and the five metropolitanates were no less than 37 suffragan bishoprics. In accordance with the constitutional practice in the Church of the East, each metropolitanate had not less than 6 but no more than 12 suffragan sees. An increase beyond the latter number necessitated the creation of a new metropolitanate. Moreover, in later years, only the seven highest ranking metropolitanates, namely, those of Gundishapur, Nisibis, Pherat [Basra], Mosul, Arbela, Beit Garma [Kerkuk], and Halwan [Halala], had the privilege of electing the Patriarch-Catholicus.[66] Interestingly enough, it is also known that the Metropolitanate of Arbela at that time had six suffragan dioceses, namely, those of Ba [Beit] Nuhadra, Beit Bagas, Beit Dasen, Ramonin [Rumini], Dabarinos or Rabarin Hesen, and Beit Mahquart [probably Marga].[67]

Thus, while links with the West were restored in 410, the more immediate significance of that synod was the affirmation of the Persian character of the Church of the East. Unfortunately, some prelates who lived at some distance from Seleucia-Ctesiphon, to whom communication could not reach in time [despite the vaunted efficiency of the Persian postal system], even if they had wished to come, could not be present. Thus were absent the metropolitans of Fars and of "the islands of the Persian Gulf" [Qatar], Media [Tabriz], Beit Raziqaye [Rayy, or Rai, near present-day Teheran], Abrashahr [Nishapur], and Merv in Khorassan, and some others.[68] In effect, the Synod of 410 was attended only by the prelates of the western ecclesiastical provinces of the Church of the West, and this was to bring trouble in the not too distant future.

Brief Interlude of "Westernization"

The absence of the prelates farther to the East was significant, for it helped allow a brief period of "Westernization" [referring to hellenized Asia Minor and Persia] to creep into the Church of the East. The Catholicus Mar Izhaq had died that same year, and was succeeded by one Mar Ahai. On the latter's demise in 414, Emperor Yazdagird I recognized the election of Mar Yabalaha I (d. 420), and four years later sent him as Persian ambassador to the court of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II (408-420). The latter replied by sending as his own envoy to Yazdagird another prelate, Bishop Acacius of Amida [Diabekir]. Indeed, from Yazdagird I's reign till the very end of the Sassanid dynasty two centuries later, Christian prelates were the usual envoys between the courts of Byzantium and Ctesiphon.

The bishop Acacius, however, seemed to have acted with misguided zeal, when almost soon after his arrival in 420, he convoked a synod and sought to "hellenize" further the Church of the East,[69] by introducing the Western canons with respect to regulations for the clergy, passed at the provincial councils of Ancyra [modern Ankara] in 314, Neo-Caesarea in Cappadocia in 314-325, Antioch in 341, Gangres [Gangra] in c.365, and Laodicea in 375.[70]

This interlude of "Westernization," not so much in the adoption of particular Western practices as the subservience to the West that they implied, would soon meet stiff resistance from the metropolitans further East.

Resurgence of Persecution

The "peace and tranquility" which Yazdagird I graciously granted his Christian subjects naturally led to a rapid growth of Christianity in Sassanid domains between 410 and 420, including conversions from the ranks of state officials and other high dignitaries. Even Yazdagird I himself had for a time contemplated Christian baptism, as one report puts it, and persecuted the Magians.[71] But eventually, he changed his mind, and trouble for Christians once more erupted in the closing years of his reign.

The reason for Yazdagird's change of heart was the strong opposition of the Mazdaean clergy and the nobles of Persia, the champions of the national tradition who felt threatened by the rapid increase of Christians in their midst. Yazdagird himself seemed to have been troubled by the large number of nobles and officials who embraced the new religion, so that later he himself tried to convince them to apostatize through inducements, though with little result. One of those who for a time apostatized was a prominent Christian of Gundishapur named Yaqub, who, however, subsequently reaffirmed his Christian faith and died a martyr under Varahran V. Even so, the historical evidence shows that Yazdagird I, who had consistently been personally tolerant of Christians, was forced to take repressive measures only as a last resort, and that it was his son and immediate successor who raised the persecution to fever pitch.

Yazdagird I's action was triggered off by the ill-advised assault and destruction of a Mazdaean fire-temple at Hormizd-Ardashir in Khuzistan by some Christians lead by the over-zealous bishop Mar Abdas. On being appraised of the incident, Yazdagird I, according to the church historian Bishop Theodoret (c.393-c.453), sent for Abdas, and "first in moderate language complained of what had taken place and ordered him to rebuild the Pyreum."[72] Abdas adamantly refused to heed this command, apparently claiming that he would rather obey God than men. With the Magians all in uproar, Yazdagird then threatened to have the Christian churches destroyed, and when this produced no result, he had no recourse but to have it carried out, after ordering Abdas executed for the crime of *lese majesty*.[73]

A generation later, church historians would exonerate Yazdagird I, "who had in no way molested the Christians in his domains,"[74] explaining the persecution as a result of the intrigues of the Magians who exerted a strong influence on Yazdagird's son and successor, Varahran V (420-438). Though there was truth in these historians' claims, it was nevertheless an attempt to conciliate the Persian authorities, and largely left out Abdas' fool-hardy actions. The fact of the matter is that in destroying the fire-temple in an important city, Abdas had attacked a symbol of Persian identity, and this was sufficient to bring to the fore the simmering Magian hatred of Christianity as an un-Persian foreign faith.

