DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4289188
Stable URL: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4289188

Jnanadeepa:
Pune Journal of Religious Studies

Vol. 5 No. 2 July 2002

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Jnanadeepa (="Light of Wisdom" pronounced as *Jñānadīpa*) is a biannual interdisciplinary journal of religious studies from an Indian Christian perspective. It is closely associated with Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth: Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune 411014, India.

Jnanadeepa is published biannually, in January and July. Views expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the editors. Manuscripts submitted for publication should be original and cannot be returned (writers' style sheet is available on request); they could be sent (preferrably as a text or RTF file) in a computer diskette or through E-mail as file attachment.

All **correspondence** (requests for subscription, manuscripts, books for review – two copies, please – exchange copies of journals, advertisements, etc.) to:

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Printer: JTJ Associates Pune- 40 (Tel: 6832352)
Typeset: JDV Computer Centre
Publisher: Kurien Kunnumpuram for Jnana Deepa Publications.
ISSN: 0972-3331

Subscription Rates

Country	*One year*	*Three years*
India	Ind. Rs. 80	Ind. Rs. 200
SAARC Countries	Ind. Rs.140	Ind. Rs. 400
Other Countries (Surface Mail)	US $ 16	US $ 45
Other Countries (Air Mail)	US $ 20	US $ 55
Institutional Rate	US $ 40	US $ 110
Personal Life Subscription	Rs 3,000(India)	US $ 350(Foreign)

Editorial

Ever since September 11, 2001, terrorism and violence have become hot topics of discussion in the media. The impression is gaining ground that religion and ideology are the root causes of violence in the world today. It is in this context that we have chosen as the theme of this issue of *Jnanadeepa* **Religion, Ideology and Violence.** We wish to explore the religious and ideological factors at work in human society that promote violence.

There is one article in this issue which discusses in general the relation between religion and violence. It is the author's contention that most of the violence perpetrated in the name of religion has non-religious causes. Hence, it may not be advisable to speak of 'religious' violence. Another article deals with the sacralization of violence by socio-political organisations and institutions through a clever use of religious symbols and images. It also recommends Gandhiji's practice of non-violent and self-suffering love as a means to unmask and counter such violence.

There is a growing impression among many people today that in the name of Jihad Islamic extremists are indulging in a lot of violence in different parts of the world. It is against this background that one article examines the concept of Jihad. It comes to the conclusion that by and large Jihad does not involve violence. It is primarily concerned about one's struggle for personal spiritual growth as well as the efforts to promote unity among the Muslims. However, Jihad can at times refer to the attempt of the Muslims to defend themselves, even using force, when they are attacked by others.

What about the Hindu attitude to violence? Instead of answering this question generally, one article investigates whether the Bhagavad Gita advocates violence. The common opinion is that the Gita articulates a philosophy of violent warfare. After all, Gita purports to be a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. On compassionate grounds, Arjuna refuses to wage war against the Kauravas. Krishna tries to persuade him to forget his fine feelings and face the situation with valour by taking up arms. Gita is, therefore, often used to justify violent attacks on people who are considered to be enemies. After a thorough examination of the Gita, the article points out that it is a mystical poem which describes the inner struggles of people who are serious about their relationship to God, others and the cosmos.

There are four articles dealing with violence in Christian history. The first one deals with biblical perspectives on violence. By and large, the Israelites were a violent people living among other violent peoples. Yet they had laws that strongly advocated justice and peace. And the prophets of Israel dreamt of an era of peace and prosperity. The basic thrust of the New Testament is the establishment of a new humanity, which lives in peace and harmony with God, with itself and with nature. The second article deals with

violence in mission history. Here violence is taken to mean not only physical violence against persons but also various kinds of pressure on people to change their religion. It is undeniable that a certain amount of violence was used by the Church in its efforts to convert people. While some people throughout the centuries protested against the use of force in Christian missionary activity, it is only in Vatican II that the Church took an unambiguous stand against the use of force in its missionary work.

There are two things that people remember whenever there is talk of the Church and violence: the Crusades and the Inquisition. There are two articles in this issue which deal with them. The first one studies the crusades and comes to the conclusion that whatever be the arguments that were given in favour of the crusades, it is difficult to reconcile the hate-filled crusades with love commandment of Jesus. The second one investigates the origin and evolution of the Inquisition. The Inquisition bears witness to the fact that the Church became increasingly ready to use force in order to maintain purity of doctrine. Orthodoxy became more important than orthopraxis. What is really unfortunate is that the Inquisition spirit still continues to exist in the Church though Vatican II made a valiant effort to exorcise this spirit.

There is finally an article which seriously reflects on the atrocities committed against women in Gujarat in March-April 2002. The author points out how enormous crimes, including sexual violence, were committed against women belonging to the minority community. This violence was promoted and justified by the ideology that the BJP and the Sangh Parivar espouses. The only way out of this spiral of violence is the upholding of the secular principles enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Besides these papers on violence, there are three articles included in this issue which deal with different aspects of postmodernism. The first one discusses the significant changes that have taken place in our understanding of art as we moved to the postmodern period. The second examines the rapid changes that have occurred in the world during the last few decades and comes to the conclusion that we are probably living through what may rightly be called a New Renaissance and a Postmodern Reformation. This should be reason for new hope. The third deals with the theory of the nonsensory perception of God in the context of a postmodern philosophy.

It is our hope that this issue will encourage readers to reflect on the problem of violence in our world today and resolve to take steps to counter it.

Kurien Kunumpuram SJ
Editor

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Religions and Violence
Causes, Consequences, Remedies

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1. Introduction

Nobody will deny that our world today is thoroughly violent and that far too much violence takes place in the name of religion. Almost daily there are reports of violence, where religions play a direct or indirect role. History has ample records of the past intertwining of religions and violence; how they have initiated, incited, fostered, and condoned violence, in the form of systematic discrimination, hatred, intolerance, persecutions and wars (Lefebure 2000:13). This realization prompted Pope John Paul II, the head of one religion, Roman Catholicism, on March 12, 2000, to ask forgiveness for the violence that some Christians have committed in the service of the truth, and for the attitude of mistrust and hostility sometimes assumed toward followers of other religions. One of the greatest challenges to religious belief in the 21st century will be the sheer enormity of the evil done by humans to each other in the name of religion. None of the great religions can be acquitted of this charge and there are patterns at work which indicate that religions could be one of the most important causes of massive violence in the coming decades (Huntington 1997).

But the irony is that every major religion in the world, at least at some point, has also expressed a commitment to the value of peace and nonviolence. Many globally well known leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama, bishop Desmond Tutu, Maha Gosananda, Nhat Hahn etc., and many other less well known but equally revolutionary leaders have drawn inspiration from their religions in their nonviolent struggles. Religions have provided civilization with values like love, empathy, compassion, hospitality, forgiveness, humility, justice, repentance, reconciliation, human rights, etc (Gopin 2000:13). Many dissident movements against political systems, wars, racism, militarism, colonialism, imperialism, dictatorship etc. have a strong religious motivation, and their leaders have been supported by the spiritual resources of their religions. Moreover, not all the violence in the world is caused by religions. The worst and most abhorrent crimes of the last century were committed in the name of antireligious ideolo-

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gies like National Socialism, Stalinism, etc. The view that religions necessarily breed violence (Merleau-Ponty) is as one-sided as the one that they automatically generate peace. The thesis of this article is that most violence in the name of religion has nonreligious causes, like national interest or political oppression; moments of economic and social uncertainty or cultural upheaval. I shall argue this thesis in the following way: I shall begin with a discussion of religion and its resurgence in the contemporary world; then I shall deal with the problem of violence and the phenomenon of 'religious' violence; next I shall point out the possible causes of religious violence; in the final section I shall explore the possibility of peacemaking through religion.

2. Resurgence of Religion in the Contemporary World

The twentieth century began with the great promise of secularization and the demise of religion (Cox 1999: 6-8. no. 2/3). Religion came to be associated with fanaticism and intolerance, and its elimination from social life was regarded as a factor of progress and stability (Riccardi 1997/4: 71-73). The fact is that the promise of secularization and the demise of religion have turned out to be myths of the 20th century. Religions have not declined; on the contrary, they have revived and revitalized themselves and have reappeared as a relevant factor in individual and communal life in many parts of the world. In some regions of the world there is a decline of institutional religion but there has emerged a new religious sensibility characterized by independence from traditional religious authority, dogma and law, and more inquiry, experimentation, and creativity. In some other regions there is a resurgence of old patterns of belief and practices, expressed sometimes in active opposition to state authorities, the liberal spirit of religion, and the global secular culture (Gopin 2000: 3). In many regions of the world religions have become factors of stability or instability, of war or of peace. Let us illustrate this point with some examples: Pope John Paul II and the Polish crisis formed a situation in which the religious factor, with peaceful social pressure, became a key element in destabilizing the Soviet Union. Liberation Theology in Latin America through its concern for social justice became a symbol of Catholicism as a relevant social factor; we might think of bishop Desmond Tutu and his struggle against apartheid or the social and political power of Islam and Khomeini's Revolution in 1979. The supporters of Hindutva in India use religion to gain political power and consolidate high caste domination by forging the collective identity of Hindus through several religiously motivated activities. The assertiveness of religious parties in Israel and their direct involvement in political questions are well known. The most recent example has been the rise and fall of the Taliban and its religious aspirations. Examples can be multiplied from all parts of the world, like Sri Lanka, former Yugoslavia, or Algeria. In all these cases, we see the return of religion as a phenomenon of mass identity. And the violence that is associated with it is qualitatively different from the wars of religion of medieval times. Very

often it is a protest against the existing order of things and an aspiration toward something new; in other words, it is a cultural reconstruction to cope with an existential situation. It is evidently one-sided to see religions as necessarily leading to backwardness and fanaticism. On the contrary, "the religions represent a complex world of believing men and women, of values and of a rich experience of profound social depth. Like any important factor in human history, the religions can present different and contradictory aspects and can contribute to both stability and instability" (Riccardi 1997/4:77).

3. "Religious" Violence

That brings us to the specific question of religious violence, but before that, let us say a few words about violence itself. We humans are prone to violence and our histories are stamped by experiences of violence. What is violence? There are many definitions of violence, but let me choose one from among them which defines it as the attempt of an individual or group to impose its will on others through any verbal, nonverbal or physical means that inflict psychological or physical injury (Nessan 1998: 451). What causes violence? Eugene Drewermann, depth psychologist and theologian, says that violence is innate to human nature (Drewermann 1994). Others claim that it is rooted in the patterns of aggression among primates[1] but humans transform it through reflective self-consciousness. Human violence is not an instinct but an intentional act (Lefebure 2000: 13). Thomas Cullinan makes an interesting distinction between violence 'within' and violence 'without', and connects the violence 'within' to the violence 'without'. The former has to do with our inner conflicts and the latter with our reactions to external social conflicts. The outer violence takes three forms: 'hot' violence, by which is meant guns, bombs etc.; 'cold' violence, by which is meant economic power used to dominate or to destroy those who lack it; and 'cool' violence, which gives apparent legitimation both to 'hot' and 'cold' violence (Quoted in Nzacahayo 1997/4: 12). The question can naturally be asked whether there is any justification for attributing a religious motive to violence, if aggressiveness which is seen as the biological nucleus of violence (Wils 1997/4: 110-118) is an anthropological constant belonging to humans as humans. That is what the last century, steeped in violence and bloodshed caused by several nonreligious factors and ideologies, apparently tells us. But at the same time, we have to ask another question, namely, if violence is such a brute biological fact, can religion which, too, is intrinsic to human culture, be left out of its purview, and what is the exact relationship between the two?

Contrasting views have been put forward regarding this. The famous theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, for example, does not see any intrinsic relationship between religion and violence. He says that the massive violence that has occurred in the name of religion is tied up with various presuppositions which are alien to religion, which in fact mean a betrayal of the deepest dynamic of any relationship to the Absolute (Schillebeeckx 1997/4: 130-34). According to him, religious violence is

based on non-religious foundations. The first foundation is the claim of a religion to be the only true religion. Here the right of other religions to exist is consistently denied. In a multireligious society such a negation is in itself a virtual declaration of war and thus amounts to violence. The second foundation, according to Schillebeeckx, is the claim of a religion to be the direct guarantor of the well-being of human society. As a result there arises the conviction of some religious people that their own religion is their first civic duty and that the God whom they confess is the direct guarantor of the well-being of human society. Thus it would mean that the relationship to the Absolute necessarily implies a direct connection to the concrete social and political order created by human beings. In the context of multiplicity of religions such a view leads to religious violence (Schillebeeckx 1997/4: 133-34).

The noted sociologist, Francois Houtart, on the other hand, says that the roots of religious violence, in some measure, can be found right back in the 'religious', and that is why religions easily become vehicles of violent tendencies (Houtart 1997/4: 1-3). He bases himself on the well known theory of Rene Girard who begins his theory from the fundamental nature of violence. Girard's argument begins with an analysis of the role of violence in the construction of human culture in general and religious culture in particular. The key to understanding the extent of violence within human culture, for Girard, is to be found in understanding the way we learn. Human beings are fundamentally social beings and learn by imitating others. This he calls the 'mimetic desire'. This implies in the long run creating one's social identity through a process of both attraction and repulsion. For Girard the whole process of mimetic learning tends to violence (Fraser 2001: 15-17). If that is the case, the whole of human society will fall to pieces through violence. Therefore, there should be a way to counter this violence. There should be some safe detonation of the violent impulses. For Girard that safe detonation is sacrifice. "Violence is not to be denied, but can be diverted onto another object, something it can sink its teeth into" (Girard 1977: 4). That something is the sacrificial victim. Sacrificial scapegoating is a way of regulating violence. Thus religion through sacrifice sacralises violence and makes it possible to distinguish it from lawless violence. Girard traces the roots of all religions to the directing of violence into manageable pathways. Although Jesus rejected the culture of violence with his call for forgiveness, the Christian theology of the cross has reinforced and deepened the very thing Jesus himself railed against (Fraser 2001: 30). Girard's search for an explanation for the interpenetration of religion and violence through the mimetic theory is commendable and illumines a wide range of aspects of religion and culture although it remains problematic in many respects (Lefebure 2000: 21-23).

Houtart goes on to mention other causes of religious violence. One is the urge of religion to identify it with the good. This identification with the good has justified much violence in the history of all religions (Houtart 1997/4: 2). Religious mission which also implies

expansionism has also been linked with the use of violence. In the case of Christianity we have such examples as the patronage given to the Iberian powers by the popes to conquer, dominate politically, and reduce to slavery the people they met on their voyages to convert and combat the infidel. While this does not by itself require violence, it certainly has caused extreme violence in the past. According to Houtart, "If we touch on the great religious systems one after another we find the same traces. The basic texts reflect the ritualized violence of sacrifice, the use of violence for a superior good, and the need for violence in defence of the faith, along with the ethical regulation of non-legitimising violence, all aimed at ultimate peace" (Houtart 1997/4: 2).

A study of the different religions can point to the presence of other legitimating factors for religious violence. For example, in the monotheistic religions the passion for fulfilling God's will is paramount. The whole cosmos is to serve this purpose. To this end even violence against the cosmos and the nonhuman world is allowed more readily than in the Eastern religions. The world is to be transformed and God's will is to be established. Any one, and so any religion, who/which wants to fulfil God's will feels continually called to exert force or violence, at least in self-defence. Consequently there developed the theory of Just War[2] in Christianity. In Judaism, according to most readers of the traditional texts, the principle of using violence to save innocent lives in violent situations where there is no alternative, overrides the commitment to peace. In Islam, unjust injury is certainly ground to defend oneself. So in these religions even though there is a strong tradition of nonviolence present in their foundational texts, "the ideal of nonviolence is constantly threatened and endangered for a good end" (H ä r i n g 1997/4a: 97). The religious reading of social relationships is another cause of religious violence. Here religion fulfils an ideological function by legitimizing social relationships and the social order is presented as willed by God. No one can touch it. Feudal structures in medieval Europe and brahminical domination in India are examples of this. Any naturalization of unequal social relationships will lead to violence.[3]

I intend here to avoid a philosophical discussion as to whether violence belongs intrinsically to religion. I would rather follow a phenomenological approach to religious violence and show that it is a very complex phenomenon, involving a number of factors. The strictly 'religious' is just one of these factors. It is often manipulated by other forces because of the return of the religious dimension as an influential factor in the contemporary world. Religion is a force that envelops hundreds of millions of human beings and it plays the central role in the inner life and social behaviour of these people. It generates enormous power. This power can be used either for promoting violence or for generating peace. Often it is the former that happens. Religion accentuates the deepest emotions and intuitions of the human heart and hides its darkest fears. We have the choice either to allow these intuitions to flower or allow the fears to surface. Often it is the latter that is done. This is the experience of

India where senseless communal violence has created enormous terror and suffering.[4] Let us therefore try for a deeper glimpse into the reality of religious violence today.

4. Understanding Religious Violence

The first step toward understanding religious violence today is to grasp its genuine complexity. Failure to do so has led to the repeated recurrence of such violence and the lack of effective strategies to prevent it. As pointed out above there are non-religious motives that are central to religious conflicts. Since religious language and symbolism are critical ways in which human beings interpret reality, and the religious terminology can express their full range of emotions, nonreligious factors soon receive a religious colouring. Sacred texts, myths, rituals, and images from religions then become central elements in the conflicts. One should in the first place be aware of this fundamental fact. Having said that let us analyse some of these concrete factors at work in religious violence.

4.1 Conflict of World Views

One factor at work in religious violence today is the conflict of world views, one liberal and secular, and the other conservative and religious. The former is supported by the liberal state and expresses either secular views on life, or religious views that are liberal. The latter is characterized by an extreme enthusiasm for old patterns of beliefs and practices, and opposition to the state, secular authorities and the basic institutions of the secular culture. Here is a fruitful ground for religions setting people on a collision course with the rest of society causing serious levels of violence. Both the liberal and the conservative sides can become militant through their bias, prejudice and intolerance toward the other.

4.2 Identity Formation

A second factor at work in religious violence is the quest for identity. Contemporary globalization – the unprecedented economic integration and cultural homogenization under the leadership of a materialist, consumerist Western culture, offers it a fertile context. There is a rebellion against this overwhelming and overpowering economic and cultural hegemony with its attendant symptoms of inequality, poverty, and destruction of culture. In this setting of great social, cultural and psychological uncertainty, there is a frantic search for roots, for identity, uniqueness, and the original system of meaning. It is quite common in such situations that human beings turn to traditional religious systems in search of stability and identity. There is also a general loss of meaning in contemporary materialist societies. This void is increasingly being filled by people searching for an organized response to the world, and it is religion which is best suited to it. Depending on the socioeconomic, psychological and political situation of the individual and the society, this search can become violent.

Let us see how some of the conflicts that are/were going on in the world are defined by this factor.[5] In Sri Lanka,

where the Sinhalese and the Tamils who are still engaged in a conflict, religion is invoked by the Sinhalese whose identity is defined by Buddhism, which is very solidly established as the result of various historical factors, including the colonial preferential policies toward the Tamils. Now they feel that their identity as a people is being threatened. This justifies their pursuit of a merciless war against the Tamils. It is seen by the Buddhist *sangha* as a religious mission making Buddhism a party to this war which is in direct contradiction to its philosophy.

In Ireland, where English colonialism has subjected the Irish Catholics to real genocide, the settling of British colonists who became Anglicans has added a religious dimension to the already existing economic and political dimensions. The two religions involved have not become the standard-bearers of the conflict but religion is very much present in it and the conflict is often identified today as a Catholic-Protestant one.

In Yugoslavia, the main cause of the disintegration of the country was political and economic, but religious identity added a violent dimension to it, and accentuated the conflict. The whole conflict turned out to be a test case for fidelity to one's religion and the conquest of territory necessary for the preservation one' identity. The historical reasons for it are well known, like the Catholic dream of resistance to Communism and Orthodoxy through the creation of a belt of Catholic Baltic states even by tolerating fascism and Nazism. But then there emerged an Orthodox-Slavonic, and a Muslim dream, centred on Serbia and Bosnia respectively. This has created a triangular conflict.

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the religious factor is relevant only for a part of the two camps but an influential part. Both sides use the religious argument and both sides kill in the name of God. One party kills to defend the land given to it by God. The use of violence is a religious duty to safeguard a supreme value. The Palestinian side sees the defence of Muslim identity as central and sacred.

In Algeria, the quest for identify is central to the conflict. The issue here is the destruction of a culture and the economic and political failure of the West. The reaction is both against the West and its socio-political and economic models, and its own people who are considered western in life style. But the struggle is carried out in the name of Islam, which is considered to be the sole certain value remaining in the midst of disintegration.

In northeast India which has a considerable Christian population there are various violent insurgency movements. The Hindu nationalists have identified the insurgency movements with Christianity and are whipping up anti-Christian sentiments. The reality is that the northeastern insurgency is a sample case for the search for ethnic and cultural identity and autonomy arising from many factors; the failure of the rest of India to accept and respect its Mongoloid heritage; the allegedly non-transparent political process of integrating these peoples into the Indian union; and the neglect of economic development.

In Kashmir, which many fear will be the nuclear flash-point of the 21st century, a movement for identity and legitimate autonomy has been high-jacked by radical elements and has been communalized and placed in the hands of Pakistan, which now invokes the name of Islam. Many more examples can be added to this list. This survey shows that a conflict which may have economic, cultural, social or ethnic backgrounds can gradually assume a religious garb and threaten to become a matter of preserving one's religious identity.

4.3 Economic Factors

Latin America offers a good example for religious violence generated primarily through economic factors (Sobrino 1997/4: 38-54). Here religion is caught up in violence which it has not generated itself but which is the fruit of institutionalized injustice. Injustice is itself violence because it deprives people of the basic necessities of life, and therefore, life itself. This violence gives rise to more violence, repression, war, and state terrorism. The root cause of this violence is capitalism and the injustice and inequality that accompanies the particular brand of capitalism that exists in Latin America. It is supported by a section of the Church and the conservative evangelical sects with their apolitical and otherworldly message. In the midst of this, many Christians have also perceived the liberating potential of their religion. This reaction which has taken the form of a pastoral and theological movement, called Liberation Theology, is not necessarily violent. But it resists the manipulation of religion and has even defended the possibility of Christian participation in armed struggle. Therefore, although it is anti-violent and is absolutely against the causes of violence, it is not pacifist in the last resort. The political authorities have sought the support of conservative Christians to brand their opponents as irreligious, and to uphold what they profess as Christian values. There have been violence against and persecution of these Christians shown in the murder of archbishop Romero, the massacre of the Jesuits of the UCA, the rape and murder of the four US nuns and countless other crimes. Here we see how economics in a direct sense causes religious violence.

To this must be added another type of economic activity, namely the funding activities of some groups from the rich countries in the poorer countries. Religious militants from around the world, including violent groups, receive vital funds from the United States, Saudi Arabia etc. In the United States, adherents of different religions live quite peacefully side by side, but they generate conflict elsewhere. Were it not for American financial aid for terrorist networks of the Palestinians and the Israeli rejectionists in West Asia, so much violence would not have taken place there. Christian fundamentalist evangelical sects who cause significant conflict in many parts of the world are mostly funded from the United States. Russia passed a rather repressive "Religion Law" in 1997 because of the evangelical sects streaming into that country with large funds from the United States. Many rich evangelical sects are engaged in aggressive missionary work in India

and that is one of the reasons for the anti-Christian propaganda there in recent times. The financial support given by Saudi Arabia to militant and non-militant groups of Muslims in many parts of the world is well known. There can be many explanations for this dangerous funding activity. One could be that privileged people express their darker fears and aspirations through conflicts that they support elsewhere. Secondly, the wealth that they have created for themselves has not healed the wounds that they as immigrants have brought with them. There may be still other factors at work here (Gopin 2000: 213-15), but I would consider it an example of economic causes fuelling religious violence.