Persecution under Varahran V

Indeed, immediately upon Varahran V's accession, the persecution of Christians at once threatened to flare up into a general conflagration. Bishops, priests, and monks were specially sought out, and the most vicious tortures employed on those who had the misfortune to be arrested. The church historian Theodoret speaks of cases where hands or backs were flayed, or heads stripped of the skin from brow to beard, or portions of the flesh torn away by ingeniously arranged split reeds. Others were bound hand and foot and thrown into pits filled with long-starved rats, not to mention other torments and sufferings "even more horrible than these."[75]

Some Persian Christians, perhaps because of their nobility of birth or else their social prestige, were spared the death penalty. But the personal tragedy which they nevertheless suffered may perhaps be illustrated by the torments of one Hormisdas, who belonged to the most noble family of the Achaemenids, and one Suenes, who owned a thousand slaves. When both men adamantly refused to heed Varahran V's command for them to abjure their faith, Hormisdas was stripped of all his rank and possessions and was made a camel-driver, while Suenes was divested of all his properties, half of these being given to his vilest slave, who was also handed Suenes' wife in marriage.[76]

Those who proved most zealous for their faith, whose example was regarded by the authorities as particularly dangerous, were martyred. One particularly brave Christian martyr at this time was Yaqub, of Gundishapur, who as a Christian was widely known in Persia. Emperor Yazdagird I had earlier taken a liking to him and had induced him to apostatize, thereafter heaping upon him many honors and raising him to the dignity of "head of the chiefs of the Persians," probably referring to a military title. But Yaqub's mother and his wife, writing from Gundishapur, reproved him for his apostasy, and in the end he repented, renounced Mazdaeism and returned to Christianity. When the Magians clamored for his death, Varahran V, remembering Yaqub's good services to the empire, at first sought to win him back to the official state cult, threatening if he remained obdurate to have his limbs cut off one by one. Yaqub, however, stood fast in his Christian faith, and was executed in A.D. 323.[77]

Another rich man of noble lineage, one Firuz who was also from Beit Lapat [Gundishapur], had at first apostatized, in order to escape punishment. But when his parents and wife turned away from him in disgust, he returned to the Christian fold. Denounced to the chief Magian Mihr-Shapur, the latter brought Firuz before Varahran V, who was then at Siarzur. When Firuz refused to apostatize the second time, he was beheaded.[78]

The Notary Yaqub and other Christian Officials

There is evidence that Varahran V was not exactly a blood-thirsty tyrant. He was forced to impose the death penalty, only when the continued defiance of the Christians became an affront to his majesty. The case of sixteen Christian officials, including the notary

named Yaqub, who was of Roman lineage from the town of Karka de Ersa, is an interesting case in point. When they refused to apostatize, their goods were confiscated and they were condemned to the lowly task of tending to the royal elephants the whole winter. In spring, when the emperor, according to custom, moved to his summer capital, the prisoners were set to work on road repairs along the route. Still the sixteen held on to their faith, and the persecutor Mihr-Shapur complained to the emperor that the prisoners' constancy was encouraging the other Christians and preventing their apostasy. At a loss as what to do, Varahran V bewailed: "What more can I do to them? Their goods have been confiscated, their houses have been sealed up and they themselves have been tortured."[79]

Mihr-Shapur then suggested his own plan, which was promptly executed. Each night he had the prisoners stripped naked, bound by the hands, taken to the desert, and laid on their backs with little or no water. After a week of this torture, when they were practically near death, even Mihr-Shapur gave up and let them loose. Thereafter they returned to their duties in the palace, Yaqub reporting regularly to the bishops what was being planned against the Christians. When he learned, however, that at the court they were regarded as having apostatized, hence, their "pardon," Yaqub put on sack-cloth and covered himself with ashes.

When brought before Varahran V, Yaqub still stoutly maintained his faith, stating that he had not denied Christianity, nor did he intend to do so, because it was the faith of his fathers. Seeking to convince the emperor to desist from his persecuting policy, Yaqub reminded him that Yazdagird his father had for twenty years reigned in peace and prosperity. But because thereafter he shed innocent Christian blood, he was in death abandoned by all, his body not even receiving decent burial. This naturally enraged Varahran V, who summarily ordered Yaqub, like his namesake from Gundishapur, punished by "the nine deaths" — execution by successively cutting off first the fingers, then the toes, the wrist, the ankles, the elbows, the ears, the nose, and finally the head.[80]

Roman Intervention and Peace

As in previous occasions, the persecution at this time forced many Christians to flee from Sassanid domains, and the flight of a good number over to Roman territory subsequently resulted in several international incidents at the border. To Byzantine protests against Persian persecution of Christians, the Sassanids countered that Mazdaean clergy in Cappadocia were themselves persecuted by Byzantine Christians.[81] Combined with other grievances, the religious issue prompted the Byzantines to invade Persia in 420, shattering the peace achieved in 384. When Theodosius II defeated Varahran V in 422, one of the terms which the Persian ruler was forced to accept was to grant full religious liberty to Christians in his realms,[82] though, as seen in the case of Yaqub of Gundishapur, the Persian emperor did not fully adhere to this agreement. On the whole, however, the compromised peace, though at first unstable and precarious, brought relief and quiet to the Church of the East.

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The more than three decades of peace in 384-420 could have led to stronger ties between the Churches in East and West. But what happened instead was a resolve of the Persian prelates to sever their dependence upon the bishops of the West.

When the persecution of 420 broke out, the result was to breed confusion, in which two successors of Mar Yabalaha I were deposed one after the other. In 421 a new Patriarch-Catholicus was elected, namely, Mar Dadisho, son of a high-ranking Persian official. He was supported by Samuel, the bishop of Tus in Khorassan, who had gained favor with Varahran V on account of his help in defending that eastern province from the invasion of the Hephthalite [*Haftar* or *Haytal*], or White, Huns from Transoxania. But in the ensuing controversy over the catholicate, which was partly a revival of old quarrels and rivalries, Dadisho's opponents succeeded in drawing over to their side some important personages in the Sassanid court, and apparently even some bishops in the Roman East.[83] This last circumstance was instrumental in shaping the future course of action of Dadisho's party.

Disgusted by the unseemly intrigue, Dadisho himself gave up his post and left Ctesiphon. His supporters, however, found him in the Arab district of Markabta in Tayyaye [Arabia], and prevailed upon him, now that peace had once more returned to the Church in Persia, to convoke in 424 a synod at that very same place.

The Indigenizing Synod of Markabta

Attended by 6 metropolitans and 36 bishops, with some like Mar Yazdoi and Mar Barsabas coming from as far east as Herat and Merv, respectively, in Khorassan, the synod of Markabta of A.D. 424 was remarkable in two respects. Not only did it represent the greater majority of the hierarchy of the Church of the East, as compared, for example, to but 12 prelates at Mar Yabalaha I's synod of 420; it also strongly represented those elements which ran counter to the "Westernizing" synods of 410 and 420.