4.4 Political Factors

The contemporary Indian situation where there is a systematic campaign by the advocates of Hindutva against the minorities, especially Muslims and Christians, is an example of the politicization of religion as a cause of violence. Surely as in most other cases, there is an intertwining of many factors, but the political factor is obvious to any one. Hindutva is an ideology that defines India as a Hindu nation through a process of cultural homogenization, social consolidation, and above all political mobilization of the majority community against the minorities. It has a clear political agenda and it has unleashed violence against the minorities in India.

This political dimension becomes apparent when we examine the history of the emergence of Hindutva. One of the main causes was the political, economic, cultural and religious insecurity that some of the upper caste and upperclass Hindus felt under British rule. As a reaction to this, a Maharastrian brahmin Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) codified the political and social doctrine known as Hindutva. He argued that the Hindus constitute a single nation and asked people to build up a Hindu Rastra (Hindu nation) in order to safeguard the interests of the Hindus. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) founded the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925 in order to consolidate Hindu unity against the other religions in India. Accused of being associated with the assassination of Gandhi, the RSS was banned, but it kept itself alive through various organizations, like the Jana Sangh (1951), Vishva Hindu Parishad (1964), Bajrang Dal (1984), etc. The Jan Sangh, its political wing, changed its name into Bharatiya Janata Party in 1980. With its coming to power recently, there began a rapid polarization of the Hindu/non-Hindu fronts. The issues apparently seem to be the Ram temple in Ayodhya or the conversion activities by Christian missionaries, but a closer look at the facts shows that a great deal of the agenda consists in organizing greater Hindu consolidation for future electoral combat. Indonesia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Afghanistan etc., too, offer examples of military or "tribal" politics playing active roles in causing religious violence.

4.5 Religious Pluralism

Another factor that causes religious violence is religious pluralism and

the claim of some religions to superiority. Pluralism is a fact of reality. The postmodern intellectual situation is characterized by pluralism and by its very definition rules out hegemonic attitudes (Latourelle and Fisichella 1994: 783). Religious pluralism, too, is an accepted fact in the modern world. The awareness of and openness to the vitality and authentic power of other religious traditions should put an end to all superiority claims by religions because in the name of this claim, there has occurred massive violence and oppression. For example, Christian overconfidence that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ was final has led to harsh and damning judgments of those who did not accept the Christian claims. Today people realize that even when religious traditions have sharply divergent views of human existence and the universe, their central values often resonate with those of other traditions.

Any claim to superiority by one religion over the others can meet with stiff resistance. In the wake of the publication of the Encyclical letter Redemptoris Missio by pope John Paul II (AAS, 83 (1991): 249-340), the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohammed, summoned the archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Soter Fernandes, to seek explanation about certain passages in the document. A similar reaction was shown by the authorities in Indonesia. The recent exhortation of Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, created a similar reaction in India (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia of the Holy Father John Paul II 2000). One of the newspapers in India commented: "The head of the Roman Catholic Church painted his own vision of the 21st century in which the third millennium would see the triumph of the cross in Asia just as the first millennium had seen Christianity conquer Europe. Thus the pope has confirmed the suspicions of the sangh parivar that conversion is very high on the Roman Catholic agenda" (*The Telegraph* 1999: editorial). A still more recent document, *Dominus Jesus* (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2000: 33) contains the rather disrespectful expression that the non-Christian religions are in a gravely deficient situation as regards salvation. If they are deficient then they should accept the better religion, Christianity, which means evangelism. But the fact is that evangelism ipso facto is unacceptable to the orthodox Hindu mindset. It is in this sense that religious pluralism can become a cause of violence.

4.6 Violence against Women and Dissidents in the Name of Religion

This is another area of religious violence. Take for example the biblical tradition and its treatment of women. Of course it must be said that all Christian churches are not equally guilty of this, and other religious traditions, too, have religiously sanctioned violence against women. An insistence on the fatherhood of God, the absence of women in positions of church leadership, and the exclusive language of the liturgy etc. provide ideological and social support for violence done to women (Meyer-Wilmes 1997/4: 56). A number of biblical texts reproduce the whole gamut of sexual violence against women, the power of men over women, and a the-

ology of suffering which is prescribed as a means to overcome this violence. There are passages in sacred texts which continually demean women's sexuality and legitimize male violence (Judges 19). The portraying of women by scripture and tradition across all religions as not possessing full human subjectivity, but only derivatively, has to be seen as a contributing cause to domestic violence. Religion fails to own its own responsibility for the pressurizing of women into accepting cultural norms which sanction violence (Grey 1997/4: 65). The deplorable treatment of widows sanctioned by Hinduism is well known. The religiously sanctioned subordination of women in many Islamic societies and the reaction to it are also much discussed today.

Another area of religious violence is the legacy of violence against dissidents in the name of protecting the purity of the faith. Dissidence or heresy is a threat to the very identity of the faith. Usually dissidents are ahead of their times, are critics of the power and order on which the faith depends, and this causes anxiety and unrest in the minds of religious authorities. Those who do this suffer violence and oppression, physically (fortunately, a thing of the past), and psychologically. The history of this violence which may have had political, sociological and theological arguments to justify it need not detain us; but the fact is that large scale violence has taken place on this account (Häring 1997/4b: 81-92). Even in modern times the Catholic Church has maintained rigid and intolerant rules toward the dissidents.

5. Overcoming Violence in the Name of Religion

Our survey has been a brief one omitting many countries and regions but one which still shows the many faces of religious violence today. So much violence in the name of religion should surprise everyone. People thought that it was a thing of the past. On the other hand, one is even more surprised at the opposite trend. At a casual search on the Internet on the theme of peace, one is astonished to see several peace initiatives by people and organizations throughout the world. Most of them are religious people who draw inspiration from their religious traditions. One of the best examples of this is the "Truth and Reconciliation Committee" in South Africa. This only shows that the world's religions have a reservoir of spiritual and ethical values which can build up rather than destroy. Never before in history have so many religious leaders and adherents of religions been inspired to work for a truly multicultural and multireligious vision (Gopin 2000: 4). Never before has there been such a high level of interaction among the world's faiths. But seldom in history has so much of hatred been expressed toward other people in the name of religion as in our own times. So religion has a dual legacy of violence and peacemaking. The task today is to make peace the first and only option. To this end religions should venture on a theoretical and practical action plan which could have the following components.

5.1 Recognition of the 'Religious'

We must acknowledge the rightful place of religion in individual and

societal life today. Now that the promise of the demise of religion has proved to be a myth, our task is to analyse how the new found religious sensibility and the reawakening of conservative religion can be channelled so as to contribute to peace and well-being in the world. Religion is not wished away by an overdose of secularism or a liberal, rationalist discourse. As has been shown above, religion is a mighty force; it can be recharged with collective energy and join forces with any situation in a most unexpected manner, in the least expected places and times. Naivete about religion can be dangerous.

The standard approach to religious conflict by the liberal, secular state and the intelligentsia which controls it, has been to fight against it by strengthening the typical components of civil society: civil rights for all, a free press, honest courts, integrated police system, etc. (Gopin 2000: 15). Others advocate that the best way to move society away from intolerance and violence is to develop a universal set of guidelines, a global political culture, a global ethic, a global economy, universal human rights, etc. Still others predict that religious violence will cease when economic progress is achieved. But none of these solutions address the reality of the growing enthusiasm for religion among ordinary human beings and the power it has over them. This phenomenon should be addressed. What has given religion such an extraordinary hold on millions of people all over the world and why is it susceptible to manipulation by religious leaders? In fact it is the failure of the rational, secular, apparently democratic polity itself. Civil society has been weakened or rendered dysfunctional. Modernity as embodied in these institutions has become alienating. So people turn to religion and the rhetoric of religious leaders seems even more persuasive.

5.2 Experiencing the 'Religious'

Secondly, we need to recognize that we are naturally violent, that it is always within us, and that it might break out at any moment to ravage all that we hold dear. The lie that people have always wanted to believe is that violence is wholly outside themselves and is caused by 'others'. Demonizing the 'other' and making the 'other' violent and hateful is a game that has been played often. Rene Girard's theory has been mentioned above: the very origin of religion is for the containment of violence. Now the question is, how can religions overcome this violence. Religions have to devise mature ways of encountering human nature in its totality and making its adherents aware of their violent side. Calling the violence within by name is the first creative step in this direction. Then one has to use the nonviolent streams of one's religion to face this violence. Every religion has this stream running through it: love, empathy, nonviolence (ahimsa), sanctity of life, interiority, compassion, asceticism and discipline, prophetic criticism, etc.

In other words, the most effective means of overcoming violence through religion is personal transformation through religion. Religion should affect the internal working of the human mind and heart. For that, religions have al-

ways emphasized personal morality, ethical behaviour etc. Violent behaviour cannot be separated from inner transformation through the eradication of sin, ignorance, suffering or whatever name religions give to this negative side of the human situation, and the practice of transforming virtues. There are countless examples of this in our world. Forgiveness is perhaps the greatest religious virtue. It has been proved that it has a profound healing power. It is a virtue that religions could teach its followers to practise. Another dimension of personal transformation through religion is the need for prophetic protest by religious people against other subtler forms of violence, like injustice, inequality, discrimination, etc.

5.3 A Pluralistic Vision

Thirdly, religions have to devise ways and means to live in a genuinely pluralistic situation. This I would consider one of the greatest challenges to religions in our times. Pluralism is not ethical relativism or the attitude that anything goes. It is the foundation of the intellectual flexibility and cross-fertilization that characterize the modern world. Plurality as a fact and pluralism as an ideology should be clearly distinguished (Newbegin 1993: 239-240). Surely the acceptance of pluralism is not in itself the solution for religious violence and does not substitute the age old values of honesty, justice, love, compassion, etc. But still pluralism should be respected. It is the law of the universe. It is the ability to have an identity which can at the same time cross the border into another's humanity. It is the refusal to see an ontological opposition to the 'other', a dualistic division between the good 'self' and the evil 'other', between the saved and the damned. It is the humanization of the 'other,' instead of demonization. Religions must learn to accept this. Then they will rethink the meaning of fundamental concepts like mission, witness, proclamation, etc. One should ask whether proselytism is necessarily a value, whether coercion of others into one's own religion is the way to spiritual fulfilment and whether numerical and institutional superiority over others is a religious value. We need a "new psychological foundation for institutional fulfilment of obligations and dreams, one that focuses on the internal quality of a community's life and values, not its corporate victory over others" (Gopin 2000: 206).

It is here that fashioning an agenda for dialogue becomes important (Origins (21/8) 1991: 130). The Christian claim to absolute truth put forward by the churches enmeshed in a network of imperialistic features, is to be rejected. This is not to reject Christianity's unique significance. No religion can claim absoluteness nor is there any place for relativism and the surrender of one's deepest convictions to the supermarket of the liberals. Christians are called to a critical appropriation of their tradition and also to an openness to truth and grace in other traditions. Given the amount of data from the world's religions, and given the relatively recent beginning of serious dialogue among most of the major religious traditions, it may well be premature to seek any final, theoretical, conceptual resolution of the problem of religious pluralism. The constantly widening horizon of knowledge

calls upon religions both to the incorporation of insights and images from other traditions and the maintenance of identity in a spirit of openness, humility and patience before the chaotic (Lefebure 2000: 174-184)[6] diversity of the worlds religions. Chaos theory suggests that we cannot predict or control the outcome of many natural processes and cultural encounters. But there is a purpose behind them all the same. The world's religions, too, have a purpose in the mystery of the universe, and there is no place for any one tradition overruling others or indulging in triumphalism. If truth is important, the primary concern is to search for it in whatever way one can and wherever it is possible.

5.4 A New Hermeneutic

Fourthly, there is the urgent need for a new hermeneutic of religious texts. There has been a lot of violence in the name of religious texts which have emerged from varying contexts. Hermeneutics is a process that is going on subtly every time someone reads a text, and in particular situations this can turn violent. It is the duty of religious authority to help the correct reading of texts. That brings us to the specific place of religious authority in religious violence, and the need for affirmative action by religious leadership. No one can underestimate the power of leaders. In many societies emulation of an ideal figure including a deity is important. It can lead to prosocial or antisocial attitudes. Even their smallest gestures take on mythic significance. It is a fact that many developments in the world today are threatening to many religious leaders, who, too, are products of their individual and cultural histories. A positive methodology for interacting with religious leaders and thinkers is important and there is also the need to train leaders who are ready to incorporate the peaceful attitudes of a religion. Unfortunately, often religious leaders appear to have become helpless spectators as politicians and criminals hijack religion to promote their vested interests.

5.5 A Call for Justice

Justice is another name for peace, and the lack of justice is the cause of many violent global conflicts. Justice is giving one his/her due economically and culturally. The phenomenon of contemporary globalization with its economic model called market economy or global capitalism is unjust by its very logic. Millions of people are negatively affected by it. It is understandable that the marginalized and the dispossessed are prepared to work for an alternative vision, often with the help of politicized religion. Globalization has a strong cultural component as well, namely, the attempt to impose a western culture on all. This is resented by many and they get the help of religions to resist this. The exaggerated claims of contemporary globalization should be exposed, and the fears, the resentment and the harm it has done should be assessed. The nature of civil society should be determined on the basis of consensus. No solution can be imposed, especially solutions which are culturally alien and economically oppressive. Universal concepts should be framed with a provision for their intercultural application. Most often the solutions proposed are

culturally rooted in the western context, but they claim universal applicability. This is an unwarranted intrusion into the inner life of another culture and it will have violent repercussions which may also involve the religions.

6. Conclusion

Religious violence, combined as it is with many factors which are central to the human situation, will continue to occur as long as these factors exist. Religious violence legitimized by false or true religious assumptions will continue to occur as long as these assumptions exist. Therefore, the task of everyone concerned about religious violence is to address these problems. If I may be allowed a prognosis, some of the factors that could be responsible for violence involving religions in the coming decades would be the attempt by the West at economic and cultural hegemony, refusal to accept pluralism, religious fundamentalism, and the politicization of religion. It is a realistic assumption that these problems are not going to be resolved easily. But if the new found religiosity, the emerging cooperation among the various religions to establish peace, the tremendous economic possibilities, etc. are used toward a fundamental reordering of our worldview these problems can be justly solved. Religions are important and will continue to be important. They are the guardians of conscience and the soul of culture. But they have a serious task ahead, of bringing the ethical back into the centre and cooperating in the creation of a just, compassionate and equitable society by challenging their adherents to confront their selfishness, pride, greed and violence within. This is the only way to purge the world of rabble rousing clerics and their demonic claims which have created enormous terror and bloodshed in the world.

Endnotes

1. This is what Frans de Waal has demonstrated, challenging the common view that animals do not kill out of cruelty or sheer aggression as quoted from the Dutch edition Van nature goed. Over de oorsprong van goed en kwaad in mensen en andcre dieren, Amsterdam and Antwerp 1996. Quoted in Wils 1997/4: 112).
2. For an excellent treatment of the "Just War" theory, see Lefebure 2000: chapters 3-5.
3. Such violence is caused today perhaps only in India, and that, too, in a limited way.
4. I am referring to the history of communal violence in India which are often caused by nonreligious factors (Parathazham 1998: 5-18).
5. In the following paragraphs I am using a summary of the analysis made by Houtart (1997: 5-7).
6. Lefebure makes an interesting connection between Chaos Theory and the plurality of religions.

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Does the Gita Advocate Violence?

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The question of the relationship between religion and violence has been widely discussed today. Does religion legitimise violence? Does violence find justification in religions? Occasionally passages from religious scriptures are quoted in support of perpetrating violence. Political parties craving for power and commercial groups greedy for money manipulate the religious feelings of people in order to make gains. Religion is often misused and religious scriptures are misinterpreted in this arena. A return to the authentic religious scriptures will show that no genuine religion would advocate violence, but rather communicate the message of non-violence: peace and harmony, love and compassion.

Here I would like to explore whether the Bhagavad-Gita Gita supports violence or offers the message of non-violence. The Gita, written in the form of a dialogue on the battlefield, gives *prima facie* the impression of advocating a violent attack on the enemies. Arjuna, the commander-in-chief of the Padavas, refuses to wage a war on compassionate grounds. Krishna, the charioteer, tries to persuade him to put off his fine feelings and face the situation with valour by taking up arms. Had Krishna driven him off the battlefield, the war may not have taken place and much of the bloodshed would have been avoided. Hence, the Gita discourse has been often interpreted as giving a philosophy of violent warfare. Taken in this sense Gita is even today used to justify violent attacks on people who are considered to be enemies.

But here we need a deeper probing into the text and context of the Gita with questions like: who are the real *enemies*? What type of *war* is the Gita speaking about? Which is the *battlefield* that is alluded to? And who are actually *Arjuna* and *Krishna*?

Gita, a Mystical Poem

The Bhagavad-Gita has reached us as part of the Bhishmaparva of the great epic Mahabharatha. Critical literary studies have proved that Mahabharatha was composed not by one author but by many in the course of the period between 6th Century BC and 2th Century AD (Radhakrishnan 1957: xviii). Vyasa, the legendary compiler of the Mahabharatha, is a name that means the one who divides, the one who edits. In the corpus of the Mahabharatha one can

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find texts of a rich variety of literary genres, works of various authors and the contributions of different ages. Independent literary compilations of individual sages and poets have been constantly incorporated into the evolving corpus of the epic till it acquired the final shape in which it has reached us. The Bhagavad Gita could be taken as one such text interpolated into the Mahabharatha in the course its textual evolution. Considering several literary and theological factors one may conclude that the Gita was composed around 3OO BC as an independent mystical poem by an enlightened sage. In order to *save* his text he inserted it into the evolving epic the Mahabharatha. In doing so, he found an apt space at the crucial moment on the eve of the decisive war between the Paṇdavas and the Kauravas.

However apt the moment of the Gita discourse was found to be, the creation of that space by the author was really ingenious. According to the classical norms of waging a war it is not at all appropriate to conduct a long philosophical discourse on the battlefield just before the clarion call, when the armies are arrayed on both sides. This is not the time and place for doctrinal instruction. Had it taken place much before the war and away from the battleground one could understand its significance. A classroom situation created on the battlefield is in itself something artificial.

Hence we have to probe into the real intention of the author of the Gita in using the imagery of a discourse on a chariot on the battlefield. In other words, the *text* has to be interpreted in the *context*. In the contextual background of the Gita we come across a classical text, the Katha Upanishad, which is definitely a pre-Gita compilation. In it the rich symbolism of the chariot is described as follows:

> Know the Atman as the lord of the chariot,
>
> And the body as, verily, the chariot;
> Know the *buddhi* as the charioteer,
>
> And the *manah* as, verily, the reins.
>
> The senses, they say, are the horses,
> The object of the senses the paths;
>
> The atman associated with the senses and the mind,
>
> Is said to be the enjoyer
>
> Kaddopanishad, 1.3.3-4.

The Upanishad develops further the symbolism of the chariot and says that there are moments in our life when the senses go out of control like wicked horses as they are not harnessed with the buddhi and hence the mind cannot restrain them. The word yoga is derived from the root *yuj*, which originally means to yoke, to harness, and hence is related to the symbolism of the chariot. The person who cannot control his senses and mind is called *ayuktah* (Kath Up. 1.3.5). In Maitri Upanishad 4:4 the embodied atman is spoken of as *radthitha*, the carted one. The author of the Gita takes up this archetypal image of the chariot familiar to the readers of his time in order to describe the dynamics of spiritual transformation. A person who experiences acute disharmony in his life (*ayogah*) surrenders himself to the divine Lord, who enters his *buddhi* (intuitive faculty), takes hold of the reins of the *manah* (discursive mind) and controls the senses. The di-

vine Lord thus becomes the charioteer and guide, teacher and saviour for the human seeker in a crisis situation. The battlefield is in fact the arena of life's ongoing struggles. "Life is a battle and a field of death – this is Kurukshetra. War and destruction are not only a universal principle of our life here in its purely material aspects, but also of our mental and moral existence. It is self-evident that in the actual life of man intellectual, social, political, moral we can make no real step forward without a struggle, a battle between what exists and lives, and what seeks to exist and live and between all that stands behind either" (Aurobindo 1980: 37,39). This is made clear in the opening verse of the Gita: the Kurukshetra is the Dharmakshetra; the battlefield of life is the place where righteousness and harmony prevail. In moments of severe crisis, when humans are at the end of their energy, the divine Lord enters the human chariot of life and takes them out of the crisis. This assurance is given in the salvific message that is something unique in the Gita (4: 7-8)."The life of the soul is symbolised by the battlefield of Kurukshetra and the Kauravas are the enemies who impede the progress of the soul. Krishna stands for the voice of God" (Radhakrishnan 1958: 520-521).

Here we touch upon the central teaching of the Gita. The dialogue between Arjuna and Sreebhagavan is the symbolic expression of the ongoing inner dialogue between manah and buddhi, between the individual atman and the supreme Atman, between the human seeker and the divine Lord (Berg Quoted in Sharma 1987: 31). The entire dialogue has only one aim: to deliver the human seeker from the situation of *ayoga* to the experience of *yoga*, from disharmony to harmony, and thereby to make him an effective instrument in the process of transformation from adharma to dharma. An integral inner harnessing of the senses with the mind and of the mind with buddhi, and of the buddhi with the atman, and of the personal atman with the divine Atman takes place in this yoga process (3:42, 6:20-25). The entire spirituality of the Gita may be summarised in the one call: *yogastah kuru karmani*, being harnessed within, get engaged in your works (2:48). The dialogue between Arjuna and the divine Lord on the chariot is therefore the symbol of the inner dialogue that takes place between the human soul and the divine Lord in the cave *of the heart*. "Bhagavad Gita is not a historical work, but under the guise of physical warfare it describes the dialogue that perpetually goes on in the hearts of all human beings; the physical warfare has been brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring." (Gandhi 1931: 4). "The scene described in the Gita symbolises allegorically the situation which most human beings face some time in their lives, namely, the challenge of decision-making when one is not sure whether what one is about to do is right or wrong. The Gita provides an excellent technique of decision-making" (Singh 1977:3).

Bhagavad Gita should therefore be taken primarily as a mystical poem. There is a personal mystical experience that gave shape to this text, as is the case with many mystical writings worldwide. The author of the Gita finds himself in

an acute crisis: he does not know in which direction he should take his next step. "My mind is totally perplexed concerning what to do; deep sorrow parches my senses; I cannot see things clearly any more! "(2:7-8). Unable to face the situation he is tempted to flee from the battlefield of life. But here he does something salutary: he surrenders himself totally to the Lord. "Oh, divine Master, tell me clearly, what is auspicious for me. I am your disciple. I take refuge in you. Teach me." (2:7) With this he creates space within himself for the saving divine intervention. He surrenders the reins of his mind to the divine charioteer. In his *buddhi* the divine Lord enters his life. And it is in this inner sacred space that the dialogue takes place. In the course of this salvific dialogue the human seeker is enlightened and strengthened; at the end he stands up and declares: "My delusion is gone. I have regained clarity of vision, all through your grace, Lord. " (18:73) The human person is led out of his crisis and given a holistic vision of reality.

This is the basic mystical experience of the Gita. In order to describe it and communicate it to the successive generations the sage picks out two characters from the evolving story of the Mahabharatha: Arjuna and Krishna, and he clothes his experience in the form a long dialogue between them at Kurukshetra on the eve of the decisive war. By selecting this motif he presents the core of his spirituality powerfully: encounter with the divine Lord does not take us away from the struggles of life, but inserts us deeply into them. What the sage asks for is not the giving up of works, but the renunciation of the greed (*kama*) that vitiates the works (6:1). The theme of the war is mentioned in chapters I-II clearly but as the dialogue evolves the theme of the physical war recedes and the message of the inner spiritual battle comes to the fore. " The echoes of the battlefield die away, and we have only an interview between God and man." (Radhakrishnan 1971: 521). The motif of the physical war is 'something like a canvas on which the sage paints the process of the inner battle', that goes on in the heart of every person (Nataraja Guru 1962: ix). Hence, as we read the Gita our attention is to be directed to the impressive description of the spiritual liberative process of the Gita; we should not be confined to the epic context, which is only an artificial setting. "Since the Gita's subject is not description of the war and justification of violence, it is wrong to give much importance to these. If, moreover, it is difficult to reconcile a few of the verses with the idea the Gita advocates, i.e., non-violence, it is still more difficult to reconcile the teaching of the work as a whole with the advocacy of violence" (Gandhi, *Bhagavad Gita*: 12)

Who is the Enemy?

In order to grasp the deeper meaning of the notion of war in the Gita one has to ask: who is the enemy that the text alludes to? If the Gita is not the work of the political history of a people the question regarding the Kauravas is a pseudo-question. Since Gita is a mystical poem, one has to explore the reality of the enemy primarily within oneself. Intrinsic to the human person, according to the Gita, there is an ongo-

ing battle between two attitudes to life: one coming from the ego-assertion (*ahamkara*) and the other evolving out of self-realisation (*atmabodha*). What enslaves a person to the ego is greed (*kama*), and what liberates a person is the sense of harmony (*dharma*). Kama is the destructive force in the fabric of the human psyche. This is the enemy within:

> Greed it is, arising from the constituent of the passionate strand of nature, all devouring, mightily wicked – know this to be your enemy on earth.
>
> This is the wise man's eternal enemy; by this is wisdom overcast, whatever form it takes, a fire insatiable.
>
> Therefore strike down this evil element, the sinful destroyer of wisdom and discrimination.
>
> It is really hard to get at this enemy appearing in the form of greed. Having realised the Self beyond the buddhi, having steadied your self in the divine Self, smites this enemy!
>
> (3: 37-43 *passim)*

If the real enemy is the greed within, the real battle takes place within oneself. To get on to this battle one has to stand firm in the inner consciousness of being one with the divine Self. The inner purification demands primarily a deliverance from the grips of kama. "Only by renouncing the desires coming from greed can one gradually get rooted in the consciousness of the true Self." (6:24-25) Hence Gita proclaims the ethics of *nishkama karma*: "do your duty without greedily clinging on to the fruits of the action" (6:1, 3:19: 2:48) One has to liberate oneself from the possessive grip of *I and mine*. "The devotee is the one who is free from the feelings of *I* and mine." (12:13) "Liberated from all sorts of desires coming from kama he moves about without the feeling of *I do* and *for me*." (2:71) The only motivation for his life and work would then be ' to bring about the integral welfare of the world': "The unwise act out of attachment to the works; the wise however being freed from kama work solely for the integral welfare of the world" (*lokasamgraha*, 3:25).

Victory of the Self

When through the inner battle one overcomes the narrow confines of kama, the perspectives are broadened. "One perceives the divine Self in all things and all in the Self; one sees God present in all things and all in God " (6:29-30). One experiences 'the divine presence pulsating in the heart of all beings. ' (10:20) The entire universe is experienced as a *theophany*: matter is the *body* of the Lord, for everything is *pervaded* by the Lord, who is the *Ground of being* (11:15f, 9:4, 7:8-12) One develops an intense feeling that one lives and moves in a divine milieu (6:31). The work that one does becomes thereby participation in the divine work of establishing universal harmony (*dharma*). When one surrenders one's works to the divine master one finds oneself as instrument in the hands of the divine Lord (9:27). Hence the divine injunction: "At all times muse upon me and get involved in the battle. May your mind and buddhi be surrendered to me" (8:7) Definitely the reference is not to the physical war as is evident in the subsequent verses, which describe the process of meditation.

The goal of the spiritual battle is therefore the individual's inner harmony (*yoga*) that leads to the universal harmony of the world (*dharma*). "If the buddhi is lit up by the consciousness of the Self and makes it the master-light of its life, its guidance will be in harmony with the cosmic purpose. If the light of the Atman is reflected in buddhi in a proper way, that is, if the buddhi is cleared of all obscuring tendencies, the light will not be distorted, and buddhi will be in union with the Atman (Radhakrishnan 1977: 116). When the Lord motivates Arjuna to 'brace himself for the fight' (*yuddhaya yujyaswa*, 2:38) , what he means is that Arjuna should 'brace himself for yoga'(*yogaya yujyaswa*, 2:50). And when the Lord asks Arjuna to 'stand up resolute for the fight' (*uttishta, yuddhaya krtanischayah,* 2:37), what he means is that Arjuna should ' stand up resorting to yoga'' (*yogam atistha uttishta* 4:42) The challenge in the Gita is, therefore , to get at the inner battle against an ego-centred attitude to life. Then it becomes verily a battle for God's work: for the *establishment of dharma* (4:8)

With the inner freedom won through the inner battle one is enabled to discover one's specific duty in society: "Devoted in joy to one's own duty one attains perfection" (*swadharma*, 18:45). Discovery of one's duty is a matter of inner freedom and maturity. The teaching of the Gita enables a seeker to grow into maturity. "The freed soul is inspired by divine knowledge and moved by the divine will. He acquires the mode of being (*bhava*) of God" (Radhakrishnan *Bhagavad Gita*: 76). Each one has to discern for oneself what the Lord wants one to do in this world. Then one's dharma becomes an insertion into the universal dharma of the Lord. " By dedicating one's works to the Lord, who is the source of the activity of all beings and by whom this universe is pervaded, one attains perfection" (18: 46). With this attitude one develops a deeper subject-consciousness: I am not the real subject of what I do but the divine Lord is the true subject of my works (*anahamkara* 13:9). "The one who is free of kama and possessiveness, the one who is liberated from the *I do* feeling, is destined to *become Brahman*" (18:53).

War and Violence

Here the question of *just war* gets a theonomous meaning. Having gone through the inner battle through which the ego-centredness is conquered, one makes a discernment and may discover that a physical war has to be waged. Such a decision is not motivated by interests evolving out of kama but by concerns coming from an awareness of dharma. In this sense Gita speaks of *dharma-war* (*dharmayuddha*, 2:31, 33). Here the physical war is understood as participation in the divine work of establishing dharma in the world. And the person who gets engaged in it considers it as fulfilling his duty of protecting the rights of people. A person who holds responsibility for a country may have to take decisions which may cause disturbances for some sections of people. But such a decision is preceded by an open search for the well-being of all and a sincere dialogue with all parties concerned (cfr. Mahabharata, Udyogaparvam 126). What the Gita

demands is that no taint of kama, no element of egoism, should be at work in such a decision.(18:59). Offensive steps taken out of kama leads to violence, which is totally unethical. Only a person who has gone through the hard and assiduous battle within oneself has the freedom and credibility to wage a physical war that may become inevitable from the dharma point of view. "It must be remembered that it is war of this kind and under these conditions that the Gita had in view, war considered as an inevitable part of human life, but so restricted and regulated as to serve like other activities the ethical and spiritual development which was then regarded as the whole real object of life, war destructive within certain carefully fixed limits of the bodily life of individual men but constructive of their inner life and of the ethical elevation of the race" (Aurobindo 1980: 46).

However, the idea of the physical war cannot be pushed to the fore in interpreting the Gita. A war may be the last resort in solving a problem because it would inevitably mean a certain amount of suffering inflicted on others. But the ethos that is dominant in the Gita is that of equanimity, non-violence and compassion. A person who is interiorly integrated (*yogin*) is a person of equanimity: " equanimous towards friends and foes, comrades and enemies, saints and sinners" (6:9); "in the selfsame way he looks at allies and enemies" (14:25); "he is unperturbed in success and failure, in gain and loss" (2:38, 48) ("In the language of the Gita I want to live at peace with both friend and foe" (Gandhi 1924)). Such a liberated person has developed a higher consciousness that keeps his mind above the dualities of the conflicts of life (*dvandvateetah* (4:22, 2:45). This state of consciousness would not allow him to enter upon a path of violence. He will rather be 'passionately concerned about the good of all beings' (*sarvabhutahiteratah*, 12:4) He will see reflections of his *true Self* in all beings and thus feel *one* with all (6:31-32) As hallmarks of a liberated person Gita mentions mercy (*daya*) and compassion (*karuna*) (16:1, 12:13):

> He who feels no hatred for any being,
> who is friendly and compassionate,
> free from the possessive feelings of *I and mine*, even-minded in pain and pleasure, patient and forbearing...he is dear to me (12:13).

This compassionate attitude is the response to the perception of the divine presence in all beings. When the entire realm of reality is seen as the divine realm, one cannot do any form of violence towards any sentient being. In no verse does the Gita advocate violence; the term violence (*himsa*) appears only once in the entire text, and that is to condemn violence: Only those whose mind is clouded by the power of darkness (*tamas*) and whose steps are taken out of delusion (*moha*) inflict violence on others without any regard for the tragic consequences and destruction (18:25). Repeatedly Gita upholds the value of non-violence (*ahimsa*) as the specific characteristic of the person who goes through the spiritual sadhana (10:5, 13:7, 16:2, 16:3, 17:14). In this perception Gita stands under the influence of Buddhism (Upadhyaya 1983: 528-539). Non-violence is not the attitude of a

timid person; on the contrary, it is the fearful person who in defence of himself forces violence on others. One who is anchored in the ego and motivated by greed for power and money causes a lot of violence on others (16:13-16). One who does not have self-confidence turns out to be violent in every possible way. A person who is 'firmly established in the experience of the true Self' (2:55f) is a self-confident person and he will never take to violence. The entire teaching of the Gita is geared to making persons self-confident and interiorly free, and thus non-violent. *Yogathah kuru karmani* – be grounded in the divine Self and get engaged in your works (2:48) – when this central message of the Gita comes across to the nation, individuals and communities can only promote a culture of non-violence. *Ahimsa paramo dharma.*

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JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 31-44

Sacralization of Violence
Any Way Out?

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This paper surveys the phenomenon of violence in its relation to religion, as exemplified in the two recent incidents of the terrorist attack on WTC and the Gujarat Genocide. Terrorism and communal violence cannot be classified together; however, the denominator of religion operates as a commonality between them. After analyzing how and why real-world struggles get sacralized, we probe into the two responses to violence, represented by Rene Girard (theological response) and Gandhi (practical application). In spite of the many differences, both seem to agree upon the *'only way'* to unwind the coil of violence.

1. Two Dates that are a Continuum

1.1. Sept 11, 2001

The terrorist attack on WTC and Pentagon was rather an abrupt act, which began and ended within hours. However within that short period, the act has acquired almost Trans-historical, Trans-temporal dimensions. In that sense, the attack is a continuum; it has been memorialized into the lives of people. From far away in India, EPW, not a periodical that is known to be sympathetic to the US, had this to say:

> No words can possibly reflect the horror of Tuesday's (Sept 11, 2001) mass murder of men, women and children – ordinary airline passengers and workers in commercial and governmental offices – by terrorists using hijacked planes to blow up the World Trade Centre in New York and a part of the Pentagon complex in Washington. Nor the psychopathic inhumanity of those who over weeks and months went about cold-bloodedly planning and executing this crime against all humankind. What has sent shock-waves round the world, even more than the actual human and physical devastation, terrible as it has been, is the realization how vulnerable even a country as powerful and as well defended against external attacks as the US is to the sort of invisible enemy who struck on Tuesday. And the next time round the enemy might choose to arm himself with chemical or biological weapons even a crude nuclear device (*EPW* 2001: 3491).

1.2. Feb 27, 2002 – Mar-Apr, 2002

The Godhra violence and the Gujarat genocide had a definite begin-

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ning, but does not seem to have an end; rather it ends in a continuum. By mid-May, the violence and hatred are not quenched but seem to have seeped into the lives of people bringing an apparent calm, probably only to rise up like a volcano. The Gujarat violence exemplifies the continuum aspect of violence. Let us listen to an eyewitness accounts:

> The torching of bogey S-6 of the Ahmedabad bound Sabarmati Express at Goddhra on Feb 27, in which 58 passengers, including 26 women and 12 children, were burnt to death, is an unpardonable act. ... But, for the burned corpses of the ill-fated passengers to become the justification for armed squads of the ruling BJP and its brother organizations – RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal – to launch a pogrom that sits well with what the UN defines a genocide against the innocent Muslims of Gujarat? ... Dead bodies no longer resembled human beings: they were reduced – whenever they had not been burned to ashes – to a grotesque and pathetic sight that were a haunting reminder of the depth of hatred and the intense dehumanization that the politics of inherent superiority and exclusiveness generates (Communalism Combat 2002: "Genocide" Editorial).
>
> Within hours of the Godhra outrage, the Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal put into motion a meticulously planned pogrom against the Muslim community. Officially the number of dead is 800. Independent reports put the figure at well over 2,000. More than a hundred and fifty thousand people, driven from their homes, now live in refugee camps. Women were stripped, and gang-raped, parents were bludgeoned to death in front of their children. Two hundred and forty dargahs and 180 masjids were destroyed – in Ahmedabad the tomb of Wali Gujarati, the founder of the modern Urdu poem, was demolished and paved over in the course of a night. The tomb of the Musician Ustad Faiyaz Ali Khan was desecrated and wreathed in burning tyres. Arsonists burned and looted shops, homes, hotels, textile mills, buses and private cars. Thousands have lost their lives (Roy 2001: 21).
>
> Increasingly Indian nationalism has come to mean Hindu nationalism, defined not through regard for itself, but through a hatred of the Other. And the Other, for the moment, is not just Pakistan, it's Muslim (Roy 2001: 28).
>
> The fascists did not create the grievance, they seized upon, upturned it and forged from it a false sense of pride. They have mobilized human beings using the lowest common denominator: religion (Roy 2001: 30).

2. Religion: the Common Denominator for Violence.

Religion seems to be a common denominator to violence in the terrorist attack and in communal riots. Both are acts of violence and are inspired and legitimized by religious ideologies. Osama bin Laden believes that in order to protect Islamic faith and practice, he has to defeat the US; the Hindu fundamentalists hold that pure Hinduism can flourish only by creating a Hindu *rashtra* in India and the Muslims are the roadblocks. They have to be eliminated if possible. In terms of the act itself, the attack on US is named as terrorist

attack; whereas the violence in Gujarat is communal and public. There are differences between terrorism and communal violence, and it is not recommended that they be clubbed together. However, we look at them together in order to reflect upon the common religious factor in them.

In both these incidents, there is a religious legitimization of violence. The terrorists and the communalists are convinced that what they do is right and ought to be done. They also receive indirect social approval from the public. If not, such acts would not have been possible. The terrorists and the communalists across the world, perceive that their religious ideologies and cultural identities have been under threat. This is true with regard to the Palestinian Muslims, the Irish Catholics, and the Sikh militants, Christian Identity groups in the US or the Zionists in Israel. Since they have been violated, they feel justified in violating others. The main intention seems to be to preserve their religious and cultural identities. The 'Other', who threatens their identity, has to be fought. This ideological base of violence has been sold to the public that acknowledges this reasoning. Violence behind terrorism and communalism is not merely out of a human propensity for aggression, but flows out of religious or else internal convictions.

3. Symbolism in Violence

The religious dimension is reinforced by the symbolism that is employed in the acts of terrorism and communal violence. In choosing the location, time and object of attack or in the manner in which the terrorists and the communalists behave or comport themselves, religious imageries abound.

3.1. For Osama bin Laden the WTC and the Pentagon are two 'symbolic spaces' representing the economic and military power of the evil empire – the US – and it is his divine mandate to attack them. For the Hindu communalists Babri Masjid represented a violation of Hindu religion and therefore it had to be demolished. For the Muslim fundamentalists to attack the *kar sevaks* in Sabramati Express signified attacking those who pulled down the Babri Masjid. By targeting such centres, they were giving a message to the public: that the mightiest empire is vulnerable and that the Hindus are not totally safe in India. The centrality of the space, time and the audience in terrorist attacks have been studied by Juergensmeyer and he opines that in these attacks there is a war between the secular and the religious. Terrorists want to show that they can control the public space and that the secular governments are not in control (2000: 23-143). In the communal riots too message is given to the secular governments that religious ideology will have to prevail. It is to claim the public and secular space for the religious; it is to access the secular space for the sacred.

3.2. The timing of the attack is significant in that it captures the attention of the public or of the religious minded people. The Kar sevaks undertook the journey to Ayodhya during 'Ram navami' so that it found an acceptable chord in the public. As Juergensmeyer says the terrorist attack

involves special timing so that a dramatic effect is brought about. On the one hand they choose an auspicious time for violence so that the public attention is drawn; on the other hand, by their acts, their day acquires transcendental dimension. Today, Sept 11 has acquired a trans-historical significance; so also Dec 6th in India or Feb-March for Gujarat.

3.3. "Terrorism will not last without being noticed" (Juergensmeyer 2000: 139). Terrorism and communal violence would be pointless without an audience. While the general public remains one of the targets, there is also specific communication to a particular community or nation. In the case of the WTC attack, the US remains the specific audience and in Gujarat violence, the Muslims in Gujarat. Terrorism and communal violence are public performances today. They are often done for the screen so that the public may watch. In the Gujarat riots it is reported that Muslim women were raped in front of the camera, and the Hindu symbols of *trishul* and om were marked on their private parts, and later, people watched these movies. This public display of horror and violence conveys the message that 'Muslim' space represented by their women is occupied and that they remain occupied people as long as those marks on their bodies remain. They remain in Hindustan at the concession of the Hindus. The occupation of 'the Other' is easily done once the religious symbols are marked on them. The *kar sevaks* adorned themselves with saffron scarf and *trishul* as they went around looting, raping and murdering the Muslims.

3.4. This way of transcendalizing the space, time and performance in the act of violence is enhanced when there is the mediation of religious symbols. Religion is at the service of violence. The worst is that the rich sources of images that move, beautiful images – the Ayodhya group, a blue skinned Krishna in his tribanga pose, Siva with the Ganga flowing from the knot of his hair, the eternal Mother whose palms are stretched out to bless – have been put at the service of irrational anger and hatred (Ramanathan 2002: 25).

Through symbolization of space, time and events, and by employing direct religious symbols, the terrorists and the communalists transcendalize their violence. Their struggle and violence acquire cosmic and eschatological dimensions. For bin Laden the war with America is a war that is fought in favour of God, His messenger, and the Muslims. For the Christian Identity groups in the US, the Bible presents a God of war, who fights the metaphysical conflict between good and evil. For the Hindu fundamentalists, in order to preserve *sanatana dharma*, the foreigners – the Muslims, the Christians (the impure ones) – have to be fought against. It is not a struggle of one or two days; it is a millennial struggle the end-victory of which is assured by God. In the vocabulary of Hindu fundamentalists and of terrorists, one can perceive also a metaphysical duality between the spiritual and the material, the enemy representing the latter. In the history of religions, one notices 'salvation armies' who are ready to participate in the eschatological warfare: be it jihadi

groups, dal khalsas, the Bajrang dals or soldiers of the cross. "What makes religious violence particularly savage and relentless is that its perpetrators have placed such religious images of divine struggle – cosmic war – in the service of worldly political battles" (Juergensmeyer 2000: 146).

4. Interrogating Violence

We need to interrogate these religious moorings of modern violence. Why is that religion in modern times needs violence? Why is it that terrorism and violence requires religion? How do the believers accept the divine mandate to annihilate others with such certainty and conviction? Why religious violence at this point of time?

Religions speak of the cosmic battle between the powers of evil and righteousness. The biblical God sides with the victimized Jews in Egypt and even fights with them in their struggle against Pharaoh. The fight in the Gita is to bring back the order in the world that has been temporarily disrupted. The infidels have to be fought against so that one true Allah is adored. In all these, the struggle is to establish order; the fight is to terminate violations and violence. They are in fact symbolic fights in order to bring back the reality of order and harmony. The line between symbol and real is rather thin. How do we distinguish between symbolic violence and real violence? When does the eschatological and cosmic fight between the evil and the good enter the arena of daily and worldly conflicts? "The cosmic struggle is understood to be occurring in this world rather than in a mythical setting. Believers identify personally with the struggle. The struggle is at a point of crisis in which individual action can make all the difference" (Juergensmeyer 2000: 161.). When the real world-struggles get interfaced with cosmic struggle, then the violence of the act gets sacralized.

4.1. Does religion *per se* advocate violence? One could assume that religions propose an eschatological fight against evil; the struggle against evil is perceived by the believers as involving suffering and at times violence. Such perceptions depend upon interpretations. Scriptures unfold the religious truth in an on-going, progressive way, and the believers at a given point of time might perceive a particular struggle as part of the cosmic struggle and advocate violence as legitimate. Conclusively, however, it could be said that all religions teach the effusion of love and harmony, and the apparent legitimization of violence *per se* is temporary and incidental. We shall come back to this question later in this paper.

5. Sacralization of Real-World Struggle

5.1. For the present we shall take up the other side of the question, namely, why do the real-world struggles involve religions? Juergensmeyer, in his analysis of terrorism, points out that the real-world struggle gets hooked on to religion when the struggle is perceived as a defence of the basic identity and dignity of a people or an individual. It acquires a cosmic dimension where the metaphysical struggle is continued in this worldly struggle and wherein gods

are involved (2000: 162). The struggle is perceived as a spiritual warfare against the sense of humiliation that had been experienced by particular groups such as the Irish Catholics, the Arab Muslims, the Hindu fundamentalists etc. Furthermore, the struggle is never lost because the goals are reified and deified: for the Muslims and the Jews the land is God-given; for the Hindus, Bharat is the punyabhoomi. Once it is thus deified, the positions are inflexible and the struggle is the fulfilment of a holy writ. Once the contested elements like the land or a building are sacralized, use of violence gets justified, and the worldly opponents get demonized. This naturally flows into the creation of martyrs and demons, sacrificial victims and the satanized enemies (Juergensmeyer 2000: 182). Incidentally, it may be said that while analyzing the satanization of the US by the Muslim fundamentalists, Juergensmeyer exonerates the US completely, ignoring the latter's history of complicity with the oppressive military regimes in South America, the horrifying Vietnam War, and its support to military and dictatorial regimes across the world, as and when it suited American interests. "...The US support for corrupt and authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world – which ensure their survival by persecuting legitimate political opponents and constricting the political space – is driving Islamist activists underground, forcing them to take up the gun and hit back at their oppressors. Osama bin Laden may be an extreme example of Islam gone wrong but there are many who harbour genuine grievances against the US." (Shivsankar 2002).

5.2. While this seems to be the process by which a real-world struggle gets sacralized, further inquiry is needed as to why particular violent groups or cultures feel the 'identity problems'. Each terrorist attack or communal violence has its own specificity and this has to be analyzed from the social sciences' perspective. However one may address these violent acts from its general typologies and raise questions. Why at this juncture, at the birth of the third millennium, when the entire world is racing on the 'high-tech super-highway' do we witness the rise of religious and rightist fundamentalist strikes? It looks that it is not in spite of globalization and high-tech communication that violence surfaces, but rather, at least partially, because of them.

5.3. The advances in communication technology have brought about heightened world consciousness about human rights, environmental and social concerns. As a result lobbying and advocacy at national and international level has increased human solidarity, particularly in times of disaster. However, high-tech culture and globalization have their own negativities. Today the arms and eyes of technology can invade the privacy of peoples and cultures, rape mother earth and denude the forests creating ecological imbalance. Its advance has pulverized the debate on alternate sciences and technologies (Visvanathan 2001: 13). At the economic level, financial institutions are rewriting the global landscape. The unpredictable movement of market forces makes the individual institutions and states helpless and volatile to the forces of the invisible hand of the free-market economy. At the politi-

cal level, the nation-state is becoming more and more powerless and helpless. The decision making and the shifts in market trends are at the dictates of dreary network of agencies like the GATT, WTO, and IMF. Ironically, terrorism is becoming the reverse side of transnational politics and transnational economics, especially in its invisibility, exemplified in the terrorist attack on Sept 11. "Terrorism has no country. It's transnational, as global as an enterprise like Coke or Pepsi or Nike. At the first sign of trouble, terrorists can pull up stakes and move their 'factories' from country to country in search of a better deal. Just like the multinationals" (Roy 2001: 22).