Not surprisingly, the prelates at Markabta begged Dadisho to continue as their Grand Metropolitan [Catholicus or Patriarch], and in the same breath declared that henceforth, no future appeals may be made to any patriarch or bishop in the West against the "Catholicus, supreme head of the bishops and governor of all Christians of the East." Moreover, henceforth, "every cause which cannot be determined in the presence of the Catholicus shall be left to the judgment of Christ."[84] It is equally significant that for the first time, the Persian Prelate was given the title of "Patriarch," thus placing him on equal footing with the Patriarchs of the Western Churches.[85]

named Yaqub, who was of Roman lineage from the town of Karka de Ersa, is an interesting case in point. When they refused to apostatize, their goods were confiscated and they were condemned to the lowly task of tending to the royal elephants the whole winter. In spring, when the emperor, according to custom, moved to his summer capital, the prisoners were set to work on road repairs along the route. Still the sixteen held on to their faith, and the persecutor Mihr-Shapur complained to the emperor that the prisoners' constancy was encouraging the other Christians and preventing their apostasy. At a loss as what to do, Varahran V bewailed: "What more can I do to them? Their goods have been confiscated, their houses have been sealed up and they themselves have been tortured."[79]

Mihr-Shapur then suggested his own plan, which was promptly executed. Each night he had the prisoners stripped naked, bound by the hands, taken to the desert, and laid on their backs with little or no water. After a week of this torture, when they were practically near death, even Mihr-Shapur gave up and let them loose. Thereafter they returned to their duties in the palace, Yaqub reporting regularly to the bishops what was being planned against the Christians. When he learned, however, that at the court they were regarded as having apostatized, hence, their "pardon," Yaqub put on sack-cloth and covered himself with ashes.

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Thus did the Church of the East, in effect, claim for itself equality with and independence from those of the West, the initial step which doctrinal division and political developments would soon propel, launching the former on a separate ecclesiastical existence. The only link which thereafter still remained with the latter was a tenuous one, namely, the fact that the influential theological school at Edessa[86] continued up to this time to be more or less in concord with the doctrinal positions of the West. But even this last link lasted but a little over half a century, for at the synod of Beit Idrai of 486, the Church of the East would adopt "Nestorianism," thus permanently severing its ecclesiastical ties with the Western Churches.

This declaration of independence of A.D. 424 had the immediate effect of obviating any further Persian persecution on political grounds, and this by-product was not an unwelcome change for a Church that had intensely suffered persecution many times in the past. Indeed, except for one possible exception, future persecutions when they erupted would not be on charges of political disloyalty, but would arise from the continuing animosity of the Magians.

Brief Resurgence of Persecution under Yazdagird II

When fresh conflict broke out anew between Persia and Rome in A.D. 445, as Armenia reaffirmed its independence from Persia, an intense persecution once more overran the northwest Persian frontiers during the reign of the otherwise tolerant Yazdagird II (438-457). It was particularly fierce in Beit Garmai, the ecclesiastical province southeast of Adiabene. No less than 12,000 Christians, including the entire provincial hierarchy, were martyred. Mar Yohannan, the metropolitan of Karka, the bishops Sahrgard, Lasom, Mahosa of Arewan, Harbat Gilal, and Dara, and several leading clergy perished in that holocaust. Many lay Christians from distinguished families were also arrested and summarily put to death. Thousands more suffered for their faith in the social dislocation that ensued in that region.[87]

Yet there were inspiring moments in the midst of these trials and tribulations. In Beit Garmai about 446, an officer named Tahmiazdgerd, who was in charge of the executions and who himself was apparently an inquirer, was so moved by the fortitude in the face of certain death shown by a woman martyr named Shirin and her two little sons that he then and there confessed his faith in Christ.[88] A month later, he too was to meet martyrdom by crucifixion.

In 447 the persecution spread harshly into Media, with the arrest of a famous evangelist named Mar Pethion, who was a monk from the convent of Beit Sahde of Karka in Beit Garmai. Mar Pethion's followers numbered several from among the most distinguished families in the region, including one high-ranking military officer, as well as the police commander of Shahin. After several days of torture, Mar Pethion was decapitated, and his head displayed on the royal road new Kolwan.[89]

Yazdagird II's Anti-Christian Decree of 449

In 449 Yazdagird II issued a persecution degree, of which a copy of that sent to the Armenian prelates is extant, and is significant for showing the points of issue between Christianity and Mazdaeism at this time.

The decree accuses all who refuse to follow the official state cult as deaf, blind and deceived by the *dev* [spirit] of the evil god Ahriman. It flails Christians for their allegedly confused belief that God is a jealous God [for how can he be jealous, in Mazdaean eyes?], creating death and condemning humankind to it "just for a fig pricked from a tree" [obviously referring to the Genesis account of The Fall]. Christians are also accused of erroneously teaching that one and the same God is responsible for both good and evil, life and death, happiness and suffering, etc., contrary to the dualist tenets of the Mazdaean cult. Christianity is also condemned for teaching that God, who had created heaven and earth, was born of a virgin named Mary, whose husband was Joseph; the truth, however, being that he was the son of Pantherus, by illicit intercourse; and that God had been crucified by men, that He died, was buried, and rose again and ascended into heaven.[90]

It appears from these last accusations that the Magians were familiar with classic Jewish rabbinic literature against Christianity, as evident from the reference to the alleged illegitimacy of Jesus' birth, which is first mentioned by Origen as a Jewish attack.[91] It also shows that Persian authorities and the Magians, in addition to their own accusations, echoed at this point the objections to Christianity posed by the Jews. As a modern historian has recently pointed out, the Persian authorities and the Magians were not ignorant of the doctrines of both the Old and New Testaments.[92]

In any case, it is clear that the main Mazdaean objections to Christianity stemmed from the wide discrepancy between the philosophical foundations of both religious systems. To the Magians, God cannot be jealous, for jealousy exists only among men, though obviously they were taking out of context the Judeo-Christian idea of God's "jealousy" in the face of human worship of other gods. As the Magians taught that goodness, life and happiness were blessings from the good spirit Ormuzd, while evil, death and suffering were the curses of the evil spirit Ahriman, the idea of the Son of God being at one time subject to the power of evil was a scandalous doctrine to Mazdaean thinking. It recalls the Apostle Paul's acute observation that in the Mediterranean world, the idea of a crucified Christ was "a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles" [I Cor. 1:23]. It was simply preposterous to the Magians to think that men could kill God.