5.4. Globalization attempts to homogenize cultures and economies, creating large domains of 'exclusion and inclusion'. Local identities and boundaries get blurred as the new mobile elite feel extraterritorial exhilaration and the invisible hand of market economy reaches all over. As a result, excluded cultures and peoples search for identities. In that search for identities, they fall back on the primordiality present in their culture and religion. This primordiality – specifically historical, geographical and religious – cannot be disturbed by the market forces and therefore groups fall back on cultural and religious fundamentalism. This is one of the ways in which religions get drawn into violence.

5.5 The high tech-globalized economies have produced a monoculture of consumerism. As Eric Fromm says: [...] to consume is one form of having, and perhaps the most important one for today's affluent industrial societies. Consuming has ambiguous qualities. It relieves anxiety because what one has cannot be taken away; but it also requires one to consume more, because previous consumption soon loses its satisfactory character. Modern consumers may identify themselves by the formula: I am = what I have and what I consume" (Fromm 1976: 36). We have come the full circle of this consumerism. Many of the religious and ancient cultures view this consumerism as anti-religious and anti-human, and they identify modern consumerist culture with western Christianity and more especially with America. The Muslim world sees America as anti-God and anti-religious because of its consumerist and capitalist culture. A section of the Hindus thinks that modern consumerist culture is a threat to the Hindu way of life and they hold western Christianity responsible for it. The conflict between modernity and tradition, with its plus and minus, pushes more and more traditional societies into the margins and they fight for identity, often in a violent and fundamentalist way. They search for a space that is truly theirs, and which is not threatened by free market economic culture. Religion and culture then become the only resort. The Islamic and Hindu revivalism at this point of time, taking even violent turns, can be partially explained by this rationale of defending true religiosity and cultural identity.

5.6. There is in India a revolt of the upper middle class and the elite, especially from India's business community and from the ranks of Hindu nationalists, to reinvent India in terms

of a mono-cultural religious nationalism based on Hindu majority ideology. This they argue will help India to hit the super-highway of market economy and to make India a nuclear powered nation-State. In this search for making India a macho-nation-state in par with other advanced countries, the protagonists fall back on religion and culture because others can never supersede them. The west can't defeat India on its religious and cultural ethos. The majoritarian and communal violence is a fall out of this attempt. Religion becomes handy in this venture. There is also a sense of humiliation that Hindu religion feels due to centuries of colonialism, first by the Mughals, and then by the British. Fifty years of independence have not made India a competing advanced nation. The humiliation and frustration push a section of Hindu society to forge a pan-Hindu base in order to make its presence felt at the global level. To build such pan-Hinduism, they reason, a certain amount of violence, specially against the alien minorities is inevitable, albeit sanctioned by a religious ideology.

5.7. In the name of nation-state building, crude violence has been done to peoples and cultures by displacement of large groups of people, by deforestation for the sake of massive damns, large scale mining and firing ranges. These so-called national projects have subsumed local cultures and identities. Their protests have not taken a religious tone. However there are definitely cultural underpinnings that will not die off easily.

These real-world struggles get sacralized when the identity is linked with one's primordiality, namely culture and religion. Then it becomes the concern of a people and their identity. It is a struggle in which 'gods' take part. It becomes a *dharma yudha*, a *jihad*, a crusade. Violence is sacralized and legitimized. At least a section of the public would then support it directly and a large section of the people would render indirect and silent support. Terrorism and violence will not last without being noticed and acknowledged by the public, however small in number.

6. Responses to Religious Violence: Girard and Gandhi

In mid-April this year, newspapers carried titles like "Gandhi's Sabarmati burns, "Jesus' Bethlehem is under siege." These were not imageries of some past acts or literary devices; they were actual reports. Gandhi's Sabarmati and Gujarat were literally burning for weeks; Jesus' birthplace was under siege by Israel. We take rather a quick glance at two responses to violence as propounded by Girard and Gandhi.

6.1. Girardian Thesis on Violence. This is not the place to elaborate on the entire argument of Girard. Besides his own works, a number of studies have appeared evaluating Girard's claims. (See: references). His theory illumines a lot of religious and cultural mechanisms like exclusion, scapegoating, sacralization etc. However, his claim that mimetic theory is the foundation for all institutions; that there was a primal murder and consequently the primordial origin of reli-

gions and cultures in sacrificial scapegoating etc are grand theories that are more speculative than empirically justifiable. It is also questionable whether mimesis is the origin of human consciousness; or whether it could be simply accepted as one of the primitive drives in the human being. However, his mimetic theory deserves attention in so far it highlights how violence erupts. Our desires are not spontaneous. Our desires arise from our awareness of a lack within us: a lack not only of possessions, but also of being. Mimetic desire means that we desire an object because it is desired by another / a model. The object becomes more attractive because someone else desires it. This model can easily become the rival, and then mimesis leads to jealousy, rivalry and violence. The only way out is to scapegoat a victim whose dead body will bring an untold peace in the community. Violence is thus sacralized and ritualised.

For our purpose we could say that Girardian findings confirm that there has been and there is sacralization of violence. What we are more interested in is the biblical response to the sacralization of violence. According to Girard, sacralization of violence is the natural human way. However, the biblical revelation in a unique way de-sacralizes violence. God in Jesus chooses to be the victim of violence, becomes the scapegoat of the murderous traits in humans and thus unmasks the violence in humans. As the victim of violence, the suffering servant absorbs in him all the violence and evil of the world, and in return pours out unconditional love. His love is not mimetic, nor diminishing. The more the violence, the more is the love. This unmasking of violence also happens through Jesus' many teachings, especially in the parables. For Girard such unmasking of violence by choosing to be the victim happened only in biblical revelation and this is the secret hidden since the foundation of the world. Girard has been criticized for making this unique claim for Biblical revelation and to call all other sacrifices a process of sacralization and a mechanism of containing violence. For our argument, his thesis is worth considering for determining the true role of religion with regard to violence. If the genuine function of religion remains the unmasking of violence and pouring out of unconditional love to absorb all the hatred and violence of this world, religion not only does not sacralize violence, but in fact works against it.

6.2. Gandhi's Perception of Violence. Gandhi accepted the inevitability of a certain amount of violence in daily life in view of eating and drinking: i) for the sake of health and hygiene lower beings have to be destroyed occasionally. "It is violence, yet duty" (YI. 2 &21 Oct 1926); ii) for protecting other lives and for averting grater evil, one had to use violence; iii) one may have to protect people in one's care: "He who refrains from killing a murderer, who is about to kill his ward (when he cannot prevent this otherwise) earns not merit, but commits a sin; he practises no *ahimsa* but *himsa* out of a fatuous sense of *ahimsa* (YI, 4th Nov 1926); iv) he also condoned mercy killing in extremely hopeless situations. (YI, 4th Nov 1926).

Jealousy and lust are different shades of violence and Gandhi admitted its presence in his early life with his wife (Gandhi 1985: 38). Likewise he held all secrecy to be sin. "Secrecy, in my opinion, is a symptom of violence, therefore, definitely to be avoided, especially if the freedom of dumb millions is the goal. Hence all underground activity ... is taboo" (Pyarelal 1956: 37). Extorting money, stopping trains, pillage and abusing an opponent during a *satyagraha* struggle were treated as forms of violence (*CW* XV: 221; XVIII: 462). Unnecessary consumption and holding on to what the world needs, amount to violence." (*CW* XIII: 37; *CW* XLIV: 58). He admired the bravery and the commitment of Subhas Chandra Bose and Jayaprakash Narayan, but held that their violent method was not a lasting solution to Indian problems (*CW* LXXI: 113-115). Every sort of armed rising was considered a remedy worse than the disease requiring to be cured (*CW* XVII: 483). Terrorism and deception, besides being violent, are the weapons of the weak (*CW* XVIII: 271), just as anarchism is a 'sign of fear' (*CW* XIII: 214). In short, he believed that every form of violence is untruth, and therefore irreligion.

Unlike the votaries of Ahimsa of his time, Gandhi did not make of non-killing a blind fetish, but rather transformed it into a *resistant tool* for 'putting one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant, of defying the might of any unjust empire (*CW* XVIII: 133), and into a *compassionate attitude* of good will towards all life that embraces even sub-human life in pure love (*CW* XXIII: 25). This he was able to do because of his perception of the magnitude of violence.

• The violence of daily life and personal violence formed only one dimension of violence. He was more concerned about the structural violence that is embedded in the social, political, economic, educational, cultural and civilizational institutions. His seminal book *Hind Swaraj* was on the one hand an exposition of the embedded systemic violence of the western institutions, and on the other hand, a rejection of the violent and dogmatic positions of some of the Indians of that time, including V.D.Sarvakar and his two dogmatic books titles *Mazzini* and *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. "Hind Swaraj is not merely a document against violence, it is also a document against the system which sustains violence, and against the system sustained by violence" (Chaudhuri 1998: 190). Among the forms of systemic violence, the following may be cited: violent modern culture, violence of foreign rule, the state violence, and the missionary violence (Pattery 1996: 38-46). By unmasking the violence inherent in the various institutions, Gandhi has shown how violence has been sacralized in and through modern systems. If Girard has claimed that all institutions and cultures are attempts by the humans to contain violence, Gandhi manifested how in fact the modern institutions are violent. However, Gandhi will not agree with Girard in his claim that all institutions owe their origin to violence.

We are discussing the sacralization of violence. Gandhi helps us to clarify that it is not only when religion is

overtly used or mentioned that violence gets sacralized. Modern symbols of worship like the free market economy, the nation-state, the foreign rule by the multi-nationals, consumerist life-style etc are also analogous agents of violence. On the one hand they embody invisible violence and on the other hand, they have acquired such a place in modern life that they have substituted the role and function of religion as such. The modern institutions are sacralized in terms of their place in modern life, and at the same time they themselves represent violence.

6.3. Gandhi's Response to Violence. The theory and practice of non-violence has been studied extensively by scholars for the last fifty years or so. We shall not elaborate on them. We shall limit ourselves to Gandhi's response to the phenomenon of sacralization of violence. Gandhi did not work out a mechanism of ritualizing violence either in religious sacrifices (as Girard elaborates), nor in puritanical non-violent observances as the Jains did. His response to violence is first and foremost to expose the mechanism of violence within individuals and in the socio-cultural systems. He held the system to be responsible for much of the violence of his time. He perceived that violence is permeating the socio-economic, political and religious systems. It required a holistic approach to deal with violence. This included a positive and pro-life approach; it also required a negative approach to shun all violence, to disown all violent behaviour and to unmask all kinds of violence.

6.4. Gandhi's approach to violence in relation to the sacralization of violence seems to be unique. In order to get out of the cycle of violence, Gandhi advocated 'self-suffering love', that sides with the victim of violence and allows the violence of the 'enemy' to fall upon oneself. This readiness to suffer the violence and not to retaliate requires great courage. "To fight with the sword does call for bravery of a sort. But to die is far braver than to kill. He alone is truly brave, he alone is a martyr in the true sense who dies without fear in his heart and without wishing hurt to the enemy" (*CW* LXVII: 422). To let oneself be the victim so that the coil of violence may break itself is the strategy of Gandhi.

Gandhi learned the first lesson of this self-suffering love from his father's reaction to his confession of stealing. On reading his confession, his father cried silently and Gandhi said: "Those pearl-drops of love cleansed my heart and washed my sin away [...] This was, for me, an object-lesson of *ahimsa*" (Gandhi 1985: 27-28). Gandhi undertook many fasts in order to manifest the object lesson of self-suffering love, though many have criticized the implicit 'force' involved in the act of fasting. According to Gandhi, a genuine fast is a direct act of resistance to untruth; it is an immediate appeal to the conscience of the wrongdoer; it relies on one's own inner spiritual strength. In this sense 'fasting' epitomizes the meaning of suffering in non-violent resistance as an eminently 'transforming pedagogic act'.

The philosophical founding of this self-suffering love, this act of enjoining

oneself with the victim's perspective, is rooted in the Gita and in the Gospels. Gandhi's insight into the selfless action of the Gita (*nishkama karma*) highlights the point. "When there is no desire for fruit, there is no temptation for untruth or *himsa*. Take any instance of untruth or violence, and it will be found that at its source is the desire to attain the cherished end" (Desai 1948: 132). "He who would be *anasakta* (selfless) has necessarily to practise non-violence in order to attain the state of selflessness. *Ahimsa* is therefore a necessary preliminary. It is included in *anasakti*, it does not go beyond" (*CW* LXXII: 393). The fearlessness that is required for *ahimsa* comes from the inner strength or from the soul-force.

The other source of his self-suffering love is the Gospels (the Sermon on the Mount) and the person of Jesus. Towards the end of the twenty-one days' Delhi fast undertaken by Gandhi in September 1924 (Gandhi described his fast as prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness of sins unwittingly committed), which was occasioned by the Hindu-Muslims riots, C.F.Andrews wrote in Young India: "Instinctively my gaze turned back to the frail, wasted, tortured spirit [Gandhi] on the terrace by my side, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people. With a rush of emotion there came to memory the passage from the book of lamentations – "Is it not nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow. And in that hour of vision I knew more deeply in my own personal life, the meaning of the Cross" (Thomas 1969: 314.). S.K.George would say, "Gandhi's response to violence made the Cross a working principle of redemptive-suffering-conquering love overcoming evil everywhere" (George 1947: 24.). Gandhi had in a sense realized the non-violent pedagogy of the Cross and applied it to his struggle in unmasking and conquering violence.

Thus, we could say that because of his perception of the sacralization of violence by the existing socio-political institutions, Gandhi chose to unmask that violence by adopting a strategy that would unwind the recoiling violence. His way was a self-suffering love: one allows oneself to be the victim voluntarily and courageously so that the might of violence may end. To that extent, we could say that Girard remains substantiated in his theory that it is in identifying with the victim and letting the violence fall back on oneself that one enables the cycle of violence to break. Gandhi, however, did not restrict this mechanism to the realm of ritual sacrifice nor to the 'sacred' in religion. Unlike Girard, Gandhi finds neither a founding murder for the origin of violence, nor foundational death for the unwinding of violence. Gandhi unmasked the sacralization of violence in secular institutions. Then he brought the mechanism of dealing with violence (self-suffering love) into the public arena, releasing it from the sanctuaries of religious rituals. The pedagogy of self-suffering love, according to Gandhi, is exemplified in the basic teachings of all religions. On his part, he unmasked the violence of the secular and its pretenses to be the sacred; he also enabled the sacred to present itself as non-violent and self-suffering love.

In conclusion, we go back to Arundathi Roy. She said with regard to the Gujarat genocide that "they (Hindutva) have mobilized human beings using the lowest common denominator: religion." In a sense she is right to say that for the modern times, religion is the lowest of human denominators. It is the free market economy consumerism, multi-nationals and the like that are the denominators today. It remains true, however, that religion with its primordial appeal works to mobilize people to fight for an identity, even if that projected identity is a false or fabricated one. The role of religion as social organization seems to be dubious. In the wake of religion-related terrorism and communalism – be it in Palestine, in Ireland, in Gujarat, in Afganistan, in Okhlhoma, in New York – serious and critical study of religions is called for. We also need to critically look into modern institutions like the nation-states, market economy related institutions like WB, IMF, GATT (all symbols of modernity), and to unmask the violence embedded and sacralised in them. The response to terrorism and communalism is not to increase more state-sponsored violence and state-dominated religion, but to embody more desacralised secular institutions and more self-critical religious practices. Violence can easily be 'sacralized' through the legitimization of religion; but religion can also discover the true sacred in non-violent and non-diminishing love.

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Jihad

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'Jihad' is one of the most misunderstood concepts today. Anyone, who is familiar with the situation of the world today, would probably make an attempt to understand the concept of Jihad. One of the questions that I am often confronted with, when I speak to others either in a classroom or a seminar hall, is about 'Holy war', as Jihad has been translated by western scholars. This is a complex reality. It is much more difficult to pass a religious judgement on 'holy war' (Jihad) and its moral acceptability than to understand the concept, as many scholars have distorted the idea of jihad. 'Was Islam spread at the point of the sword?' 'Was the Muslim emblem the Holy Quran or the sword?' 'Were the Muslim imperialists and rulers after mundane power or loot? These are some of the questions people often ask.

I think we should be frank enough to accept the fact that war is a necessary evil, and its existence is a fact of life whether we like it or not. Looking around, we wonder and are ashamed to find injustice, oppression, capricious ambitions, arbitrary claims, hatred and jealousy. To a great extent, people are fighting for justice and opposing all that is evil and oppressive. But the main objective of Islam is not war, nor is it the normal course for the Muslims. According to Islam, war should be the last resort when all other measures fail. It is to be used only under extraordinary circumstances, as we shall see in the following pages.

The traditional Church teaching on the concept of a just war divided judgement into two areas: when is it justified to use force, "*jus ad bellum*?" and the principle guiding the use of force, "*jus in bello*" (*Zenit News Agency* Oct 03, 2001). For a war to be just, a number of criteria need to be satisfied: that there be a just cause; that the action be initiated by a legitimate authority; that it be guided by right intention; that the action do not produce more evil than the good sought; that it is the last resort; that there is a reasonable chance of success; and that the eventual outcome be the establishment of peace. Every action should focus on the preservation of peace.

The entire world was shaken up by the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. It reveals to us how fragile peace is, and how terrible the tragedy is when thousands of innocent lives are lost.

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There is no religion in the world which does not stand for peace. In the general audience held the day after the attacks in the United States, Pope John Paul II declared, "In the face of such unspeakable horror we cannot but be deeply disturbed. I add my voice to all the voices raised in these hours to express indignant condemnation, and I strongly reiterate that the ways of violence will never lead to genuine solutions to humanity's problems."

Jihad as Understood

When we are faced with the problem of jihad, we need to understand the etymology of the term and its background. In my analysis I would bring out jihad as divinely sanctioned for the purpose of the defence and preservation of one's faith. It should also be kept in mind that jihad is to be understood from a religious point of view, as opposing vehemently any kind of idol worship and the association of any other gods with Allah (*Shirk*: the most unpardonable sin in Islam). By this act the spirit of the ideal Islamic religious community is preserved.

In the present time, generally 'Jihad' is understood as the divinely sanctioned obligation to wage war in Islamic tradition. The other common word used among the Muslims for fighting is 'qital' which means fighting in the path of Allah. Most of us associate 'jihad' with Islamic fundamentalism. It is considered to be the acts of the fundamentalists and fundamentalist groups we are quite familiar with these days.

This word jihad also evokes intense emotions in people. It is a term frequently mentioned in the media, a topic for discussion among the scholars and religious and political leaders. In its original sense, the word jihad never had any connotation of 'fighting'. Etymologically the word is derived from 'jahd' or 'juhd' meaning ability, exertion or power, and jihad and mujahida mean exerting one's power in repelling the enemy. We have in the Holy Quran, "And to those who strive (strenuous) and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons, Allah has granted a grade higher than those who sit at home" (4:95). The word 'strive' or 'strenuous' is originally 'mojahid' from the word jihad. It means to do one's utmost, to make effort, to strive, to exert, to employ oneself diligently, studiously, sedulously, earnestly, zealously, or with energy (Cheragh 1977: 78). It clearly shows that the original meaning of jihad is not fighting or warfare. In the religious context it means the struggle against one's evil inclinations or an exertion for the sake of Islam and umma, community (Peters 1995: 1).

It is indeed a misconception that the word 'jihad' is supposed to be synonymous with war. Maulana Muhammad Ali quotes from the Encyclopaedia of Islam on Jihad as, "the spread of Islam by arms is a religious duty upon Muslims in general" (Muhammad Ali 1986: 60). So Jihad meant not only war, but war undertaken for the propagation of Islam. Considered a sacred duty on every Muslim and Muslim nation, jihad means fighting against unbelievers with the objective of either winning them over to Islam or subduing and exterminating them in case they refuse to become Muslims and

causing Islam to spread and triumph over all religions.

Islamic scholars hold the view that jihad is of three kinds. The first is against a visible enemy. A visible enemy could be anyone who harms Islamic faith and believers in Islamic tradition. Preservation of one's faith is the foremost duty of every Muslim. So they must not fail in this responsibility. If need be, it could be in an intense form, exerting one's ability and power either by word or deed. They consider it as a divinely sanctioned duty. The second kind of jihad is against the devil. Devils are constantly on the lookout for companionship and instigate the believers to fall into their trap. To such wicked acts of devils one should not give in, but rather constantly fight against these devils to preserve one's faith and purity. The final kind of jihad is against one's self (nafs). As human beings we are fragile and weak. We easily give in to our weaknesses. Islam teaches one to preserve one's self from all kinds of evil and strive for a better life here on earth and in the world to come. In short jihad is using or exerting one's power or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation (Muhammad Ali 1986: 70-72).

Jihad from Different Perspectives

The idea of a pan-Islamic movement was conceived and propagated by Jamaluddin Afghani (1838-1897). He said that all Muslims all over the world must unite under the slogan of 'Islamic Unity.' Muslims have an ideal state, therefore they are to unite and establish a Muslim State. Jihad is also to be viewed from this perspective. So the idea of jihad is tied to the idea of the unity of the Islamic state against all non-Islamic states and the legitimacy of the caliph or imam as the single ruler of the Islamic State (Kelsay and Turner 1991: 37). Jihad can be declared only by the state headed by the legitimate caliph or imam. So the Islamic conception of jihad is inextricably tied to the notion of the unity of the Muslim community and its ruler.

The concept of victory and success was quite strong in the minds of the early Muslim rulers. The first caliph (successor of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)) Hazrat Abu Bakr was engaged in riddha wars (apostasy wars). He wanted to protect people from sins and vices and to liberate them. To a great extent, the reality of war shaped the attitude of the Muslims on the perspective of jihad. The Apocalyptic Tradition and popular attitudes toward war made Muslims take up arms and fight against infidels (Kelsay and Turner 1991: 42-26).

One of the fundamental beliefs and one of the five pillars of Islam is faith in the final judgement. Every person on the earth will be either rewarded or punished according to his/her deeds. Future life depends on the present course of action. This idea is quite strong among the Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) preached and believed as though the last judgement was very near and it would probably take place in his very lifetime. So the early Muslim community took it seriously and considered it their prime duty and responsibility to stamp out unbelief from the world. Jihad was meant to 'clean the world up' in preparation for

the impending final judgement (Kelsay and Turner 1991: 48). This is what Christians also did. They considered themselves to be 'soldiers of Christ', going about preaching and bearing witness to the Risen Christ.

Certain historical circumstances were important for the development of jihad in Islam. This was introduced to prove and legitimize the phenomenon of 'just war'. The early Christian martyrs had been witnesses and fighters in spirit, maintaining passivity in the face of suffering and death, thus associating themselves with Jesus' own life and death. Later the Crusades created a new crop of Christian martyrs whose supreme act of love consisted of dying while trying to kill their adversaries. In the Islamic tradition, too, the idea of martyrdom arose with the term 'shahid', which means both 'witness' and 'martyr' (Bonner 1996: 2). It is one who dies fighting the enemies of God, whose defining attribute is his reward. By this act one becomes a true witness.

Ideological Concepts of Jihad

In Islamic history, the doctrine of jihad was of paramount importance. It was looked upon as a means of establishing a just Islamic state ruled by Islamic shariah. It was based on the experience of Prophet Muhammad. At the time of persecution in Mecca, the Prophet (SAW) together with his companions migrated to Medina in 622 A.D., which is called hijra. So the call to jihad was accompanied by a call for emigration.

Jihad can also be interpreted in the realm of eschatology. The concept of Mahdi (rightly guided one) is strongly believed by the Muslims. The Mahdi is considered to be a hidden imam, a true leader preserved by Allah, who will appear at the appointed time and bring in the reign of justice, peace and truth and put an end to corruption and oppression. In this context we have the example of a few Mahdis who came up and fought against colonial dominion: Ubayd Allah (d.930 A.D) the founder of the Fatimid dynasty, Ibn Tumart(1077-1130) the founder of the Almohad dynasty; in India Abd al-Rahman (1810 in Surat), and Muhammad Ahmad (d. 1855) in Sudan (Peters 1979: 43). Many leaders strongly fought against any kind of dominion over the Muslims by non-Muslims. There had been a strong resistance to colonialism and dominance of the British in India and Egypt, against the French in Algeria, the Italians in Libya. Thus jihad is the struggle for the good of the Muslim society and against corruption and any kind of decadence. It is highly encouraged that all Muslims join hands to achieve this goal. They are to take part in this struggle and work with all their intellectual and material abilities for the realization of justice and equality between the peoples for the promotion of security and human understanding, both among individuals and groups (Peters 1991: 161).