Vicissitudes of the Armenian Church

It was during this persecution that the fortunes of both the Persian and Armenian Churches were for a time closely intertwined. When Yazdagird II gave his Christian subjects in Armenia two choices — either to rebut all that was contained in his edict of 449, or else

present themselves before the supreme tribunal, Hovsep (Joseph], bishop of Ararat and Katholikos of Armenia (441-452), and seventeen other Armenian nobles sent back a reply, explaining the true Christian position on the issues raised by the edict.

With the exception of its monophysite christology, the Armenian treatise sent in reply could very well have been written by Persian Christians, and ended with the following firm resolve:

> From this confession, none can ever shake us, neither angels nor men, neither sword, fire, or any bitter tortures. All our goods and chattels we commit into your hands; our bodies also are at your disposal. If you choose to leave us in the free exercise of our faith, we on our part will exchange you for no other lord on earth; neither, however, will we own in heaven any other lord than Jesus Christ only, beside whom there is no other God.[93]

Yazdagird II, however, refused to honor the document and instead summoned to his court nine leading Armenian nobles, whose names he picked personally. The Armenians begged him to recall how since the days of his great-grandfather Shapur III, the Armenians had been most loyal subjects of Persia. But with the emperor's unrelenting resolve to rid Armenia of its "erroneous doctrines," and with the Magians all set with a massive program to proselytize all Armenian Christians within a year's time, war was inevitable.

With the defeat of the Christian army of Armenia in 451, conditions progressively deteriorated, so that all Armenian Christians in 455-456 were ordered to embrace the official Mazdaean cult of Persia. It was at this time that the persecution of Christians once more spread to the Mesopotamian provinces of the Sassanid empire. Fortunately, both the Armenian and Persian Churches were able to weather this storm, the war with Rome came to an end, and the persecution immediately subsided. Finally, in 484 Emperor Balas signed a new edict of toleration for his Christian vassals and subjects, in gratitude for Armenian assistance to him during a recently concluded civil war. Thereafter, no further serious trouble was to beset the Church of the East from the side of the political authorities.

Epilogue

The fortunes of Christians in Persia further improved under the later Persian emperors. Khusrau I Anushiravan the Just (531-579), the greatest of the Sassanid monarchs, was also a close friend of the Nestorian Patriarch-Catholicus Mar Aba I (536-552). Moreover, Khusrau I was apparently the first Sassanid emperor to have taken a Christian woman for his wife, and at least one of his own sons is said to have been baptized by a Jacobite bishop. Khusrau I himself was reportedly a secretly baptized Christian.[94]

His grandson, Khusrau II Parviz (590-628) had several Christians among his leading ministers, including his finance minister Karh Yazdin[95] and the court physicians Aba of Kaskar, Yuhanna Sendori of Nisibis, and Gabriel of Singar. Khusrau II also had at least two

Christian women among his queens. One of these was the fair Meryem [Miriam, or Mary], to whom the Nestorians would draft a petition for assistance in A.D. 610; and the other was his most favorite wife, the beautiful Shirin,[96] a Jacobite Christian for whom he built three magnificent churches.[97] When Khusrau II turned despotic in his latter years, it was a Christian-inspired revolt, led by his own son Sheroe and Karh Yazdin's son Shamta, which dethroned him in A.D. 628.[98] Sheroe, a professing Christian, succeeded him as Kavad II, so that towards the end of the Sassanid dynasty, a Christian was actually shah of Persia.

Anarchy and chaos followed Kavad II's death in 629. What is interesting, however, is that two of his successors, namely, his sisters Puran-dukht [Boran] and Azarmi-dukht, were also Christians. In fact, Yazdagird III, the last Sassanid emperor before the Arab Muslims completed their conquest of Persia, was likewise a Nestorian Christian.[99] If the Muslim Arabs had not taken over Persia, the course of history of Christianity in Asia might have been much different.

1 T. Valentino Sitoy Jr. (Ph. D., Edinbugh), former Professor of Christian History and Dean of the Silliman Divinity School, is now Consultant on Theology and History of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

2 In 1975 there were 42,000 "Assyrian Christians" in Iraq, 22,000 in Azerbaijian in the USSR, 20,000 in Iran, 10,000 in the U.S.A., 6,000 in Lebanon, 4,500 in Australia, 2,000 in India, and about 1,000 each in the U.K., Sweden, and Turkey, and about 450 in Kuwait. See David B. Barrett (ed.), *World Christian Encyclopedia*: *A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, AD 19000-2000* (Nairobi, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 155, 378, 390, 393, 446, 452, 649, 682, 695, 706, 721.

3 Placid J. Podipara, C.M.I., The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church (Aleppey: Prakasam Publications, 1976), 17. The designation "Chaldean" was given to those among the remnants of the Church of the East, who after 1551 united with Rome, to distinguish them from the old body of Nestorians. The name "Assyrian Church" [actually, a misnomer] was given the Nestorians by the Churches about 1917. See also Donald Attwater, *The Christian Churches of the East*. Vol. II: *Churches Not in Communion with Rome* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1948, 194-195.

4 Thus, the retired Christian merchant Cosmos Indicoleustes writes about A.D. 548-550: "Even in Taprobane [Ceylon], an island in Further India, where the Indian sea is, there is a Church of Christians, with clergy and body of believers, but I know not whether there be any Chrisitans in the part beyond it. In the country called Male, where the pepper grows, there is a church and at another place called Calliana there is moreover a bishop who is appointed from Persia [Gk. *apo persidos cheirotonoumenos*]." As quoted by A. Mingana, "The Early Spread of Christianity in India," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library [Manchester], X (1926), 29-30. See also Cosmos Indicopleustes, The Christian Topography of *Cosmos Indicopleustes*, tr. and ed. by J.W. McCrindle (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1987), bk. iii, 118- 119. For an assessment of the authenticity and accuracy of Cosmos testimony, see James Hough, *The History of Chritianity in India from the Commencement of the Christianity Era* (5 vols.; London n.p., 1839-1840), I, 86.

5 See A.C. Moule, *Christians in China Before theYear 1500* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930), 65 citing a T'ang imperial edict of A.D. 638, in the 1884 edition of the *T'ang hui yao* ["A Collection of the Accounts of the T'ang Dynasty"], c. 49, fol. 10v. This text was first found by the sinologist Alexander Wylie.

See also the Nestorian Tablet, of A.D. 781, in P.Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument in China* (London: Society for promoting the Christian Knowledge, 1916), 162-180, and his later *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China* (Tokyo: Toho Bunkwa Gakuin: Academy of Oriental Culture, Tokyo Institute, 1937),, 53-77. For another early study of the Nestorian Tablet, see G. Pauthier, "L Inscription syro-chinoise de Si-ngan-fou, monument nestorien élevé en Chine l'an 781 de nôtre Ére, et découvert en 1625" (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot FrKres, Fils et Cie., 1858).

6 See Podipara, *Hierarchy of of the Syro-Malabar Church*, 49 Cf.Fridolin Ukur and FrankL. Cooley, *Jerih dan Juang* [Indonesian] (Jakarta, 1979), 450-457.

7 See, for example, E.A. Gordon, "Some Recent Discoveries in Korean Temples and their Relationship to Early Eastern Christianity," *Transactions of the Korean Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, V. 1 (1914), 1-39. Cf. Saeki, *Nestorian Monument in China,* ix. See also Oh Yoon-tae, *History of the Korean Church* 242-290, as cited by John England, "The Early Christian Communities in SE and NE Asia," *Missiology: An International Reveiw*, XIX (1991), 208.

8 *Chronicle of Arbela*,32-33, in W.B. Young, *Handbook of Source Materials for Students of Church History* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1969), 51.

9 *Chronicle of Arbela*, 39-41, in Young, Handbook, 273-247. French translation from Syriac in Mingana, S.S., I 117-118].

10 *Histoire nestorienne inédié* [*Chronicle de Seert*], in 2 parts, ed. by Addai Scher, in *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie., 1907-1919), IV (1907), 237.

11 Ibid

12 *Chronicle of Arbela*, 41, in Young, Handbook, 257.

13 See J.S. Assemani, *Acts of the Holy Martyrs of the East*, I35*ff.* [French summary in Jerome Labourt, *Le Crhistianisme dans l' Empire Perse sous la Dynastie Sassanide (224-632)* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1904), 41 Cf. *Young, Handbook*, doc. 113.

14 Adolf Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, tr. and ed. by James Moffat (2 vols.; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-1905), II 297-299.

15 James Moffat, in his notes to Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, II 297n.

16 The Title *Katholikos* or *Catholicus*, from Aramaic *gathulik* was a little equivalent to an exarch, and was mid-way between a metropolitan and a patriarch. It had been adopted by the prelate of Armenia before the time of Papa bar Aggai. For more details, see Adrian Fortescue, *The Lesser Eastern Churches* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1913), 48-49.

17 See J.-B. Chabot, *Notices et extraits des Manuscripts de la Bibliothéque Nationale et autres bibliotheques* publiée par l'*Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Tome Trente- septieme [XXXVII] (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1902), 2. This volume is also known by the title Synodicon Orientale.

18 S.L. Greenslade, *Schism in the Early Church* (New York: Harper & Brothers, [1952]), 63. Cf. Chabot, *Notices et extraits*, 2.

19 Luigi Pareti, *The Ancient World*, tr. from the Italian By Guy E. F. Chilver and Sylvia Chilver, Vol. II, of *A History of Mankind* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 682.

20 Eusebius, *Vita Constini*, 4:13 [tr. by Ernest Cushing Richardson], in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2nd series, ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1890), I 543-544. See also Theodoret, *Hist. Eccles.* [tr. by Blonfield Jackson], in Ibid., I, 554-555.

21 Neale, *The Patriarchate of Antioch*, 130.

22 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 4:56-57, in Schaff and Wace *Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, I 554-555.

23 Young, *Handbook*, 277.

24 Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.*, 2:9 [An English translation of Sozomen's work appears in Vol. II, of Schaff and Wace, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series.

25 Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'Empire Perse*, 46.

26 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *History of the Expansion of Christianity* (7 vols.; New York: Harper & Bros., 1937), II, 271, citing Shedd, *Islam and the Oriental Churches*, 158.

27 Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.*, 2:9 Cf. Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'Empire Perse*, 46. Cf. also Young, *Handbook*, 388.

28 *Chronique de Seert* [*Histoire nestoriene inédité*] (ed. by A. Scher), in 2 parts, in *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie., 1907-1919), IV [1907], 297.

29 Labourt, *Le Christianisme*, 69-70.

30 Latourette, *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, I, 228.

31 Mar Shapur was beaten up with clubs and his teeth knocked out. Mar Izhaq was ordered stone to death by apostates; Mahanes had his skin flayed from the top of his head to the navel; Abraham's eyes were bored out by hot irons; and Shimun was burried up to his chest and shot to death with arrows. See *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, ed., rev. and supplemented by Herbert Thurston, S.J. and Donald Attwater (4 vol.s; [London]: Burns and Oates, 1956), IV, 452.

32 Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.*, 2:9-11. Cf. *Histoire nestorienne inédité*, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, IV, 302.

33 J.S. Assemani [*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I 189] has identified Guhistazad, or Azad, as the eunuch of Artascirus, king of Adiabene and Shapur's cousin. Quite possibly, Azad

had been converted in Adiabene, or perhaps had heard of the Gospel while he was in court of King Artacirus. Afterwards, he himself might have been responsible for other conversion in the court of Shapur II. See also *Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II, 264. Cf. also Jean Maurice Fiey, O.P. *Assyrie Chrétienne: Contribution á l'Étude et de la Geographie ecclesiastique et monastique de Nord de l'Iraq* (3 vols.; Beyrouth: Dar El-Machreq Editeurs, 1965-1968), I, 44.