Jihad thus provided a suitable ideology to resist all foreign, non-Mulsim, domination. In India the modernist approach to Jihad had the following tendencies: the desire for a rapprochement between the Indian Muslims and the British, the wish to reform Islam in order to remove religious impediments for

the adoption of western culture and finally the need to defend Islam against ideological attacks from the west (Peters 1991: 162). But in modern India, the notion of jihad was very restrictive, as it was confined to wars of defence against religious oppression. We know from history that in some countries, for example Egypt, jihad had meant the struggle against all kinds of oppression, irrespective of whether it was religious or political. So jihad came to be against colonialism, Zionism and communalism.

In the course of time, new trends emerged with regard to the understanding of Jihad. Jihad became a 'permanent revolutionary struggle' for the propagation of Islam, in order to 'liberate humankind'. There is also an opinion among some Muslims that one cannot apply categories like 'offensive' or 'defensive' to the concept of jihad. Jihad as a struggle for the propagation of Islam is good in itself and need not be justified by moral values that are alien to Islam. Thus the concept of Jihad should be looked at from different perspectives and angles. One should follow certain norms and regulations. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the model and example to all Muslims. The Prophet (SAW) had his mission and carried it out faithfully. He was a messenger of peace, a prophet, a lawgiver, religious leader, a chief judge, a commander of the army and a head of the state. He exercised both religious and political leadership. He preached peace, he put an end to distress, gave firm principles concerning every walk of life, gave strict warning against corruption, injustice and mental sluggishness. So the Holy Prophet (SAW) has to be followed all the time and in all matters.

Jihad and the Holy Quran

Quran is considered to be the 'living voice' by the Muslims. It is the Holy Book highly revered by the Muslims. It is the book of directives showing humankind how one should live and be successful in this life and in the life to come. Muslims find in the Holy Quran solution to all their problems – political, religious, ethical and social. It is their strong belief that Quran is the literal word of Allah and should be respected and followed by every Mulsim on earth. It has been their guiding force all through the centuries.

We do have references to Jihad in the Holy Quran. The references are of quite a wide range, so that one can easily misunderstand the verses. There are a few so-called 'war verses'. We cannot consider these 'war verses' in isolation and make a judgement. We should be able to place these verses in the proper context and situation and understand them accordingly. There are verses which are for total restraint, while there are verses which prescribe total war. The Quranic view of jihad can be traced through a number of stages (Lazar 2001). At the initial stage when the Holy Prophet (SAW) was in Mecca, his followers were very few and were living in a hostile situation. At this time we do not have any reference in the Holy Quran, authorizing the followers to fight in support or defence of religious belief or otherwise. Later when Prophet (SAW) migrated to Madina, revelations sanctioned fighting as a means of de-

fence against the aggression of the Meccan adversaries (22:39-40). It was only later that we get references which enjoined attack against the opponents of Islam at all times and in all places. Let us in detail analyze some of the verses on Jihad in the Sacred Scripture, the Holy Quran.

In the Quran the word Jihad is used in the sense of exerting one's power or ability without implying war. "Those who strive in our cause, we will guide them to our paths. Verily Allah is with those who do right" (29:69). Here the word used for strive is jahada, and the Arabic word Jahada is derived from jihad. In this case it means the spiritual striving to attain nearness to God, and the result of this jihad is God's guiding force behind those who walk in His ways. It is quite clear that here jihad is meant for one's personal and spiritual growth and not to be misused for any other purpose. We also have another verse from the Holy Quran to enumerate this aspect. "Whoever strives hard (jihad), he strives only for his own soul, that is, for his own benefit for Allah is self-sufficient (free of all needs from all creatures)" (29:6).

We read in the Holy Quran, "And strive in His cause as you ought to strive with sincerity and under discipline" (22:78). Again we read, "Therefore listen not to unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost sternness with the Holy Quran" (25:52). In both the references mentioned above, jihad is enjoined. In the first verse it is the nearness to Allah and in the second jihad is to be carried on against unbelievers, as mentioned in the Quran. But this jihad is not of the sword but of the Holy Quran, that is by the weapon of Allah's revelation. In fact we have many references to this kind of jihad. Initially this is what jihad meant. Unfortunately today the meaning of jihad is misunderstood by the Muslims as well as by others.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received the revelation as, "O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is hell, an evil refuge indeed!" (9:73 and 66:9). The Prophet (SAW) received this revelation twice indicating the importance of the real meaning of jihad. So jihad is to be carried on by means of the Holy Quran as expressed in the Holy Quran (25:52).

Islam is a missionary religion like Christianity. Its followers do advocate, preach and propagate their religion. But the remark made on the religious fervour such as, 'the spread of Islam by force' has no reference in the Holy Quran. "Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error. Whoever rejects anything other than Allah and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks" (2:256). We have no reference in the Holy Quran with regard to the permission for war in the spread of Islam. Many scholars, including D.B. Macdonald, the writer of the article on jihad in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, question the validity of such statements. Much more so, there is nothing either in the Holy Quran or Hadith (traditions of the Prophet) to corroborate such views and ideas. There seems to be a

struggle between preconceived ideas and an actual knowledge of facts.

We read in the Holy Quran, "To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight because they are wronged and verily Allah is most powerful for their aid" (22: 39 and 40). This revelation is a Madinese revelation. It is not to be understood as a general permission to make war with such people in general, but only with people who made war on the believers and the reason stated is 'because they are oppressed or wronged.' The wrong is indicated as: 'driven by persecution from their home, for no other reason than that they worshipped the One true Allah'. It was in this sense, jihad is to be understood. As stated further on, if war had not been allowed under such circumstances, there would be no peace on earth, no religious duty would be performed and no place of worship would exist (Muhammad 1986: 554).

Jihad then became a necessary alternative to the growing religious tension, fundamentalism and religious intolerance. Jihad with such pure motive is a struggle carried on simply with the aim that truth may prosper and that freedom of conscience may be maintained. Quran 2:190 reads: "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you. But do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not the transgressors." Just war is permissible only as self-defence and under well-defined limits. Fighting in self-defence is called fighting in the way of Allah, because fighting in defence is the noblest and just of all causes. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigour, not relentlessly, but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of Allah. Limits should never be transgressed. Women, children, the old and the infirm men and women should not be maltreated, trees and crops should not be cut down and peace should prevail when the enemy comes to an agreement.

There are certain clear-cut norms to be followed. Muslims should not attack first. They should fight only with those who fight with them;, aggression is strictly prohibited. There is a mention of fighting with the idolaters in chapter 9 of the Holy Quran. But even here, one should not understand it as in an inclusive way, but only with those who broke the agreement and attacked the Muslims. "The pagans wherever you find them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war" (9:5).

There are certain verses, which are totally misunderstood. It happens when some one tries to analyze the verses of the Quran without any reference to the context and the situation. There are so called 'verses of the sword' such as "But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay" (9:5), and "And kill them wherever you find them" (2:191). In both the cases the order to fight is given only against those who have taken up the sword and attack the Muslims first. So the 'verse of the sword' refers only to people "who broke their oaths and aimed at the expulsion of the Prophet (SAW) (9:10).

"Fight with them until there is no persecution and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors" (2:193). In this verse, 'reli-

gion should be only for Allah' should not be understood as everyone should accept Islam and become Muslims. The Arabic word, Din, is comprehensive. It implies the ideas of indebtedness, duty, obedience, judgment, justice, faith, religion, customary rites.... Religion is to be treated as a matter of relationship between God and humans, a matter of conscience, in which others have no right to interfere.

Even during the time of war, if needed, peace is to be recommended. We have in the Holy Quran, "But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace and trust in Allah" (8:61). So there is a clear understanding and real thirst for peace. "O ye who believe! Violate not the sanctity of the rites of Allah, ... Nor people resorting to the sacred house, shutting you out of the sacred Mosque, lead you to transgression. Help one another in righteousness and piety, not in sin and rancour, fear Allah" (5:2). Again in 5:8 we have, "let not the hatred of others make you swerve. Be just; that is next to piety and fear of Allah."

From the Quranic revelation we understand the concept of jihad, which is being widely misunderstood by a large number of people. No doubt that Islam proves itself to be a monotheistic religion, and the preservation of monotheism becomes the prime responsibility of every Muslim. From this idea, emerged another concept of jihad which is to destroy idolaters. Our Muslim friends take pride in their monotheism. They are ready to go to any extent to preserve monotheism. So there is no room to consider jihad as a militant act or a terrorist act.

Jihad and Hadith

The science of Hadith is related to the life of the Prophet (SAW). Hadith means to say something or describe something. It includes deeds, actions, utterances and silent approvals and disapprovals of the Prophet (SAW). Hadith is one of the sources of sharia, in which the sayings and actions of the Prophet (SAW) are recorded. Next to the Holy Quran, Hadith plays a vital role in shaping the life of the Mulsim community.

As we have seen in the Holy Quran, so also in Hadith, jihad is not used exclusively for fighting. For example, the Prophet called the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) Jihad. The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, 'The hajj is the most excellent of all jihads' (Bu. 25:4). He stressed the importance of inner purification and spiritual enrichment. Hajj is one of the religious duties enjoined on every Muslim who is an adult, having good physical and mental health and who can bear the expense and also maintain the family. It is an effort made to come closer to Allah and receive his blessing.

According to the Prophet (SAW), the objective of Islam is not war, it is the religion of peace. But the pertinent question remains, "Why did Muhammad launch wars and command battles?" Historical background reveals that the Prophet (SAW) was constantly attacked by the Meccans. He could no longer stand the persecution and threats. Families were separated, properties were confiscated,

blood was shed, and the people were forced to leave their homelands. At this juncture the Prophet (SAW) had no other option than to fight against them. It may be a paradox. The Prophet (SAW) assured his followers of dignity and strength, freedom and security, and tried ally them with God. But unfortunately they were oppressed, subjected to terror and helpless. It is in this context that the revelation came, "To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged... God will aid those who aid His cause; for verily God is full of strength" (22:38-41).

This was the beginning of the war against the infidels. So the reason to take up arms is entirely different from the misconception that prevails among the non-Muslim scholars. There are also others who are of the opinion that Islam was spread by force. But anything that is forced cannot have a lasting effect. Islam has survived all these years and it is one of the major religions of the world today. The opinion that Islam was spread out of a passionate lust for plunder is yet another misconception.

Jihad in Hadith includes any form of service. Faith in Islam includes devotion to Allah, love of Allah and service to humanity. Islam as a religion of peace strives to bring humanity under the banner of love, peace and justice. The Prophet (SAW) spent his entire life for the cause of his people. As a proponent of peace, he went about doing good for the people. Amir Ali remarks about the life of the Prophet, "His life is the noblest record of the work nobly and faithfully performed." Again, "His achievement is that within a span of the mortal life the Prophet (SAW) called forth out of the unpromising material, a nation never united before. He ameliorated the condition of the downtrodden by his own life" says Prof. Hitti. The Encyclopedia Britannica says, "Of all the religious personalities of the world, Muhammad (SAW) was the most successful." The success of the Prophet lies in his service, unswerving faith, strict honesty and sincerity, naked truthfulness, firm determination, sharp intelligence, tolerant and peaceful habits, full-hearted sympathy for the poor and the needy and the destitute, and the heart-winning manner in which he treated all those he came in contact with. Every Muslim is invited to follow the Prophet (SAW) intimately and personally.

According to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), people belonging to his community should be men of learning who disseminate the truth and are engaged in the propagation of faith. It does not consist of any fighters or warriors. So in this sense jihad is used as an invitation to Islam, to follow the teaching of the Holy Quran and learn from the life of the Prophet.

From the life of the Prophet (SAW) we come to know that Islam was not meant to be spread by force of arms as we have also learnt from the Holy Quran. Muslims are the ones who have experienced peace and entered into peace. They are people through whom others find themselves secure concerning their live and property. From the life of the Prophet (SAW) we understand that fighting in the cause of justice, fighting to help the oppressed, fighting

in self-defence, and fighting for national existence are all considered to be the highest and the noblest of deeds. In all these cases a man lays down his life in the cause of truth and justice, and that is the highest sacrifice a man can offer in his life.

Quoting Amir Ali's 'Spirit of Islam,' with regard to the direction relating to war, Maulana Muhammad Ali mentions, "In avenging the injuries inflicted upon us, molest not the harmless inmates of domestic seclusion; spare women; injure not the infants at the breast or those who are ill in bed. Abstain from demolishing the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants, destroy not the means of their subsistence, not the fruit trees; touch not the palms" (Muhammad 1986: 585). Abu Bakr, the first caliph (successor to the Prophet (SAW)) seem to have given the following instruction to the commander of an army in the Syrian battle: "When you meet your enemies, acquit yourselves like men, and do not turn your backs; and if you gain victory kill not the little children, not old people, not women... As you go on, you will find some religious persons that live retired in monasteries, who propose themselves to serve Allah that way. Leave them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries" (Muhammad Ali 1986: 587).

From what has been said so far, we get a clear idea of Jihad. The purpose of Jihad is not destructive but constructive. Again and again we find references from Hadith that the Holy Prophet never allowed his followers to take up arms aimlessly and exceed the limits. He always asked them to be faithful and tolerant.

There is a tradition which states: "I have been ordered to fight her people until they profess that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (SAW) is the messenger of Allah, perform the salah (prayers) and pay zakat (almsgiving). If they do so, their life and property are inviolable for me, unless when the law of Islam permits it to be taken and they will be responsible towards Allah" (Peters 1995: 14). It is a collective duty and recommended act too for all Muslims. Jihad is meant for Islamic unity. According to tradition, the Prophet wanted that by means of jihad there would be personal spiritual enrichment and the community would be brought together under the safe guidance of the Islamic State. Once again we find no reference to fight in the traditions of the Prophet (SAW).

Jihad and Jurisprudence

In the Islamic terminology, this is known as Sharia or fiqh. Sharia is the canon law of Islam revealed in the Quran by Allah, by Prophet (SAW) in Hadith, which was communicated to later generations. It is law dealing with the wisdom of society. Sharia or fiqh helps men and women to lead a good life on this earth and prepare themselves for a happy future. It reminds them of their duties towards God, others and themseelves.

We shall now try to understand the concept of jihad in Sharia. For the first time jihad was used in the narrower sense of qital (fighting) by the jurists. The jurists used the word jihad as syn-

onymous with qital. In the course to time, the meaning was further narrowed down to mean that the Muslims were called to fight against the unbelieving nations and countries whether they attacked or not. This idea is quite different from the concept that we find in the Holy Quran. Probably such a concept may have come in course of time, when Islam had to confront other religions of the world and people of different nature and temperaments.

In this context the assumption was that the unity of the Islamic community is not only based on religious unity but also political unity, which means ruled by a single Islamic government headed by the caliph or imam. By this concept, the unified Islamic State was considered to be different from all other states. Efforts were then made to bring about unity and uniformity. Even in this unifying effort certain norms and regulations had to be followed. It is not to be carried on at random.

By the end of the second century AH, the juristic tradition developed the notion of dar al-Islam (abode of Islam) and dar-al-harb (abode of war) (Kelsay 1991: 50). It is an expression of political dichotomy. This kind of division is closely linked with the concept of Jihad. Some say that there is a third category known as dar al-sulh or dar al-'ahd (abode of treaty). According to this category the inhabitants pay kharraj which is like poll tax and it is obligatory for them to pay this amount. Otherwise they will have to accept Islam and the land will also be taken over by the Muslims.

Some define jihad in fiqh as 'smaller jihad' whereas the 'greater jihad' denotes a more spiritual activity like fighting one's evil inclinations or studying the fiqh, exerting oneself as much as one can. Others distinguish different kinds and aspects of jihad such as 'jihad of the heart', which means struggle against one's sinful inclination; 'jihad of the tongue', which means ordering what is good and forbidding what is evil; 'jihad of the hand' which means administering disciplinary measures by the rulers and kings in order to prevent people from committing abominable acts and finally 'jihad of the sword,' that is, fighting the unbelievers for the sake of Islam (Peters 1995: 10). The direct purpose of jihad is the strengthening of Islam, protection the believers and ridding the earth of unbelief.

As far as Jihad in fiqh is concerned, we find a clear direction to jihad and the reasons for jihad and different ways in which one can involve oneself in jihad. Jihad is considered to be a religious and a noble endeavour. Every Muslim is called to be purified by means of Jihad. Fiqh gives them the direction and orientation towards a better life.

Conclusion

From what has been said so far, it is clear that Jihad is a complex ideology which is often misunderstood. In no way does Quranic Islam propagate violence among its believers. Islam does not justify violence. There seems to be a wide gap between the ideal and the real and between theory and practice. Muslim scholars and intellectuals, and for that matter, every genuine and God-fearing Muslim, should make

every effort to bridge this gap. Jihad, as we find it in the Holy Quran, Hadith and fiqh, is a well-defined ideology, an aid to understand the Islamic way of life and a practical source of how-to-live-life. A serious search into this concept would shed light on the personal life of individuals.

However, one is also alarmed at the way Jihad has become the lived experience of some of the followers. They decide on their own and act irresponsibly. Evil tendencies also creep into the minds of the people. Jihad is used as a means to justify their wrong deeds. If only Jihad could be understood well, it could achieve its noble purpose. If the followers are serious about the idea of Jihad in their practical life, Islamic Tradition could bear much fruit. It is indeed my conviction, that if Jihad is carried out legitimately with prudence and wisdom, it can contribute to the growth of society and the stability of the human race. Or else it would only be destructive of human progress, religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

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JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 57- 64

Violence: Biblical Perspectives

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The people of the lands where the biblical traditions took shape lived in tension and conflict with each other almost throughout their history. They constantly experienced violence, injustice and oppression, both from within their society and from external forces. And they yearned for peace, but rarely enjoyed it.

A dimension of the biblical perspectives on violence will involve the study the entire history of the biblical traditions, from primeval history to eschatology. This article limits its scope within the perspectives of 'realism and hope', and 'history and eschatology'.

Violence in Biblical Myths

On matters of war and peace, of violence and harmony, Israel's experience is in no way different from that of her neighbors. The primeval history succinctly presents this fact. Cain, the first man born of a woman, turned out to be a murderer (Gn 4:8). Later Lamech killed a young man apparently in self-defence (Gn 4:23). The author, in the primeval history, makes the following comment: "The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth. ... Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and the earth was filled with violence" (Gn 6: 5, 11).

Hamas, the Hebrew word for violence, appears for the first time in the Bible in the primeval history. Hamas is the main reason for God to make a decision to destroy the earth. The word Hamas is defined as "cold-blooded and unscrupulous infringement of the personal rights of others motivated by greed and hate and often making use of physical violence and brutality" (Haag 1980: 482).

Violence is inherent in human society and it earns divine displeasure at the very beginning of humanity's existence. It is "the breach of a just order," whereby a victim of such violence may cry out for the protection of the community and its laws when his life is threatened (von Rad 1962: 1570). Thus Abel's blood crying to Yahweh from the ground (Gn 4: 10) is symbolic of the victims of violence calling for divine justice in their helplessness. Similarly the patriarchal narratives present the guilt condition of the ten

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brothers because of the violence they committed against Joseph (Gn 42: 21-22).

Violence denotes any anti-social, unbrotherly/unsisterly activity. Very often it involves brute force but it may just be the exploitation of the weak and the powerless by the powerful (Wenham 1987: 171). Jacob in the last moment of his life does not pronounce blessing on his sons Simeon and Levi but rather uttered curses on them (Gn 49: 5-7) because of the crime they committed against Schechem with 'weapons of violence' (Gn 34: 25-30). It seems that violence is the standard norm to settle disputes and grievances even in the most ancient societies which is, in fact, not the divine standard. But this malaise is a chronic condition in society, not a just sporadic lapse (Hamilton 1990: 273). Moreover, Gn 6: 5-13 the first pericope that mentions the term 'violence' describes the enormity of the evil that is associated with it and its worldwide occurrence. In this short passage the term 'the earth' occurs eight times. 'The earth' here means the whole inhabited world. Thus in the book of Genesis the observations on violence in society are only a prologue to the narratives concerning the biblical, rather the universal experience of violence.

Holy War

In the process of its nation-building and its existence in history as a state, Israel had been grappling with uncertainties because of its geographical position and the socio-cultural realities beyond its boundaries. Amidst the surrounding mighty empires, Israel was a dwarf nation crippled by the fear of being swallowed by any of them at any time. Socio-culturally they were tribal federations until monarchy came, often living in conflict with each other. Certain narratives in the Deuteronomic history, social laws and protestations to God in prayer at the face of violence reflect the actual situation in Israel.

The concept of 'holy war' is derived from the presupposition that "Yahweh is a warrior" (Ex 15:3) and "the battle is Yahweh's" (I Sam 17: 47). While Yahweh is the ultimate leader of the armies, the military commander is endowed by him with the gift of his Spirit (Judg 6: 34; 11: 29). When he withdraws his Spirit, the commander loses his power to lead anymore (Judg 16:20; I Sam 16:14) (Toombs 1962: 797). Those who participated in the holy war showed complete single-mindedness in the service of Yahweh. They considered it "cultically as a religious act, initiated by the will of Yahweh, and carried out by people devoted to his service and ceremonially pure" (Toombs 1962: 797).[1] Together with it came the practice of herem known as "the ban" which means the extermination of the inhabitants of the conquered territory (Josh 6:17; I Sam 15:3). It is an ethnic cleansing in the name of keeping the 'purity' of their religious faith. When herem was exercised, "the result was an orgy of destruction" (Lohfink in Botterweck 1986: 194). Neither human beings nor cattle were spared. But when monarchy arrived in Israel, the extermination of the conquered people was less, because the

subjugated population was put under slave labour (Lohfink 1986: 195).

On the other hand, Israel enacted laws in order to protect the people from violence within society. "Thou shall not kill" (Ex 20:13, Dt 5: 17) is one of the ten commandments. The Hebrew term 'rasah', meaning 'to kill', "carries the connotation of intentional and evil violence" (Childs 1974: 421). It is a command against taking the law in one's own hand and committing acts of violence to achieve personal goals.

Killing in war and capital punishment are permitted in the Old Testament. But it should not be seen as the norm of the covenant community or the ideal human society. Any bloodshed is bad and it carries with it blood-guilt which requires purification. Killing in self-defence or executing criminals may be exempted from blood-guilt (Ex 22:2; Lev 20:9). Yet there is some kind of disapproval in any type of killing. Thus David was not allowed to build a temple in the name of Yahweh because he was a man of war and shed much blood (I Chr 22:8) (Sperling Quoted in Freedman 1992: 763). In this sense, even a 'just war' cannot have the right sanction. There cannot be any approval of God in the acts of violence committed even in the name of God; for violence is the enemy of God.

Society and Law

Israel was to be an egalitarian society according to the intention of Yahweh. Every individual as a member of the covenant community had the right to exist with dignity and freedom. One who infringes the rights of his/her neighbor is a person of violence. The oppressed person prays for deliverance from such violent people (Ps 140). The victims of such violence are often the poor ('ani), the needy ('ebhyon) and the weak (dal), namely the powerless (Ps 72). Often those in authority, princes, judges, prophets and priests, that is, persons of importance in the social hierarchy are responsible for the oppression in society. "They do violence to the law" (Zeph 3: 3-4). Violence goes together with socio-economic oppression and exploitation of the poor by the rich and the powerful. "They do not know how to do right, says the Lord, those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds" (Amos 3:10). "In Samaria, the strongholds had become treasuries in which the powerful stored away the profits of 'violence' against others and of 'destruction' of rightful custom" (Mays 1969: 64). Often in the prophetic literature, 'violence' and 'destruction' go together (Jer 6:7; 48:3; Ez 45:9; Hab 1:3). In these prophetic utterances violence and destruction are perpetrated by the 'chosen people' for their own evil ways (Craigie 1991: 100, 101 & 273). Violence is what they sow and destruction is what they reap.