34 For the martyrdom of Mar Shimun bar Sabai and his companions, see Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.*, 2:9-11. Cf. *Butler's Lives of the Saints* (Thurston & Attwater ed.), II, 141.

35 Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.*, 2:9. Cf. Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga, A.D. 840*, tr. from the Syriac and ed. by E.A. Wallis Budge (2 vols.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., Ltd., 1893), II 483. See also Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I, 188.

36 Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, I 491-492. Sozomen, however, says that many Christians "voluntarily surrendered themselves, lest they should appear, by their silence, to deny Christ." See his *Hist. Eccles.*; 2:11.

37 Ibid., 2:11-12.

38 Sozomen reports that the Magian who had been secretly enamored of Tarbula secretly sent her money, along with the promises that she and her companions would be spared from torture and death. For more details on the martyrdom of Shimun's sisters, see ibid.,2:12.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 2:12-14.

43 Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors*, II, 483. See also Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I, 188. See also *Histoire nestorienne inédité* [Scher ed.], in Patrologia Orientalis, IV 309-310. Cf. Fiey, Assyrie ChrBtienne, I 44-45. Cf. also Louis Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church: From its Foundation to the End of the Fifth Century*, tr. by Claude Jenkins (3 vols.; London: John Murray, 1960), II, 383. *Butler's Lives of the Saints* [Thurston and Attwater ed.], II 39-40, seems to be speaking of the this same event, but gives the date as A.D. 345.

44 Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors*, II, 483. See also Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I, 190. The reports are conflicting regarding Barshemin and his martyrdom. Fiey

says the bishop martyred was named Mar Abraham, though this could be the biblical name for Bar Barshemin, But the date is 346. The Duchesne states it was Bar Barshemin, but the date is 346. *The Chronique de Seert*, II [*Patrologia Orientalis*, V. 220] says Barshemin served as bishop for seven years before he was martyred. Cf. Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccl.* [ed. by Abbeloos and Lamy], II 39-41. Cf. also H. Gismondi, *Amri et Slibae de patriarchis Nestorianium commentaris* (Romae, 1897), 12.

Fiey [*Assyrie Chrétienne*, I 44n.], however, says that the bishop who was martyred in 342 was one Yohannan of Galmi, and wonders whether this man was the same "Yohannan, Bishop of Greater India," who was present at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, which in that case would have aggravated his "crime" by entering into collusion with foreigners. See also Bar Hadsaba Arbaya, *Hist. Eccles.*, in *Patrologia Oreitnalis*, XXII-2, 29-30.

45 Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I. 190. Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, I 44f Duchesne, *Early History of Christian Church*, III, 383, who gives the year as A.D. 346.

46Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, 23.

47 Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, I 44. See also Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, 23-24.

48 Sir Edward E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China; or, the history of the life and travels of Rabban Sawma, envoy and plenipotentiary of the Mongol Khans to the kings of Europe, and Markos who as Mar Yahbh-Allaha III became Patriarch of the Nestorian Church in Asia*, tr. from the Syriac by E.A. Wallis Budge (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1928), 18-20. The names of the various monks sent out by Mar Awgin are given in Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, III, 473.

49 See *Chronique de Seert* [Scher ed.], in *Patrologia Orientalis*, V, 260.

50 Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.*, 2:14.

51 *Chronique de Seert* [Scher ed.], Part 2, in *Patrologia Orientlis*, V, 222.

52 Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, III 383.

53 John Foster, *Church History I (A.D. 29-500): The First Advance* (London: SPCK, 1972), 99.

54 *Chronique de Seert* [Scher ed.] part 2, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, V, 261.

55 As quoted by F. Crawford Burkitt, "Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire" (Cambridge: The University Press 1899), 33-34. Cf. Young, *Handbook*, 183, quoting Apharat, Demonstrations, I 9.

56 Ibid., 36, 49 citing Afrahat's Homily XXIII.

57 Bar Hebraeus [Abu'l Faradj], *Eccles. Chron.*, 3:170 as cited by George Mark Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India from Earliest Times to St. Francis Xavier, A.D. 52-1594* (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1964), 76 citing Mari, 69 [trans., 61].

58 Duchesne, *Early History of the Chritian Church*, III, 381.

59 Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. Eccles.*, 7:8.

60 William M. Langer, *An Encyclopedia of World History*, 4th ed., rev. & enl. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), 138. Cf. Robin E. Waterfield, *Christians in Persia: Assyrians, Armenians, Roman Catholics and Protestants* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1973), 21.

61 For the proceedings and canons of this synod of Seleucia of 410, see Chabot, *Notices et extraits*, 253-275.

62 Ibid.

63 For the 21 canons of the synod of 410, see ibid., 263-272. The complete text of the 20 canons of Nicaea (A.D. 325) may be found in B.J. Kidd (ed.)., *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church* (London: SOCK, 1938), II, 16-21. See also S.L. Greenslade, *Schism in the Early Church* (New York: Harper & Brothers, [1952]), 63. For Chabot's French translation of the official Syriac version of the Nicene Creed, see Notices et extraits, 262-263.

64 Ibid.

65 See I. Ortiz de Urbina, "Storie e cause dello Scisma della Chiesa di Persia," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, III (1937), 469.

66 For more details, see Chabot, *Notices et extraits*, 272-273. Cf. Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, I 380; III, 386. Cf. *Amri et Slibae. de Patri.; eccles.; commentaria* (Romae, 1897), 72-73, as cited by A. C. Moule, *Christians in China Before the Year 1550* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930), 22.

67 Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, I 48-49.

68 The names of the prelates in attendance, as well as the names of their respective see, may be found in Chabot, *Notices et extraits*, 274-275.

69 Waterfield, *Christians in Persia*, 21-22.

70 For more details, see Chabot, *Notices et extraits*, 276-284.

71 Langer, *Encyclopedia of World History*, 138.

72 The Syriac *Passion of Abdas* exonerates the bishop and gives as the culprit a presbyter named Hasu, who reportedly confessed his crime before Yazdagird I. In Elisaeus Vartabed's *History of Armenia*, however, it is the bishop Saheg who is interrogated by imperial officials as to whether he has killed the fire in the Pyreum. See Stevenson, *Creeds, Councils and Controversies*, 258.