A false accusation or an unjust judgement is also seen as violence. It is "the false accusation that demands the life of the innocent" (Ps 7:16) (Haag 1980: 483). Law can be misinterpreted and misused in order to persecute the innocent. The irony is that the falsely accused expect justice from the court which itself is full of violence. Thus the denial of justice becomes a graver violence. In such cases, only Yahweh can come to the rescue of the victims, a

sentiment which the anawim cherish (Ps 25, see especially vv. 19-21). On the other hand, we see that the predatory violence mongers prey upon the pious sentiments of the innocents, masquerading as the dispensers of the divine law and thus making the people blind to the reality. Social crimes, unjust judgments and bloodguilt are primarily directed against Yahweh (Haag 1980: 485). And it is the violation of the created order, and disorder in society is its effect.

View from Apocalypticism

The exilic period can be considered the watershed of Israel's understanding of God, world and human society. They were subdued by the mighty empires and kept as captives in foreign lands. It was a time of introspection for the chosen people. They were victims of the violence perpetrated by the powerful foreign nations and at the same time they realized that violence was inherent in their own societal systems. And they regarded their present state as a punishment from Yahweh for their infidelity to the covenant, which manifested itself in the worship of alien gods and the practice of anti-social vices.

The return from the exile and the reorganization of the Jewish society too could not lead them to live the ideals of their religion. After the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great, the Jewish society came under Hellenistic influence. The Seleucid kings were staunch hellenizers. Under their oppression, especially that of Antiochus Epiphanus, visionary movements began to appear. The book of Daniel sees a mighty figure made up of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay, which was shattered by a mysterious stone (Dan 2: 31035). "This image is interpreted to mean that the various metals represent the successive rise and decline of world empires from the time of Neo-Babylonians to Alexander the Great and the age of Hellenism" (Lohse 1976: 56). Daniel sees the history of the rise and fall of all these empires as a unit and their ultimate destruction by God whose Kingdom will remain for ever (Dan 2:44). This marked the beginning of classical apocalypticism.

Apocalyptic literature is a crisis literature, born in the context of the oppression experienced by a subjugated society (Hanson 1976: 30). And apocalyptic movements always generate their symbolic universe in opposition to the symbolic universe of the dominant society. In the early stage opposition is expressed in the form of social protests aimed at changing the stance of the dominant society. But when the oppression is severe, three types of responses are foreseeable (Hanson 1976: 31): (a) The oppressed community can withdraw and establish a new society based on a symbolic utopian universe just as the Qumranites did. (b) The community can yield in the face of opposition and go underground leading to a sub-society expressing its identity in a symbolic sub-universe. Hasidim, early Christians and Jewish ghettoes in the last century are some of the examples of it. (c) In the face of persecution, the community may choose to reply with violence, becoming a revolutionary community constructing

a symbolic counter-universe just as the Zealots did. All these groups believed in the end of the existing unjust and oppressive social order. But there are fundamental differences in their perceptions. The Qumranites were preparing themselves for the eschatological war of the sons of light against the sons of darkness as described in their 'war scroll' (1QM). It is the complete overthrow of the present evil world order which is under the power of Satan and the establishment of a new world order under the sovereignty of God, in which only the righteous people will have a place. On the other hand, Zealots countered violence with violence. They organized revolts against the occupying forces, refusing to accept their authority. "They cling to their liberty with great tenacity and will acknowledge none but God as their Lord and King" (Josephus XVIII: 23). The Romans considered them bandits and robbers indulging in all criminal activities, and so they treated them harshly. Since these Zealots "distinguished themselves by their zeal for law, they formed a growing body of followers among the inhabitants of Palestine" (Lohse 1976 :84). They also showed absolute intolerance towards the Gentiles, the people who followed other faiths. It is one of the ancient examples of committing acts of violence with the claim of divine sanction.

Search for Peace and Harmony

The originary vision of the Judaeo-Christian religious experience is for peace and harmony in society. The 'garden of Eden' and the 'land flowing with milk and honey' should be seen as the images of a violence-free, harmonious and prosperous human social order.

> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Is 11: 6-9).

Here the prophet gives a set of images depicting the safety and security in his vision of earthly human existence. "The most helpless and innocent will be at ease with those who were formerly the most rapacious and violent" (Oswalt 1986: 283). It is a complete turn-about of the present state of life which is encompassed by fears of insecurity, danger, natural calamity, war and terrorism. The author finds the leadership over the wild animals in a mere child, but not in an intelligent and powerful leader. "In innocence, simplicity, and faith lies the salvation of a globe grown old in sophistication, cynicism and violence" (Oswalt 1986: 284).

Isaiah is not alone in visualizing such a society. Several prophets and noticeably Micah had such a vision: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every

man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken" (Mic 4: 3b-4; and see also Is 2: 4). Both these prophets, probably depending on some earlier tradition, visualize a peaceful and harmonious future. "Weapons will be converted to tools of agriculture; people will use the scarce and valuable materials of earth to cultivate life instead of crafting death" (Mays 1976: 98). Mic 4:4 presents the tranquility and the sense of security that a peasant farmer will experience, devoid of any type of violence or terrorism. There will not be extortionists who prey upon the hard-earned livelihood of the poor peasants. "When a person .... decides that he is the final judge both of what his legitimate needs are and how these needs may be met, the weak are trampled and violence results" (Oswalt 1986:118). The prophets visualize that the messianic times will be totally free of such factors, rather all will live in peace and harmony.

New Testament Perspectives

Jesus' proclamation of the rule of God fulfilled the Old Testament expectations, but in a new way. It is not by the overthrow of the surrounding mighty empires that the Kingdom of God will be established, but by bringing peace, justice, forgiveness, compassion and love into the lives of the people. Gospel calls for repentance as the first act (Mk 1:15). Repentance means to think, act and live in a different way. The sermon on the mount (Mt 5 – 7) is seen as a blueprint for true Christian behaviour in our society. Where the exhortations, "Do not resist one who is evil" (Mt 5:39)[2] and the golden rule "whatever you wish that others would do to you, do so to them" (Mt 7:12) are taken seriously and put into practice then there will be no violence or conflict in society. The New Testament vision of the human society revolves around this hope. The new heaven and the new earth (Rev 21:1) should not be seen as a totally other worldly reality, but as something that begins here and now.

Jesus by his life and teaching has shown a way for humanity which requires a transformation from within if it is to reach peace and harmony. It is the way to experience the rule of God which has already broken into history with the coming of Jesus. This transformation has to take place at two levels – personal and societal (Soares-Prabhu 1981: 605). At the personal level, there should be change a of heart in every individual. This conversion does not mean opting for one set of 'dogmas' instead of another set of 'dogmas' or for one code of religious conduct in the place another code of religious conduct. It is the inner refinement of one's character which leads to greater and greater compassion, mercy and love towards the other, which in turn will make him / her more acceptable to the Ultimate. At the same time, unjust and oppressive socio-political and economic structures too should be changed, not by violent overthrow, but by non-violent means. One sees an analogy between the approach of Jesus Christ and that of Mohandas K. Gandhi (Cassidy 1989: 80-82). Both advocated social patterns different from the existing ones. Both

refused to endorse the oppressive political order that prevailed in the society around them in varying degrees; but both opted for non-violence and both had deep faith in God. And the similarity almost ends with these. Jesus was rejected by the elites of his society and condemned to death by the political authority under the criminal law of Rome. The resurrection experience of his followers gives a new impetus to the movement that Jesus started, and thus becomes the foundation of the new creation. The first creation was corrupt in God's sight and was filled with violence (Gn 6:11). And the new creation is oriented towards a new heaven and a new earth.

Conclusion

Contrary to today's situation in which wealth 'buys' power, in ancient societies power brought wealth; but the latter is true even today in economically backward societies. "Being powerless meant being vulnerable to the greedy who prey on the weak" (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992: 49). Being poor means being subject to the denial of human rights and social honor, to the destruction of personal property and the source of livelihood, and to become the butt of persecution and public outrage. Therefore, the weak are more vulnerable to violence, whereas the agents of violence go scot-free. According to the Bible in such cases God confronts the perpetrators of violence, especially when the victims are innocent. This is seen in the cases of Abel, Uriah and Naboth in the biblical narratives. But the vision of the prophets like Isaiah and Micah and the New Testament is quite different. They visualize a society which lives the values of the Kingdom of God both individually and collectively. Ultimately, the biblical traditions find fulfilment in the one who lived in Palestine as an ordinary village preacher, died on the cross in Jerusalem, rose from the dead and will come again to find the total realization of the Kingdom of God which will be a violence-free society.

Endnotes

1. Notice its analogy with Jihad Movements of today and the Crusades of the past.
2. Leo Tolstoy's book *My Religion* is an exposition of this passage, which had a great influence on Mahatma Gandhi.

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JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 65- 74

Violence in Mission History

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The scope of this article is to highlight the major instances of the exercise of violence to spread the Christian religion, while explaining at the same time the context in which this occurred and how people understood it then. By violence here I understand not only physical violence against persons but also various forms of pressure on people to change their religion. For this purpose it will be convenient to divide mission history into three major periods.

1. First Period (313-500)

1.1. The Data

Arrived in a position of power, Christians often set about destroying idols. For non-Christians, it was a convincing demonstration of the powerlessness of their idols, that they could be destroyed with impunity. Violence was directed chiefly against idols and temples. But occasionally lives were lost in the ensuing riots. The Christians, however, did not imitate their persecutors by attempting, for instance, to decimate their opponents; so that in the 4th century the replacement of the Roman religions was accompanied by comparatively little loss of life. Bishop Martin of Tours "led his monks in preaching, in destroying temples, and in baptizing" (LATOURETTE, I: 201). It was common practice to build churches or monasteries on the sites of destroyed temples. Benedict built his famous monastery of Cassino (ca. 529) on the site of a temple of Apollo.

1.2. The Outlook

In the thinking of the times, the State was expected to have an official religion. Hence, the emperors took upon themselves the task of ensuring this. The dangers of the Church-State relationship which was developing from the time of Constantine were not realised at the start, but would become clearer with experience.

Though St. John Chrysostom sent a couple of zealous monks to destroy some temples, still he insisted that none should be compelled to the baptismal font under threat of force: the example of Christian living would be the most effective means. St. Augustine was at first opposed to the use of coercive measures against the schismatic Donatists in North Africa, e.g. confiscation of property. Later he changed his opinion, because he realized that many who wanted to be Catholics out of

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conviction did not do so, for fear of displeasing their people, or due to the dead weight of custom, or "because the sense of security rendered them slothful, disdainful, and unconcerned to inquire about Catholic truth". When pressurized by imperial decrees which threatened earthly loss, they overcame these obstacles, became Catholics and were glad to be so. It is plain how the principles enunciated by St. Augustine might be applied to non-Christians also, especially in view of the theological stand explained below.

The theological position encapsulated in the dictum, "Extra Ecclasiam nulla salus" (no salvation outside the Church) would also have influenced missionary practice. This idea was popularized in the third century by St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage in north Africa. He applied it to *Christian* heretics and schismatics. However, towards the close of the fourth century, when Christianity had become the official religion of the empire and the majority of its citizens professed it, its application was extended to non-Christians. These were presumed to be guilty, due to their wilful rejection of what plainly appeared as the truth. This position is evidenced in the writings of Sts. Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom and Augustine, among others (Sullivan: 24-27).

2. Second Period (500-1500)

By 1500 northern and eastern Europe had also become part of 'Christendom'. In kingdom after kingdom Christianity was declared the State religion; profession of the Christian faith became barely distinguishable from allegiance to king and country. Rulers of Christian realms, engaged in expansionist policies, regarded the spread of Christianity as an integral part of their programme. They used Christianity as a tool to further their aims of political domination, cultural assimilation and economic exploitation of neighbouring tribes and principalities. The missionary enterprise was actively fostered by kings who did not hesitate to use material inducements, threats and force to ensure at least outward profession of the State religion. We shall treat first of the Germanic tribes and then of the Slavs.

2.1. The Germanic tribes (3-11 cent.)

2.1.1. The Data

One can broadly distinguish two types of mission, according to the greater or lesser dependence on imperial support. In the mission under Dagobert, Martel, Pepin, Louis the Pious, and especially Charlemagne, the work of the missionaries was overshadowed by the will of the ruler. The latter used lures, threats and even force to induce acceptance of Christianity. On the other hand, the mission developed in a more spiritual fashion when it was undertaken on the initiative of independent missionaries.

Christian kings and emperors continued to make legal enactments against the non-Christian cults. In 556 Clovis' son, Childebert I, forbade idols and the non-Christian cult in his kingdom in Spain. In this context, Charlemagne did not hesitate to resort to the sword. His programme consisted of armed conquest, followed by the imposition of Christianity. Thus Widukind, who led

at least two Saxon uprisings, was defeated by Charlemagne and submitted to baptism in 785. In his "Capitulatio" for the Saxons, Charlemagne ordered the death penalty for refusal to receive baptism and for participation in non-Christian sacrifices. But the Saxons equated their religion with their political independence. So, like the Frisians they resisted Christianity as an instrument of Frankish imperialism. This led to a prolonged and brutal war in which many Saxons were slain before the others accepted Frankish rule and Christianity.

Force was used in Scandinavia too, more especially in Norway. Here some of the princes saw that they could hardly hope to raise the cultural, social and political level of their people without the organization and education which the Church brought. They also wanted to ensure their place within the growing family of Christian rulers. To this end Olaf Tryggvason, king of Norway (995-1000), used all means at his disposal. He sent soldiers to pull down non-Christian temples and idols and slew those who opposed him. Some yielded when faced with the choice of battle or baptism. When Alfred the Great defeated the Danish army (878) he required thirty of its leaders to accept baptism. In Normandy the Vikings made a treaty (911) with King Charles the Simple, whereby their settlements in Normandy were legitimized. In return, some of them received baptism.

2.1.2. The Outlook

Only a few clergymen or ecclesiastical authorities spoke out fearlessly against the violent measures of the Christian kings. Among them mention should be made of the Benedictine monk Alcuin. His criticism of the "Capitulatio" had an effect on Charlemagne, to whom he wrote in 796: "...the washing of the body by sacred baptism is of no benefit, if it is not preceded, in a rational being, by assent to the Catholic faith". These were times in which bishops and priests rode with sword and lance. Latourette remarks wrily: "The age was rough and the Christian leaven could not quickly transform it." In fact he sees the later Crusades as "part of the effect of the warlike spirit of Europe upon Christianity" (II: 106, 425).

2.2. The Slavs (7-14 cent.)

2.2.1. *The Data*

The Slavic peoples inhabited central Europe and the area around the Baltic Sea. Here perhaps much more force was employed than with the Germanic tribes. Repeatedly baptism was imposed at sword's point. The spiritual nature of baptism as a sacrament of faith receded into the background. As Lattourette observes, the Teutonic or Germanic peoples "sought to use the Church as an agency of conquest and insisted upon baptism as a symbol of the acknowledgement of overlordship and as a step towards assimilation ... Christianity became a tool of an expanding political and economic imperialism" (II: 153, 209). For this purpose they made use of such military Orders as the Teutonic Knights (founded ca. 1198) and the "Brothers of the Sword" (confirmed by Pope Innocent III in 1204). The purpose of the latter was to `convert' the non-Christian Esths and Livs, who held tenaciously to their religion. These un-

tamed Brothers lived by the sword, until the Order was dissolved ca. 1561.

When Charlemagne's son Pepin inflicted a final defeat on the Avars in 796, the survivors declared themselves ready for baptism. The Saxons used much the same methods on the Wends as Charlemagne had employed on their own ancestors, i.e., armed force and the imposition of ecclesiastical organization. When Henry I (d. 936) defeated some Wends he extorted from them a promise to pay him tribute and to become Christians. His son, Otto I ("the Great"), continued his father's policy. Some Saxon nobles, taking as their watchword "the conversion or destruction of the Wends", led a massive crusade against them in 1147. In Hungary grand-duke Geisa was baptized in 986. He compelled some of his subjects, under threat of armed force, to accept baptism; he reduced many prominent Magyars to menial positions when they refused to be baptized. In 987 Emperor Vladimir of Russia accepted the Byzantine form of Christianity for chiefly political reasons. He then made Christianity the State religion, had the idols destroyed and his people conducted in crowds to the Dnieper for baptism. In Bulgaria, King Boris (d. 901) ruthlessly suppressed a revolt of the nobility challenging his decision to impose baptism on all his subjects. Duke Mieczislaw of Poland received baptism in 966 and set about getting his subjects to follow suit. Christianity became the State religion of Poland. Boleslav III of Poland stipulated the acceptance of Christianity among the conditions of his peace treaty with the Pomeranians. In 1249 the Swede Jarl Birger led an expedition against the Finns and brought the majority of them to an outward acceptance of the Christian faith. The Saxon Cistercian Abbot Berthold organized , with papal authority, a crusade against the Livonians and conquered them in 1198. Thereupon they accepted Christianity, but `apostatised' and persecuted the Christians when the army withdrew. In general it was only a nominal Christianity which resulted from the use of force in various forms. It took hard work for more than one generation to improve the quality of Christianity.

2.2.2. *The Outlook*

Comparatively few voices were raised in the Christian name to protest the exploitation by Germans of non-German peoples. After the overthrow of the Avars, Pepin arranged for a commission of bishops to meet in Bavaria in 797, under the direction of Arn of Salzburg and Paulinus of Aquileia. They rejected force and hasty mass baptisms. The Scriptural order was: faith and then baptism, not vice-versa. Since the mission was facing "a brute and irrational people" ("gens bruta et inrationalis") who were entering the Church under pressure of defeat, the rites of Christian initiation must be preceded by a catechetical instruction of at least 8 to 15 days. Alcuin wrote to Charlemagne in the same vein. Roger Bacon (d. 1294) said it was better to convert the non-Christians through true knowledge and wisdom than through wars.

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) taught that physical violence may not be used on non-Christians to make them accept Christianity. However, the rites of non-Christians must in no wise be tolerated

by a Christian ruler, except it be to avoid scandal, or strife, or because through toleration the people would gradually be converted to the Christian faith. He also justified the idea of a military religious order (S.T. II-IIae, Q. 10, art. 8 & 10; Q. 188, art. 3).

He cited the tradition of the Church as the chief reason why non-Christian children, who have not yet reached the use of reason, may not be baptized against their parents' will. If, on attaining the use of reason, the child desires baptism – through persuasion and not under compulsion- he/she may be baptized, even against the parents' will (S.T. II-IIae, Q. 10, art. 8, 11, 12; II, Q. 68, art. 10). He mitigated the concept of "No salvation outside the Church", by introducing the idea of an implicit desire for baptism. Still the *position of non-Christians in respect of salvation appears precarious and zealous propagators of Christianity might want to use various forms of pressure to get people to join the Church.*

In 1302 Pope Boniface VIII reiterated the doctrine, without making any distinction, that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church (See his Bull, "Unam Sanctam"). This represents the common thinking of Christians during the middle ages. This teaching was given although the Church was aware of vast numbers of non-Christians, not only Muslims, living beyond the confines of Europe and lacking knowledge of the Gospel. In the first half of the 13th century the Mongol hordes had conquered Moscow and Kiev and settled along the lower Volga river; in 1401 they conquered Damascus. Beginning from 1245 the Pope sent Franciscan and Dominican missions to them and received extensive reports about their people and the extent of their dominions which reached into China. Some of these reports were widely read in Europe. Marco Polo also reported about his travels in India and China between 1273-1292. Yet, two hundred years later, on the eve of the great European expansion into Africa, S. America and Asia, the general council of Florence (1442) reasserted the doctrine of no salvation outside the Church, adding that fasts, almsgiving and other works of piety bear eternal rewards only for those who remain in the Catholic Church. [1] We see how this teaching was understood, in the indulgenced prayer of St. Francis Xavier (d. 1552) for the conversion of the 'infidels': "Behold, Lord, to your dishonour hell is being filled with them !"

2.3. Attitude towards Jews

The attitude of Christians towards Jews varied from tolerance to physical violence: persuasion, disputations, polemical writings, compulsory attendance at Christian sermons, forced baptism and frequent persecutions. Mob violence, often instigated by those in high places, repeatedly broke out against the Jews. The Synods of Narbonne (1051), Mainz (1310) and Valencia (1338) demanded the separation of Jews and Christians. The fourth Lateran general council (1215) issued four discriminatory canons on the Jews. Expulsion of Jews from France occurred in 1309 and 1394. Sisebut, king of Visigothic Spain (7th C.), gave all Jews the choice between baptism and exile with confiscation of goods. Archbishop

Isidore of Seville disapproved of the king's violence. The Popes condemned compulsory baptism and were more moderate towards the Jews than was the populace. It was partly out of the desire to achieve religious and cultural unity within the kingdom, that later Spanish kings attempted to convert or expel the Jews and Moors (Muslims).

From 1480 the Inquisition in Spain began proceedings against "Christians" who secretly clung to Judaism. When Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492 ordered Jews to be baptized or to leave Spain, a large number chose exile. A similar order was issued in Portugal in 1497. Here the majority of Jews submitted to baptism, but the Inquisition was introduced in the first half of the 16th century.

3. Third Period (1500-1800)

During these three centuries Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox missionary activity accompanied colonial expansion into whole continents. Christianity spread in close conjunction with the commercial, political and military expansion of European powers.

3.1. The Data

When once a people was conquered, they more readily accepted the religion of their new masters. This was especially clear in south America. The civil authorities here often provided armed protection to missionaries and acted on the presumption that the missionary state must be followed by the imposition of their own rule on the (American) Indians. The Nayarit Indians on the west coast of northern Mexico had long resisted both Spanish authority and missionaries. When they were conquered in the 1720's, Jesuits followed the troops and made many conversions. The same process took place with great rapidity in Colombia when Jimenez de Quesada captured (1536-'8) the table-land of Bogota and Tunja. As with the Dutch in Formosa, an escort of troops often accompanied the missionary, to give him protection when he entered new areas.

Conversions to Russian Orthodoxy followed soon upon the conquest of the Irtysh valley. Filofei Leszczynski (1650-1727), the tireless Metropolitan of Siberia, travelled along the Irtysh and the Ob accompanied by soldiers and priests; he baptized many Ostyaks and Voguls (Finnish tribes).

In this era there were only rare instances of baptism being imposed at the point of the sword, as when Ivan IV ("the Terrible") took the city of Polotzk in 1563. He ordered that all the Jews be baptized or drowned in the Dvina. The common practice was rather to bring social and economic pressure to bear on the non-Christians. Idols and temples were destroyed on a large scale all over the colonies.

In Spanish and Portuguese colonies, non-Christians were compelled to listen to missionary preaching. In the Goa islands there was already a movement towards Christianity, particularly among the poorer classes, when the Portuguese banned the public celebration of Hindu rites and feasts, under pain of a life-sentence to the galleys and loss of all one's possessions. There were other ordinances, backed by severe penalties, which placed Hindus in a disadvantageous position. In Sri Lanka the

Dutch are said to have imposed fines on those who refused to accept baptism.

3.2. The Outlook

All acted according to the accepted principle of the times, "cuius regio eius religio", that is, the people are expected to follow the religion of their ruler. The spirit of the times is expressed in a letter (1567) of Pope St. Pius V to the Portuguese Viceroy of India and his Council: "As more and more gentiles accept the Christian faith, so the king's glorious name will become more glorious, his rule in these parts will be more firmly established, he will acquire greater power to subjugate uncultured nations with divine assistance and join them to the Portuguese empire" (Saldanha: 119). The Spanish colonizers argued that the unbelief of the South American Indians was a just enough reason to make war on them and *enslave* them. This argument was rejected by the Dominican de Vitoria (1493-1546), although he and some other great theologians of the time, like Domingo Soto, O.P. (1524-1560) and the Jesuit F. Suarez (1548-1619) taught that Christian States had the right to use force in order to make non-Christian peoples receive and *hear missionaries*. But they rejected forced baptisms, of the type effected by Ivan the Terrible referred to above. Pope Alexander VII also spoke against the use of inducements and force (1658) (*Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda fide,* 1907, n. 129, xv, t.1, p 40). The Protestant John Calvin (1509-1564) taught that those who have not had the opportunity to hear the gospel message are predestined to eternal damnation.