73 Theodoret, *Hist. Eccles.*, 7:8.

74 Ibid. Cf. Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.*, 7:8.

75 Theodoret, *Hist Eccles.*, 5:38.

76 Ibid.

77 *Chronique de Seert*, part 2, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, V, 382- 383.

78 Labourt, *Le Christianisme*, 112.

79 Ibid., 115.

80 Ibid., 115-116.

81 See Duchesne, *Early History of the Christiane Church*, I 393: III, 388.

82 Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.*, 7:20 Cf. R.N. Frye, "Persian Church," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967 ed.), XI, 159.

83 Chabot, *Notices et extraits*, 296.

84 Ibid. Cf. Kidd, *Documents*, II, 198-199. Cf. also Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, III 388-389. Commenting on the decision of the Synod of Markabta, one modern scholar has observed that the decision was "the manifestation of the national desire of every National Church to be independent of the other Churhces which in its eyes are also national. There was a great tendency all over the East for every to be autocepalous ... The Persian decree was to a large extent influenced by the desire to allay the distrust with which the Persian kings watched their Christians' intercourse with their fellow Christians of the Roman Empire and thereby to forestall any unpleasantness.' See F. Dvornik, "National Churches and the Church Universal" (Westminister, 1943), 12. [Offprint from *The Eastern Churches Quarterly*, V. (1943)].

85 Fortescue, *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, 51.

86 Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, III, 17. See also Aubrey R. Vine, *The Nestorian Churches: A Concise History of Nestorian Christianity in Asia from the Persian Schism to the Modern Assyrians* (London: Independent Press, 1937), 82. For an account of the martyrdom of six leading Armenian Christians, including one Bishop Bardisoy during this period, see Louise H. Gray, "Two Armenian Passions of Saints in the Sasanian (sic) Period," *Analecta Bollandiana* [Bruxelles], LVII (1949), 361-376.

87 Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, III, 17. Wigram, in his *History of the Assyrian Church*, 138, 158, speaks of 153,000 being martyred in Karka de Beit Selok. This, however, seems a bloated figure, though it could be appreciably higher than 12,000, which is elsewhere reported.

88 See [Paulus Peeters], "Saints Sirin, martyre sous Khosrau Ier Anosarvan," *Analecta Bollandiana*, LXIV (1946), 94, 98.

89 Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, III 389.

90 Kidd, *Documents*, II, 295-296, citing Elisaeus Vartabad (d. 840), *History of Armenia*, in V. Langlois, *Collection des Historiens de l'Armenie*, 190ff. Stevenson, *Creeds, Councils and Controversies*, 349n.

91 Origen, Contra Celsus, as cited by Stevenson, *Creeds, Councils and Controversies*, 349n.

92 R.N. Frye (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 4: *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 563. Cf. Kidd, *Documents*, 296.

93 Vardapet Yeghisheh [Vartabed Elisha], *The Epic of St. Vardan the Brave. An Abridged Translation of the History of Vardan and of the War of the Armenians by the Vardapet Yeghsheh* (Elisha), tr. from the Armenian by C.F. Neumann (New York: Diocese of the Armenian Church in America, 1951), 34-35.

94 As cited by P. M. Sykes, *A History of Persia* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1915), I 528. See also *Chronique de Seert*, part 2, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, XIII, 540.

95 Next to Patriarch-Catholics Mar Aba, Karh Yazdin was the most influential man in Khusrau II's court, a contemporary Christian chronicler calling Yazdin the :"prince of the [Christian] believers" and the "defender of the Church, like Constantine and Theodosius." See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, I, 46; III, 23, citing *Chronique Anonyme*, tr. from Syriac by Duidi, Corpus *Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, II/Syr. 2, [trans., 21].

96 Michel le Syrien, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, II, 372. See also Budge's notes, in Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors*: *The Historia Monastica of Thomas, Bishop of Marga, A.D. 840,* ed. by Sir Edward A. Wallis Budge (2 vols.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Turner and Co., 1893), I, 80n., citing Guidi, *Un nuovo testo siriaco sulla storia degli ultimi Sassanidi (Tiré des Actes du 8e. Congrks Internationale des Orientalistes, tenu en 1889 E Stockholm et É Christiania)*, 10.

97 See Budge's notes to Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors*, II, 80-83. In the *Chronique de Seert*, [Scher ed.], part 2, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, XIII, 486-487, it is said, however, that Khusrau II built two churches for Meryem, and a large church in Seleucia-Ctesiphon as well as Chateau at the Turko-Persian Border for Shirin.

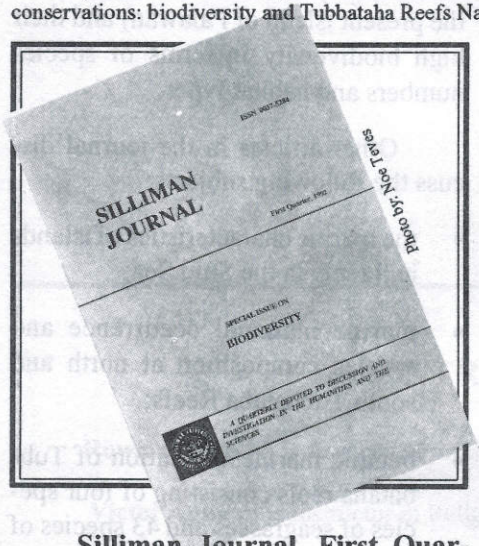
Moreover, in 1928-1929 a German archaeological party excavated two churches, one built on the top of the other on a hillock called Qasr bint al-qadi. The later building was probably the church of the Virgin Mary built by Khusrau II for Shirin. See also Monneret de Villard, *Le Chiese della Mesopotamia,* 1. Cf. also O. Reuther, *Die Ausgrabungen der deutschen Ktesiphon- expedition in Winter 1928-1929* (Berlin, n.d.).