4. Fourth Phase (1800-)

From the 19th century the Protestant Churches engaged in evangelisation in a big way, while the Roman Catholic Church continued its missionary activity.

4.1. The Data

Notwithstanding the instance of the French missions cited below, it still remains true that Christian missions as a whole were less under the control of European governments and received less direct assistance from them than during any other period since the fourth century. At the most, the colonial powers provided freedom to propagate one's faith. Forced baptisms are practically non-existent in this period. A rare exception is the attempt of Czar Nicholas I (1825-1855) to compel all Jews in State service to be baptized, in order to assimilate them to the Russians.

France found in French Roman Catholic missions a convenient tool for the furtherance of its political and colonial aims in the Near East, in China, Indo-China and the Pacific islands. The missions were also considered an instrument for the dissemination of French culture. Often French gun-boats wrung out of native rulers toleration for Roman Catholicism, freedom to found missions and propagate Christianity. They established a protectorate in China, by which the French authorities had the right to intervene where Christian missions were persecuted. In this they were followed by Germany and Italy. The Vicars Apostolic of China, meeting in Rome for the First Vatican General Council (1870), addressed a note of thanks to Napoleon III for the

blessing of the French protectorate. But thoughtful Chinese found suspicious the interest of the protectorate-powers in spreading Christianity, which they persecuted in their own countries. The occupation of Vietnam began by the request (1858) of a Vicar Apostolic for French protection. The murder of missionaries was often made the excuse for war and actual colonization. In a vicious circle this led to further persecutions, and hence further colonization. In this way, France gradually extended its dominion over Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

4.2. The Outlook

The thinking in the previous epoch left its impress on this period too. In condemning 'indifferentism' Pope Leo XII (1824) defined it as the opinion that "one can embrace and adopt without any danger to salvation any sect that attracts one according to one's own private judgment and opinion" (ND 1006). In an encyclical letter (1832) Gregory XVI described as a "wrong opinion (that) one can attain the eternal salvation of one's soul by any profession of faith, provided one's moral conduct conforms to the norms of right and good" (ND 1007). Pius IX (1854) termed it an error to "think that there is good hope for the eternal salvation of all those who do not in any way belong to the Church of Christ ... and that the way of eternal salvation can be found in any religion whatever" (ND 1009; 1013/15-17). This official document is also the first one to introduce the concept of "invincible ignorance"; as such it prepares the way for the document of the Holy Office (1949) in the Leonard Feeney case. The Letter clarified that to gain salvation it is not always required that a person be incorporated in reality as a member of the Church. Still the Holy Office quoted Pope Pius XII, that those who are not members of the Catholic Church "cannot be secure about their salvation"; he also censured those who maintain that "people can be saved equally well in any religion" (ND 855 -856).

The religious 'indifferentism' which the Church condemned must be understood in its European philosophical context, which tended to deny all divine revelation or at least to refuse any finality to God's revelation in Christ. However, the statements were open to grave misunderstanding. They also led to wrong conclusions, as when Pius IX (1864) listed the following in his 'Syllabus' of condemned errors: "In our age it is no longer advisable that the Catholic religion be the only State religion, excluding all other cults. Therefore it is praiseworthy that in some Catholic regions the law has allowed people immigrating there to exercise publicly their own cult" (ND 1013/77-78). Two decades later in an encyclical letter Leo XIII reiterated the point, that "the Church does not consider it licit that various forms of worship of God should have the same rights as the true religion" (ND 1014).

The general council of Vatican II (1962- 1965) moved decisively to preserve missionary activity from past ambiguities. The Council reminds missionaries that "they must depend on the power of God, who very often reveals the might of the gospel through the

weakness of its witnesses ... They should use means and helps proper to the gospel. In many respects these differ from the supports of the earthly city ... the Church does not lodge her hope in privileges conferred by civil authority" (GS 76). Furthermore, "The Church strictly forbids forcing anyone to embrace the faith, or alluring or enticing people by unworthy techniques. By the same token, she also strongly insists on a person's right not to be deterred from the faith by unjust vexations on the part of others" (AG 13). Accordingly "no one is to be hindered from acting in conformity with conscience, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others". And this right to religious freedom "must be recognized in the constitutional law governing society in such a way that it becomes a civil right" (DH 2). The Council also asserted the possibility of salvation for those who are inculpably ignorant of the Gospel or the Church (LG 16; AG 7). Nevertheless the teachings of past centuries continue to weigh heavily on the Church. For in 2000 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declared that whereas Catholics are in an exalted condition, non-Christians are "in a gravely deficient situation". Their prayers and rituals are nothing more than "occasions or pedagogical helps" to be open to God (Declaration "Dominus Jesus", Nn. 21-22).

5. Concluding Reflections

The first great obstacle to inter-religious dialogue and to dealing in a spirit of equality with people of other religious persuasions was denial of the possibility of salvation for them. This obstacle may be said to have been overcome, however grudgingly. Still, the Church espouses certain theological positions which could be supportive of the very ways of proceeding which Vatican II sought to repudiate. This is the second great obstacle to dialogue and it persists today. It is the insistence that the Church possesses the fullness of revelation and truth (John Paul II, "Redemptoris Missio", Nn. 5, 55, 56).[2] G. Soares-Prabhu (183) describes how, "Such exclusivism leads inevitably to attitudes of superiority towards people outside the Church ...; to a stereotyping that perceives them as spiritually inferior; and eventually to actions that treat them as less than human." Hence, notwithstanding the protestations of humility and commitment to religious freedom, "what is to prevent the Christian champions of religious freedom today, becoming (like the Christians under Constantine) the religious persecutors of tomorrow" – given the right combination of circumstances ? Today it is easier for the Church to speak the language of religious freedom, since she is no longer in a position of power, even in Europe. And in the former colonies, Christians are often a persecuted minority. With some reason "Missio", the Institute of Missiology in Aachen contends that the above mentioned Declaration, "Dominus Jesus", may not foster that peace among religions without which there can be no peace in the world (*Ishvani Documentation and Mission Digest*, 2001, no. 1, 121-124).

This essay has, hopefully, shown how powerful sociological and political factors can influence the patterns of evangelisation, while the evangelizers

and evangelized themselves may often be unaware of these influences. This highlights the importance of a deeper knowledge of the context of evangelisation, through the help of the human sciences. Social analysis, which would include political and economic factors, is a valuable asset for the evangelizer.

Endnotes

1. For the reasons stated here I cannot agree with Sullivan's thesis, that the Church was unaware of the reality of vast numbers of people living beyond all Christian influence.
2. Vatican II adopts a more nuanced position, distinguishing between Christ and the Church. Whereas Christ exists as the "fullness of all revelation" (DV 2), "the Church constantly moves forward towards the fullness of divine truth" (DV 8).

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JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 75-85

The Church and the Crusades

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Few events that happened in medieval Europe are even today spoken about as often as the crusades. Recent happenings in India[1] and the world at large[2] have brought to the forefront ideas and feelings connected with the words *jihad* and crusade. Ideas and feelings connected with religious traditions, especially if they are popular ones, evoke strong reactions from the people.

Crusades

The crusades dominated the mind of medieval Europe. Despite their overpowering influence no one term was consistently used to describe the crusades or the crusaders. Besides various vernacular words that appeared in the thirteenth century, like *croiserie* in French, the 'crusade' could be called a pilgrimage (*iter* or *peregrinatio*), a holy war (*bellum sacrum* or *guerre sainte*), a passage or general passage (*passagium generale*), an expedition of the Cross (*expeditio crucis*) or the business of Jesus Christ (*negotium Jesu Christi*). It is only in the late twelfth century that the technical word *cruce signati*, 'signed with the cross', was used for those who took part in these adventures, and from this derives the word 'crusaders' (Riley-Smith 1977: 12). As a mark of a public commitment to participate in a crusade, they wore a red cloth cross sewn to their dress.

Not only were different terms used, but crusades referred actually to more than one activity. As against the popular use of the word, 'crusade' was not restricted to the military expeditions of Christians to the Holy Land. It was used also to describe the military expeditions against Muslims in the East and for the fight against the Muslims in Spain. The same word was also used when the Christians used military force against the heretics, schismatics and dissenters within the Christian community, whom the popes adjudged enemies of the faith. Despite this varied usage of the word, in this essay we shall focus only on the crusades that were launched to recover to the Holy Land from the Muslims and see how the Christian community of those days justified the use of force to achieve its aim.

Pilgrimages

Going on pilgrimage played a major role in initiating the crusade movement. In the earliest days of Christianity pilgrimages were probably rare. Bib-

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lical scholars speculate whether the resurrection apparitions around the empty tomb in the Gospels did not have early pilgrimage visits to the tomb as their *Sitz im Leben*. At any rate, by the third century we read of Christians going on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. A visit to the holy places connected with Jesus' life was seen as a means of growing in spiritual life and also as a form of reparation for one's sins. But early Christian writers like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom considered pilgrimages to be irrelevant. They even disapproved of them. On the other hand, Jerome said that it was an act of faith to pray where the feet of Christ had stood. And Jerome's view became more popular with the people (Runciman 1954: 40).

Encouraged by the authorities, pilgrimages multiplied. As a result by the beginning of the fourth century there were said to be already two hundred monasteries and hospices in or around Jerusalem to receive pilgrims. The mid-fifth century saw the height of this early taste for pilgrimage to Jerusalem [3]

The improvement in the conditions of pilgrimage had an effect on western religious thought. It is not sure at what time pilgrimages were first ordered as canonical practices. All the early medieval penitential books recommended a pilgrimage, but usually without giving a specified goal. But the belief was growing that certain holy places possessed a definite spiritual value which affected those that visited them and could even bring about indulgence from sin. From the tenth century onwards Palestine was considered one of the four holy places to have this gift. The others were Rome, Santiago de Compostela in Spain and Saint Michael at Monte Gargano in Italy (Runciman 1954: 44).

The Cluny monks arranged and popularised pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Thanks to their efforts, an unending stream of pilgrims - men and women of every age and class - went to Jerusalem throughout the eleventh century.

Even as the pilgrimage movement was gaining momentum, the Holy Land itself passed into the hands of the Muslims. In 638 Caliph Omar captured it. But he gave freedom to the Christians to practise their religion and continue their pilgrimages. Conditions remained the same till 1077, when Seljukian Turks captured Jerusalem. They desecrated the holy places, ill-treated the Christians, putting some into prison and killing others. The pilgrims who returned to their homelands spoke of the sad plight of the Christians in the East and how difficult it had become to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Pope Gregory VII and his successor Victor III wanted to launch a crusade to avenge these wrongs against Christians and Christianity. But during those days the secular powers of Christendom were busy with their own affairs and the conflicts among themselves. So they did not pay attention to the wishes of the Pope. Things changed with the arrival of charismatic preachers like Peter the Hermit on the scene. They succeeded in building up popular opinion in favour of a war against Muslims. In this surcharged atmosphere Pope Urban II made an appeal to the Christians to take part in a crusade to

liberate Jerusalem. He made this appeal in November 1095 at the Council of Clermont, in response to the plea for western assistance made a few months earlier by the Byzantine Emperor Alexius II and hoping thus to end the schism between East and West through mutual help to each other. The Pope's appeal met with an enthusiastic response, much beyond what he himself had expected.

Helping fellow Christians

The Pope asked Christians in the West to help their fellow Christians in the East. He told them: "You must carry succour to your brethren dwelling in the East and needing your aid, which they have so often demanded. For the Turks, a Persian people, have attacked them, as many of you know, and have advanced ... occupying more and more the lands of those Christians, have already seven times conquered them in battle, have killed and captured many, have destroyed the churches and devastated the kingdom of God. If you permit them to remain for a time unmolested, they will extend their sway more widely over many faithful servants of the Lord" (Pope Urban II, 1095 edited by Barry 1960: 327-328). Referring to Muslims he urged "men of all ranks, knights and foot-soldiers, rich and poor, to hasten to exterminate this vile race from the lands of our brethren and to bear timely aid to the worshippers of Christ" (Barry 1960: 328). He warned the faithful that "many reproaches will be heaped upon you by the Lord Himself if you do not aid those who like yourselves are counted of the Christian faith" (Barry 1960: 328). He wanted them to stop fighting among themselves and killing each other and ruining the wealth of nations: "Let those who have formerly been accustomed to contend wickedly in private warfare against the faithful, fight against the infidel and bring to a victorious end the war which ought long since to have been begun. Let those who have formerly contended against their brothers and relatives now fight as they ought against the barbarians" (Barry 1960: 328). He promised that God would lead them in this venture.

Crusade – a pilgrimage

As noted, one of the reasons for the crusade was to enable the Christians to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. And the crusade, started to help the pilgrims, was itself regarded as a form of pilgrimage.[4] The pilgrimage symbol and terminology were used for the crusades and the crusaders. The vows that the crusader took were based on those of the pilgrim. The privileges that the pilgrims enjoyed, especially the protection of themselves, family and property, and indulgences, were also given to the crusaders. "The association of expedition and pilgrimage was at once expressed symbolically, especially in the cloth cross which the knights at Clermont had sewn to their garb; this was the sign of the crusade vow, a religious obligation, and at the same time the military symbol of an army resolved to fight. There also appeared a common battle cry "Deus le volt," and a new ritual blessing, which added the sword to the old pilgrimage symbols that were retained, the staff and wallet" (Kempf 1969: 448-449).

Crusade Piety

During the period of the crusades, thanks to a greater familiarity with Christian scriptures especially the New Testament, the focus of the sermons preached by the bishops, diocesan clerics and monks began to shift from Jesus Christ the Lord to Jesus of Nazareth – the wandering, suffering, humanly close and redeeming Jesus. This evoked among the laity the desire to lead a life of personal nearness to Jesus who showed the way to salvation. They saw that Jesus Christ had made salvation possible for them and had already shown by his life how to achieve it. "It is no longer surprising that the concrete aspect of this *via salutis* now became the crusade. Accordingly, crusade piety appears as a characteristic form of the Christian's seeking after salvation, which he found in a threefold union with God in obedient service – "God wills it" – with Christ in a suffering, dying, and triumphing imitation – for Christ and with him – with the Holy Spirit in the enthusiasm of the reorientation, esteemed as a newly experienced Pentecost" (Beck 1970: 87).

The crusaders viewed sufferings and defeats in wars as punishments from God to purify and punish them for disobeying God's commands and falling into sin. Moreover, suffering during the crusade was seen as integral to the penance they had voluntarily undertaken when they became part of the movement.

The crusaders compared themselves with the Israelites of the First Testament and found in the figures of the First Testament their consolation and challenge. "In their sufferings they were inspired by the patience of Job; in their march, their hardships and the blessings showered upon them they were like the Israelites journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land, with Adhémer of Le Puy as their Moses; like the Maccabees they fought for Jerusalem, they faced martyrdom, and God's favour was revealed in miracles" (Riley-Smith 1977 : 91). While the crusaders saw certain similarities between them and those from the First Testament, they were convinced that theirs was superior to that of the Israelites. They saw the crusade as more miraculous than the enterprises of the Israelites and the Maccabees, and the crusaders' sufferings surpassed those of their ancient exemplars (Riley-Smith 1977 : 91).

War

Despite the prevalence of these spiritual elements in the crusade movement, the crusades were basically wars waged by the Christians, and Christianity at that point of time officially supported this warfare. For those who are familiar with the Jesus' Movement in its earliest phase this support for military activity comes as a big surprise. One of the accusations levelled against the early Christians was their refusal to do military service.[5] Christian writers like Tertullian and Origen wrote against military activity. They gave strong pacifist arguments. But already in the fourth century we encounter in Ambrose and Augustine persons who defended just wars (Swift 1983: 27). It is quite strange that a pacifist Church in course of time not only kept silent when some of its members enrolled themselves in the

army and fought wars, but also authorised and defended wars waged in the name of religion. It began to call war a just one and indeed a holy act to be pursued with great vigour and religious fervour!

This eventually led to the appearance of 'military orders'. The monks of these orders took the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. But they were soldiers who had dedicated their lives to the service of Christ. The more famous among these orders are the Templars and Hospitallers.

Just war

The just war theory as it developed in Christian circles stipulated that for a war to be called a just one, it must be a defensive one. That is, the war must have been waged merely to defend one's country, or to recover property unlawfully taken by another. This theory was used in favour of the crusade.

The Holy Land was claimed to be the property of the Christians. It had been consecrated by the presence of Jesus Christ. As representative of Christ the Pope was within his right to reassert Christian jurisdiction in Palestine. Therefore, the crusade to the Holy Land was seen as recovering the territory that belonged originally and by right to the Christians. It was not a war of aggression but only a defensive one. As defensive, crusades were shown to conform to the basic principles of just wars. The idea of a just war was also invoked already in the fight against Muslims in Spain and Sicily.

Holy War

With the crusades the idea of Holy War entered into Christian thinking. Crusades were spoken of as Holy Wars because what was being recovered was what belonged not to any particular country but to Christendom at large, to the Church and to Christ himself. "It was not the property of the Byzantine Empire or of the Kingdom of Jerusalem that was liberated or defended by the crusades to the East, but territory belonging by right to Christendom or to Christ" (Riley-Smith 1977: 29). In the crusade the use of military force was regarded as being not merely justifiable and condoned by God, but positively sanctioned by him. The battle cry of the crusades from the beginning had been *deus le volt* (God wills it).

The prevalent political philosophy of medieval Europe and its understanding of Christendom played an important role in the crusades. In political terms Christendom was seen as a universal state and not merely that of the society of Christians. Christendom was thought of as a monarchy, founded and ruled by Christ. It was seen as transcendental, because it existed at the same time in heaven and on earth. It was seen as the only true sovereign state, because it provided the political context in which human persons could develop their potential for loving God and God's people. Other claimants for kingdoms did not have real political validity. They were at best considered temporal arrangements which could be treated as provinces of Christendom. Christendom had its possessions and its citizens, and any of its possessions which was in the

hands of others should be restored to its rule. Following this trend of thought a crusade was seen as an army fighting for the recovery of its lost property. Calling for a crusade Pope Urban II said: "I pray and exhort, nay not I, but the Lord prays and exhorts you, as heralds of Christ ... I speak to those who are present, I proclaim it to the absent, but Christ commands"[6] (Pope Urban II in Barry 1960: 328). Appeal was made to Christian duty. Christendom was disturbed. So Christians have to fight in the Christian army. Pope Urban hailed the crusaders as "soldiers of Christ." The crusaders on their part called themselves "the army of the Lord." The leaders of the First Crusade spoke of spreading "the kingdom of Christ and the Church." In 622 Heraclius, the Eastern Roman Emperor, had fought against the Persians who had taken over Jerusalem in 614. He "dedicated himself and his army to God and set out as a Christian warrior fighting the powers of darkness. To subsequent generations he figured as the first of the Crusaders," observes Runciman (1954: 11).

To Pope Innocent III the crusade was a venture that was Christ's own and those who helped the Muslims in this war were acting against the "interests of Christ himself and the Christian people" (Riley-Smith 1977: 30). And St Bernard of Clairvaux opined that King Louis VII of France going on a crusade was of importance not only to him "but to the whole Church of God, because now your cause is one with that of all the world." Odo of Châteuroux spoke in the same vein a century later: "But someone says, 'The Muslims have not hurt me at all. Why should I take the Cross against them?' But if he thought well about it he would understand that the Muslims do great injury to every Christian" (Riley-Smith 1977: 30). So Muslims were presented as the common enemy of all Christians, and not only as enemies of Christians in a particular land. They had become the enemies of Christendom by their illegal occupation of the Holy Land and because of the harsh treatment they were meting out to Christians.

God with Us

In a despatch of 18 October 1097 Adhémar of Le Puy and the Greek Patriarch spoke about the successes of the crusades in the following words: "We are few in comparison with the pagans. Truly God fights for us" (Hagenmeyer 1901: 142; as cited in Riley-Smith 1986: 91). The crusaders claimed that they were fighting under divine leadership and that they were helped by God's strong right arm. They believed that the hand of the Lord was with them. Therefore, they were convinced that no force could prevail against them. They saw God as their General, co-traveller and co-worker, and attributed the successes of the military to God's favour: "God opened to us the abundance of His blessing and mercy and led us into the city, and delivered the Turks and all of their possessions into our power," wrote Archbishop Daimbert, Duke Godfrey and Count Raymond (Quoted in Barry 1960: 329).

They were convinced that God was on their side to help them when they called on him and instilled in them great courage: "When our army was in sight

of the enemy, upon our knees we invoked the aid of the Lord ... There was no delay; God was present when we cried for His aid, and furnished us with so great boldness, that one who saw us rush upon the enemy would have taken us for a herd of deer hastening to quench their thirst in running water" (Quoted in Barry 1960: 330).

Against Enemies of God

To liberate the Holy Land the crusaders fought with the Muslims. This was not the first time that Christians were fighting against Muslims. Wars had been regularly fought between them in the past. The difference was that earlier they were seen as wars to defend the Empire and thus as something normal that happens between political powers. Though in the past Christian captives were occasionally either forced to apostatise or put to death by a fanatical Muslim ruler (and their martyrdom duly remembered and honoured), such cases were rare. But the crusade against the Muslims in the Holy Land was portrayed as a struggle for the glory of Christendom, for the rescue of its holy places (Runciman 1954: 32).

As said earlier, because of what they did to the Holy Land, Muslims were regarded as enemies of not one nation but of all Christians. Writers at the time of the First Crusade described Muslims as "enemies of God." They were considered enemies of Christendom and as such were to be treated as enemies of Christ, the God incarnate. Pope Urban II in his speech at Clermont described the Muslims as "a race so despised, degenerate and slave of the demons" (Quoted in Barry 1960: 328).

Authorised by the Pope

Against these 'enemies of God' the crusade as a military expedition was authorised not by any temporal power but by the Pope as head of Christendom and representative of Christ. As a result of this papal initiative the crusades enjoyed certain privileges, particularly indulgences, which only Popes could bestow.

Papal proclamations and encyclicals added weight to the crusade movement. The Popes also asked the bishops, papal legates and specially commissioned crusade preachers like St Bernard, to preach for the crusades. To support the preachers Pope Innocent III and his successors gave indulgences even to those who listened to the sermons irrespective of their joining the crusades or not. Besides these preachers who were controlled by the papacy, there were other popular evangelisers like Peter the Hermit and Nicholas, the boy who led the children's crusade in 1212.

Material Gains

Ordinary men in medieval Europe were moved by the new concept of knighthood and by the desire to serve Christ by taking up the cross and defending the Church by winning over the land for Christendom. At a period of time when the ideal Christian was a monk and the priesthood was a prestigious and privileged state of life, and the laity only the 'second best', an undertaking which could increase the status

of the laity was the crusade. Only the layman was qualified to take part in the crusade. The popes, bishops, priests and monks could only preach. They were not allowed to take up arms. Thus crusade became a fruitful field of action to laymen.

Moreover, crusades were not restricted to any class. Men of all classes took part in the crusades. Even criminals took part in it because their sentences were commuted in return for participating in the crusade. Other laymen also stood to gain. They enjoyed certain privileges: protection of themselves, their families and properties. They were exempted from certain taxes and interest payments. There was also the possibility of getting new kingdoms and fiefdoms. The popular evangelisers dwelt on messianic and visionary themes emphasising the rewards of the poor who take part in the crusades. That kind of language sometimes erupted in migrations towards the Holy Land, which was believed to be a paradise which only the underprivileged could acquire (Riley-Smith 1977: 43).