98 As the 9th-century monastic historian Thomas of Marga puts it, "Khusrau died by the sword of the Christian children of the Church." See Budge's notes, in Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors,* II, 81, note 4: 89, 113, note 4.

99 Evidence for Yazdagird III's Christian affiliation is provided by a letter sent to him in 628 by Mar Iso-yahb, the Metropolitan of Arbela. See Assemani, Bibliotheca Orientalis, III-1, 141. Cf. Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, I, 60. See also *Corpus Scriptorium Christianorum Orientalium*, XLIII, 76.

NOTES

(On the two latest Special Issues of the Silliman Journal concerning ecological/environmental conservations: biodiversity and Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park)



Silliman Journal, First Quarter, 1992, a special issue on biodiversity, is a timely document concerning the conditions of the biological resources in the Philippines as well as the Southeast Asian region.

Biological diversity or simply biodiversity is generally defined as the wealth of life forms, corals, fish, mammals, birds, reptiles, trees and flowering plants of different sizes, including the ecosystem where they occur. They are the very source of all our daily needs from food to clothing and medicine.

This special issue carries interesting and useful information on varied organisms, including bats, deer, wild pigs, mangroves, and marine mammal species, such as whales and dolphins.

Two articles are about freshwater ecosystem and the resources found therein. One by Dr. Angel C. Alcala describes freshwater and marine resources in Southeast Asia, with emphasis on those in the Philippines.

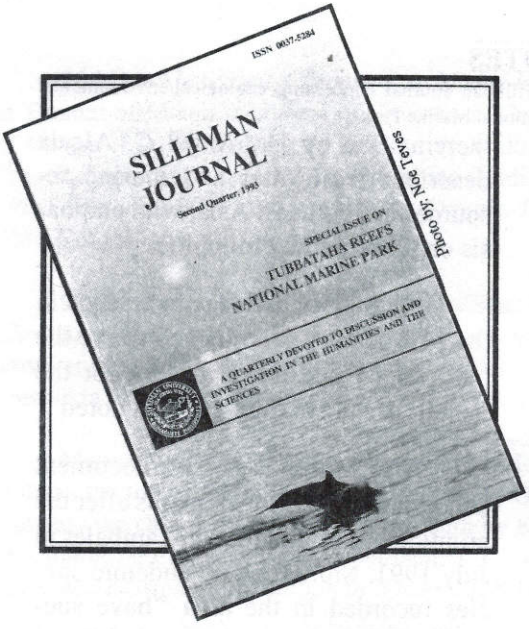
"A major challenge to science in the 21st century is how to conserve the biodiversity and make it work for the benefit of humankind," Alcala noted.

Also in this issue is a document concerning extinction of plants after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in Zambales in July 1991. More than 60 endemic species recorded in the area "have succumbed to the intense heat, ash fall and lava flow that accompanied the eruption."

Dr. Hilconida Calumpong, editor of this issue, also contributed an article concerning the need for rehabilitation of the Talabong Mangrove Forest Reserve in South Bais Bay, Negros Oriental, Philippines. Calumpong noted that immediate multispecies reforestation is critical in the maintenance of biodiversity in this forest. "Establishing the area as a botanical garden may be the only effective long-term management option," she wrote.

The journal also provides a good bibliography on mammals. Presented are summaries of 111 important publications on the diversity and conservation of the Philippine land vertebrates.

(jgperez)



On August 11, 1988, President Corazon C. Aquino, signed Proclamation No. 306: declaring the Tubbataha Reefs and their surrounding waters in central Sulu Sea and Palawan as the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park (TRNMP).

The **Silliman Journal, Second Quarter, 1993,** focused on the ecological significance and characteristics of TRNMP.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angel C. Alcala introduces this volume with an article "Ecological Importance of the Coral Reefs in Cagayan Ridge, Sulu Sea, Philippines". Dr. Alcala noted that these reefs deserve protection and management because they are the last remaining good reefs in the country, and because of the unique manner of their formation (a volcanic arc which trends southwestward across the Sulu Sea, subparallel to the present island of Palawan) and their high biodiversity in terms of species numbers and habitat types.

Other articles in the journal discuss the following subjects:

- the marine characteristics of islands and reefs in the Sulu Sea;
- marine mammal occurrence and species composition at north and south Tubbataha Reefs;
- benthic marine vegetation of Tubbataha reefs consisting of four species of seagrasses and 43 species of algae;
- a comparison of species richness and abundance of food fishes in coral reefs of Central Visayas and Sulu Sea;
- observations on the distribution of giant clams in six protected areas, including two sites in Tubbataha and four sites in Central Visayas; and
- the Earthwatch Expedition to the Philippines in April 1992, dubbed as "Saving Tubbataha Reefs".

The articles are illustrated with maps, profile diagrams and full color photographs.

The special issue on Tubbataha Reefs is edited by Dr. Hilconida P. Calumpong, director, Silliman University Marine Laboratory. **(jgperez)**

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Notice to Authors

The **Silliman Journal** welcomes contributions in all fields from both Philippine and foreign scholars, but papers should normally have some relevance to the Philippines, Asia, or the Pacific. All submissions are refereed.

Articles should be products of research, taken in its broadest sense; a scientific paper should make an original contribution to its field. Authors are advised to keep in mind that SJ aims at a general international audience, and to structure their papers accordingly.

SJ also welcomes submissions, such as "Notes," which generally are briefer and more tentative than full-length articles. Reports on work in progress, queries, updates, reports of impressions rather than of research, responses to the work of others, even reminiscences are appropriate here. Book reviews and review articles will also be considered for publication.

Manuscripts should conform to the conventions of format and style exemplified in this issue of SJ. Whenever possible, citations should appear in the body of the paper, holding footnotes to a minimum. Pictures will be accepted only when absolutely necessary. If possible, scientific papers should be accompanied by an abstract. All authors must submit their manuscripts in duplicate, typewritten double-spaced on good quality bond paper.

The Editorial Board will endeavor to acknowledge all submissions, consider them promptly, and notify authors of its decision as soon as possible. Each author of an article is entitled to twenty-five free offprints. More may be had by arrangement with the Editor before the issue goes to press.