Spiritual Benefits

Crusaders were assured of many spiritual benefits too. Taking part in the crusade was seen as a means of salvation. They were granted indulgences. Since the fight was for Christ, crusaders who were called soldiers of Christ were destined to receive salvation. "Pope Alexander II's indulgence for the Spanish warriors (1063) marks the date at which the Roman central government formally approved and took under its wing the religious war, born out of the Spanish struggle for existence against the Moors. In this way, Islam's militant religious spirit entered into Western Christianity as a whole," observes Mirgeler (1964: 114). For those who died in battle Pope Urban II granted absolution and the remission of sins. He promised them that "the sins of those who set out thither, if they lose their lives on the journey, by land or sea, or in fighting against the heathen, shall be remitted in that hour; this I grant to all who go, through the power of God vested in me" (in Barry 1960: 328). He said that life here was miserable and evil, with people preoccupied with various activities leading to the ruin of their bodies and souls. Here they were poor and unhappy. And he promised them that if they go on the crusade they would be joyful and prosperous and become friends of God. Canon 2 of the Council of Clermont declared that "whoever for devotion only, not for honour or financial gain, joins the expedition for the freeing of the Church of God in Jerusalem, can count that journey as a substitute for all penance" (Cited in Riley-Smith 1977: 59). The crusade was portrayed as another penitential act and the performance of this penitential act dispensed the penitent from the penance enjoined on that person for the sins committed. Even as late as the mid-twentieth century a financial contribution to the 'Crusades' could dispense any Christian from most of the rigorous Lenten penances imposed by canonical or liturgical laws.

Crusade was seen not only as a penitential act but also as a positive act of virtue. It was portrayed as a means of grace, an expression of love of God

and of neighbour: Love of God, because out of love for God the crusaders fought. Love of neighbour because the crusaders took up arms to help the Christians in the East (Riley-Smith 1977: 31).

Martyrdom

Already from the ninth century dying in war against Muslims had been spoken of as martyrdom. St Bernard underlined this fact in his sermons. He preached to them: "Go forward then in security, knights, and drive off without fear the enemies of the Cross of Christ, certain that neither death nor life can separate you from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ ... How glorious are those who return victorious from the battle! How happy are those who die as martyrs in the battle! Rejoice, courageous athlete, if you survive and are victor in the Lord; but rejoice and glory the more if you die and are joined to the Lord. For your life is fruitful and your victory glorious. But death ... is more fruitful and more glorious. For if those who die in the Lord are blessed, how much more so are those who die for the Lord" (Riley-Smith 1977: 32)! James of Vitry of the thirteenth century in one of his sermons said: "Crusaders who, truly contrite and confessed, are girded in the service of God and then die in Christ's service are counted truly as martyrs, freed from both venial and mortal sins and from all enjoined penance, absolved from the penalties for sin in this world, from the penalties of purgatory in the next, secure from the torments of Gehenna, crowned with glory and honour in eternal beatitude ... Do not in any way doubt that this pilgrimage will not only earn you remission of sins and the reward of eternal life, but it will also offer much to wives, sons, parents, living or dead: whatever good you do in this life for them. This is the full and entire Indulgence which the supreme pontiff, according to the keys committed to him by God, conceded to you" (Riley-Smith 1977: 61-62).

Lasting effects of crusades

The crusades lasted for two centuries, from 1099 to 1291. The military successes were small and short-lived compared to the heavy loss in men and money. Commenting on the significance of the crusades Barry writes: "Its original impetus and first reconquests of ancient Christian centers such as Antioch and Jerusalem ... brought forth a spirit of romantic adventure, zeal, literature, and religious idealism among Western Christians. Common effort in a so-called holy cause made real for a short time the ageless Christian dream of unity. The dissipation of the movement, quarrelling and divergent aims of the participants, serious break between East and West, and the reorganization of the united Moslem forces resulted in the eventual loss of the Christian strongholds and states" (Barry 1960: 325).

Despite repeated attempts the Holy Land could not be won over from the Muslims except for a short span of time. The failure of crusades led to apathy and cynicism among the Christians. Doubts were raised about God's will and the papal authority. The gap between the Latin Christians and the Orthodox Christians widened. Despite these negative feelings that the failure of crusades evoked, it is a fact that crusades "stimulated religious enthusiasm on a large

scale and gave Christendom a unifying cause that lasted for centuries" (Froelich 1987: 170).

The idea of the crusade continued to occupy the minds of the Christians in Europe for many centuries to come. The hostility towards Muslims was kept up. A spillover of that attitude was witnessed in India too – in the fight for political and mercantile supremacy in India. One of the reasons for the Portuguese coming to India is that they had heard rumours about the existence of a Christian kingdom in India.[7] They wanted to get their support so that they could make a two-pronged attack on the Muslims and destroy them. But it was not to be.

"In addition to elements of lay piety, the crusades also contained a measure of knightly energy which at times expressed itself in a bloody and un-Christian frenzy which turned the crusades into the most cruel phenomenon of the Middle Ages," says Franzen (1965: 193). A false religious fervour coupled with the bitterness of the hardships connected with war led the crusaders to revel in cruelty. Judged by the teachings of Jesus, the violence of the crusades, especially the terrible bloodbath after the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 can never be excused. Whatever may be the arguments that were given in favour of the crusades – just and holy war, fighting for and with God, the promise of material and spiritual rewards – and the crusade piety that emerged, it is still difficult to reconcile the hate-filled crusades with the love commandment of Jesus. A religion like Christianity should have promoted peace and harmony among people of different nations, cultures and religions. But through actively promoting crusades it sowed seeds of hatred that still bear bitter fruits. Christianity failed to be the solution. It became part of the problem.

Notes

1. The destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya and its aftermath, especially Gujarat.
2. The destruction of the World Trade Centre towers in New York, and Afghan War, the anti-terrorism 'crusade' (!) and the Israeli Palestinian conflict.
3. There is an early fifth century travel diary in a Latin dialect, known as Pilgrimage of Egeria (also known as Pilgrimage of Aetheria). From the text we can infer that the author of this diary was a wealthy woman who could spend years on pilgrimage, enjoyed social standing and knew the Bible well. She belonged to a devout sisterhood. In her diary she gives information about liturgical ceremonies in Jerusalem. Besides going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, she also visited Egypt, Syria and Constantinople. *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism,* 1985: 459.
4. Today it is *tourism* and pilgrimage!
5. See the appeal made by Celsus to Christians to become soldiers and fight for the Emperor and thus prove their belongingness to the Empire. *Contra Celsum* 8, 73, 75.
6. When the Portuguese landed in India they realised that there were no Christian kingdoms in India, but only some Christians who lived in India.

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JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 87- 96

Women and the Ideology of Violence in Gujarat

Kiran Moghe
Secretary, AIDWA, Pune

"Attacks on women, including sexual atrocities – stripping, rape and burning, verbal abuse, etc., - took place more on women from the minority community. The delegation is in no doubt that....the brunt of such atrocities was borne by women of the minority community. ...we feel it is important to emphasize this point because we found a concerted and deliberate attempt ...to ignore or whitewash this reality or 'balance' it by saying 'it happened on both sides'."

Report of the Women's Delegation to Bhopal, Ahmedabad and Surat, AIDWA, CWDS, MDS, NFIW, 1992-93 (emphasis added).

"There is compelling evidence of sexual violence against women. These crimes against women have been grossly under-reported and the exact extent of these crimes – in rural and urban areas – demands further investigation. Among the women surviving in the relief camps, are many who have suffered the most bestial forms of sexual violence – including rape, gang rape, mass rape, stripping, insertion of objects into their body, molestations. A majority of rape victims have been burnt alive."

Report of the Women's Panel, Citizen's Initiative, Ahmedabad, April 2002 (emphasis added).

For those who witnessed the communal riots in this country during 1992-93 after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992, there is a terrible sense of *déjà vu*. It pertains to the systematic manner in which Muslim minority women were targeted in the recent communal carnage in Gujarat, as well as its under-reporting in both official government records as well as the media. Ten years later, the violence appears to have been even more systematic, pre-planned, precise and widespread in its magnitude. It reached a depth of cruelty not seen earlier in such situations. And yet, these unsurpassed atrocities do not seem to evoke the sense of outrage concomitant to the degree of violence. Apart from those organisations and individuals already committed to fighting injustice of different kinds, be it based on class, caste or gender, the vast majority of ordinary people do not appear to have reacted adversely to these terrible incidents. Or to put it differently, a very large number

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of those who belong to the majority community in this country have remained silent, indicating their indirect complicity. Some have even sought to justify the violence as a "reaction" to the burning of 58 passengers of the Sabarmati Express at Godhra on the 27th of February 2002. What is most disturbing is that the justification is not merely in terms of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", but a legitimization of the violence in ideological terms, in the name of religion and religious identity.

There are many related issues in the recent communal violence in Gujarat that warrant attention and analysis. As a state ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party, the political wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for the last several years, Gujarat has for long been the laboratory of the "Saffron Brigade", led by the RSS and its allied organisations (the *Sangh Parivar*). It is here that the state government has made several attempts to further the aim of the RSS to establish a "Hindu Rashtra" based on its ideology of "Hindutva". This can be seen in the communalisation of its textbooks, the attempts to keep a record of inter-religious marriages, a census of the minority communities and patronage to the so-called "reconversions" of Christian tribals to "Hinduism", permission to state government employees to join the RSS etc. The willful participation of the state in the Gujarat carnage is clear from the fact that several state Ministers were active in coordinating the attacks, and that the looting and killing were allowed to continue for 72 hours, only after which the army was called in. The Chief Minister himself justified the violence in terms of the Newtonian theory of "action and reaction." State complicity has continued even after the violence ebbed, in terms of discrimination in providing compensation and relief to survivors. The dissolution of the state assembly and the advent of elections point to a much larger game plan.

However, we will confine ourselves to the gender dimensions of the violence in this article. In the first part, we look at how women were particularly targeted, and the various ways in which they have been affected by the violence. In the second part, we look at the ideological underpinnings of the events in Gujarat and try and relate them to the gender aspects. Lastly, we underline the need to undertake an exhaustive campaign to reiterate the secular character of the Indian Constitution, as a means to protect the democratic rights of all citizens in the country, of all religious denominations, and especially its vulnerable sections such as women.

Women as Objects of Violence: The Gujarat Experience

Almost every report that has documented the events in Gujarat after the burning of the Sabarmati Express has pointed to the terrible atrocities that were committed on women. Several testimonies recorded by fact finding teams[1] repeatedly portray how women and children, especially young adolescent girls were targeted by huge mobs who attacked them, especially on the 28th of February and the 1st and 2nd of March 2002. Many survivors, particularly women and children, have described how women were pursued by

mobs, stripped, raped and then doused with kerosene and burnt to death to destroy the evidence. Camp organizers have confirmed that many women who reached the camps were naked. Some had had acid thrown on them. Many had deep gashes due to the use of sharp weapons such as swords and trishuls; others were severely burnt, or had broken limbs because of being attacked by iron rods.

The most horrific story is that of the nine-month pregnant woman, Kauser Bano. Many have narrated how her foetus was ripped from her stomach and burnt along with her. Another account is of Bilkees from Dahod district, which told of the killing of her three-year daughter, a newborn baby of her cousin and 14 of her family members; she was raped and left as dead with the others. 13 year old Farzana had a rod inserted in her stomach, she too was raped and burnt. There are many such narratives, each account more and more heart rending than the previous one. The purpose of explicitly mentioning some of them is because it is necessary to confront the chilling reality of the violence, so that we understand the processes behind it, and to mobilize opinion against it.

In each narrative, the recurring theme is that of large mobs, led by leaders of organisations such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal, and in some cases by elected representatives, all belonging to the *Sangh Parivar*. Police complicity has been recorded,[2] not just in terms of the passive inability of the police to stop the rampaging mobs, but as active participants in the carnage. Several survivors have narrated how the police appeared to be showing them the way to safety, whereas in fact they led them into the hands of their attackers. Women have described how police hurled verbal abuse at them, often of a sexually explicit nature. There is not a single case where women police were deployed, a normal practice when women are affected.

Denial of Violence against Women

One aspect of the violence against women has been the tendency to deny that it happened. This is seen in the almost complete silence of the mainstream media in reporting these acts. It is only after the appearance of a few articles that mentioned these atrocities[3], and after women's organisations raised the issue at the national level[4] has it been acknowledged that minority women were specific targets of the violence. On the other hand, one of the Gujarati papers ran a false story that Hindu women were abducted from the Sabarmati Express and that their bodies were found in a mutilated state, with their breasts cut off. Although the same paper later denied the story, it became the *raison de etre* for subsequent attacks on Muslim women.[5] It is to be noted that while this story was quickly believed, many people refuse to acknowledge that incidents such as that of Kauser Bano actually took place, and tend to express disbelief about the atrocities committed against Muslim women.

The attempt to ignore the magnitude of the crimes against women is exemplified by the fact that to date, only three FIRs that record sexual violence

against women have been filed by the police. Moreover, the FIRs do not specify the names of the rapists, preferring to use the term "tola" or mob, thereby rendering the complaint a useless piece of paper. This is inspite of the fact that some survivors, mostly eyewitnesses, have openly stated the names of the assailants.

When some elected representatives of the ruling party were confronted with these facts, they are said to have been quite indifferent to them[6]. Equally, the National Commission of Women, now dominated by women espousing the cause of Hindutva, first maintained a deafening silence about Gujarat and then made a shocking statement that "reports of sexual violence against women in Gujarat were highly exaggerated".[7] It is quite clear that an endorsement of the findings of independent organisations would have been embarrassing for the Government of India, and that the NCW did a nice whitewashing job on its behalf.

Women as Perpetrators of Violence

This raises the complex issue of women's complicity in the violence. There are many eyewitness accounts of how upper and middle class women drove up in expensive cars and participated in the looting of shops in the posh shopping areas of Ahmedabad.[8] Some reports have stated that women participated in the attacking mobs, handing over women and children to them. Cases have been reported where medical and nursing staff denied Muslims medical help. In fact, in one of the rare cases where a Hindu woman had the courage to help her Muslim neighbours, she was stripped, raped and brutally done to death by the mob, sending out a warning signal to others who might have wanted to offer a helping hand like her. It is clear that it was not the gender identity of women, but the overriding religious identity of the community that became the dominant feature.

Violence as a Loss of Means of Livelihood

While Muslim women have been subjected to extreme forms of physical and sexual violence, the loss of means of livelihood also constitutes a form of violence, of a more permanent and continuing nature. The total estimated economic loss due to the Gujarat carnage has been put down to around 3500 crores[9]. Needless to say, while it is the Muslim community as a whole that has suffered, it is the poor who are the worst off. Whether it is large hotels or shops belonging to the relatively wealthier class, or small handcarts and self-employed businesses, Muslims have lost everything.

For example, a large number of Muslim women in Ahmedabad worked on a piece – rate basis in the garment industry, getting work from Hindu contractors. They were the main source of income for their families, especially in a city that has witnessed the closure of the composite textile mills in the last decade. A large number of them worked from their own homes, using their own sewing machines. Today, their machines have been destroyed, and Hindu businessmen are no longer willing to provide them with work[10].

How to survive in such circumstances is the most important question for them, leave alone the loss of their homes, other material possessions and property.

The callousness shown by the Gujarat government in providing relief extends to the rehabilitation process. The government has issued orders that the maximum compensation that can be awarded for damaged property is Rs 50,000, whatever the extent of losses suffered. But there is no known instance where even this amount has been awarded. In fact relief teams have reported seeing cheques of Rs 50 (Fifty) that have been handed out. Victims have reported that the surveys were carried out arbitrarily and that they were not allowed to accompany the survey team.[11]

One of the major problems in the entire relief and rehabilitation process has been the gross underestimation of the official death toll. Several persons have been declared "missing" since the first week of March 2002, but have not been declared dead because they cannot provide the necessary evidence. Many women have not been given compensation because "proof" wanted by the government is unavailable. It should be noted that such conditions were waived during the earthquake in Gujarat in December 2000. These women are probably now condemned to a future of destitution. How gender discrimination operates even in such adverse circumstances can be seen from the fact that in cases where compensation has been received, some of the widowed women have reported that they have been cheated out of it by family members, while they were observing the mandatory period of *"iddat"* decreed by Islam. One woman even reported that she had been declared dead by her in-laws so that they could claim the compensation! [12]

The manner in which the economic backbone of the Muslim community was sought to be broken is quite clear from the scale of destruction. What is even more shocking is the way in which these efforts continue even after the violence has ebbed. For example, as many as 105 Muslim schoolteachers, 70 of who are women, in Sabarkantha district were asked to join schools in particularly those areas where there has been large-scale violence[13]. This is clearly in order to drive them out of government employment.

Tragically, the sexual attacks on women have become a weapon in the hands of the majority community. It has been widely reported that the Muslims are being allowed to return to their homes, particularly in rural areas after signing affidavits that lay down the "conditions" under which they will be required to adhere to in the future. One condition has been that complaints of sexual assault will be withdrawn. The other is that they will not "harass Hindu girls and women". There are also reports of how Muslim men had to quit their jobs after becoming the subject of taunting from their fellow workers about the "fun" they had had with Muslim women[14]. Clearly, the rape of women is not a matter of shame but of pride for some of the majority community.

Attacks on Religious Places

One of the significant features of the Gujarat violence has been the attack on the religious symbols of the Muslim community, particularly mosques. As many as 180 masjids have been destroyed; many were demolished with the help of cranes and bull-dozers, pointing to the meticulous and planned nature of the attacks. These sites now house small idols of the Hindu God "Hanuman" and have been given the name "Hulladiya" or "Godhariya" Hanuman, symbolizing the riots ("hullad" in the Gujarati language) or the Godhra incident. Daily rituals are held around these makeshift temples, in a sense venerating the violence. Along with mosques, around 240 dargahs or mazhars have also been demolished. It must be noted that these places of worship, in Gujarat and elsewhere, are frequented not just by Muslims, but equally by Hindus, and especially women from both the communities. In a sense, they are symbols of the harmony and integration of ordinary people. Demolition of these dargahs has not only destroyed the syncretic culture of common people, but also systematically done away with meeting places for members of both communities, furthering the polarization within the community.

The Ideological Determinants of Violence

The widespread nature of the violence, the degree of precision and planning and the viciousness with which it was conducted all point to a well thought out strategy of its protagonists. These were certainly not spontaneous acts; they were coordinated efforts of very large numbers of people. It is quite clear that this is not possible without strong motivation; this was provided by the ideological campaign of the *Sangh Parivar*. In this section we look at how the RSS has created a rationale for the violence, which in a sense justifies the atrocities against women, and does away with the need to show any remorse or regret about what happened in Gujarat.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Ideology of Hindutva

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was founded in 1925 with the basic purpose of reshaping pluralistic India into a singular "*Hindu Rashtra*" based on its theory of "One Nation, One People, One Culture". The RSS in turn draws its ideological inspiration from the concepts of "*Hindutva*" as espoused by V D Savarkar, who was the first to argue that Hindus constitute a nation, and that they had a historical task to regain the glory they had lost after being defeated at the hands of the Muslims. Savarkar was quite clear that there is a difference between the religious term "Hinduism" and the political category of "*Hindutva*", stating that "when we attempt to investigate into the essential significance of *Hindutva*, we do not primarily concern ourselves with any particular theocratic or religious dogma or creed."[15]

Savarkar's ideas were further developed by the first *sarsanghchalak* of the RSS, M S Golwalkar. He provided not only the ideological basis but also the organizational structure to achieve

the aim of the *Hindu Rashtra*. In bare terms, Golwalkar argued that India was always a Hindu nation, straitjacketing the entire diversity of tradition, culture, language and customs of this country on the basis of geography, race, religion, culture and language. Needless to say, this required a considerable distortion of scientific and historical evidence, a task that the *Sangh Parivar* continues to work at to date. All those falling outside this notion were "foreign elements" with only two options, either to merge themselves or to live at the mercy of the National Race, that is, the Hindus. The way to deal with them was the way Hitler had dealt with the Jews.

The foundations of the social order of the *Hindu Rashtra* lay in the Manusmriti. Golwalkar acclaimed *Manu* as the first and the greatest lawgiver in the world, thereby endorsing the Brahmanical varna system, which he thought to be the inner strength of India. Golwalkar thus endorsed and legitimized inhuman caste and gender oppression as part of his vision of the *Hindu Rashtra*.[16]

A closer examination of the RSS discourse on women, seen in the writings of Golwalkar, reveals the image of women primarily as mothers, *matrushakti*. Golwalkar upheld the old practice whereby the *Namboodiri* Brahmin fathered the first child of every woman of any caste. In the *Sangh's* world view, women are mothers in a primarily patriarchal family structure; their main role is to bear children (sons) who will be willing to die for their motherland. The main role of a woman is to educate her children to follow the narrow sectarian interpretations of Hindu tradition, what the *Sangh* calls *samskaras*. Girls should be taught absolute obedience to the family, the role of women is supplementary, but they carry the responsibility of maintaining family discipline. All inequality within the family is explained away in terms of tradition and culture.[17]

This fundamentally inegalitarian approach to women, which totally ignores their oppression within the family, as well in the economic and social sphere, is reflected in the positions taken by the Sangh and its political wing the BJP, on various gender issues. It will be recollected that the RSS vehemently opposed the Hindu Code Bill, arguing that daughters should not be given a share in parental property. Members of the *Sangh Parivar* have openly endorsed the retrograde practice of *sati*. Despite the rhetoric, the bill reserving one-third of the seats in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies for women is not really a priority for the BJP. A recent bill introduced by the BJP-led coalition in Parliament actually seeks to legitimize violence against women within the family in the name of protection of property. Even its opposition to beauty contests was based on its opposition to the display of the body, not to the commercialization of women's bodies and their standardization to norms set by multinational companies selling cosmetics and fashion products. Recently the students' wing, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), opposed young women wearing jeans and skirts, arguing that it was against the Indian cultural tradition. In a similar fashion, the Sangh dismisses the

movement for women's emancipation in India as "western" in origin, and destroying the family structure in India.

It is quite clear that the ideology of Hindutva has no place for women's equality, or for movements that are against gender and caste oppression of women. Thus violence against women is not on its agenda, particularly if Hindu men are oppressing Hindu women, in the form dowry, sexual assault, wife beating, polygamy, etc. However, what is interesting is the manner in which the concept of violence against women is used by the ideologues of Hindutva to further their cause.

Historical experience of violence against all subordinated communities, whether in terms of class, race, caste or religion, points to the universal manner in which rape becomes an instrument of power in the hands of the oppressor. The identity of the subordinated community is viewed in terms of its women. Subjugation of the community is the subjugation of its women. Dishonour and defilement of the community is equated with the violation of its women. Therefore, rape of minority women is the rape of the entire minority community. Further, these acts are justified by arguing that the community under attack is inherently immoral, its women without character, and therefore not entitled to any rights.

This is clearly seen in the political perspective of Savarkar, who even denounced Shivaji's liberal policy towards Muslim women, arguing that they were undeserving of such a non-violent attitude when Muslim men were themselves shameless religious fanatics who had abducted thousands of Hindu women. Savarkar cleverly constructed an image of a tolerant Hindu male, with what he called "a perverted sense of Hindu virtue." This was contrasted with the image of a rampaging, lustful Muslim male, who forcibly abducted women in order to systematically increase their numbers. On the other hand, Hindu men had a perverted sense of chivalry towards Muslim women, who were equally guilty of abetting their men in crimes against Hindu women[18]. These images were systematically nurtured in the post partition period. Further, it was the metaphor of the violated body of "Mother India" that came to be regularly used to signify partition and the formation of Pakistan.

It is from this perspective that one must view the terrible atrocities against women in Gujarat, and their indirect justification in terms of the relative silence that has been maintained on this issue. It is clear that the rapes and sexual assaults, the killing and burning, of women and children are seen by the Hindutva brigade as a means of retribution. A number of anonymous pamphlets that appeared in Gujarat before and after the carnage are explicitly sexual and targeted towards Muslim women. The rumour that Hindu women travelling in the Sabarmati Express had been abducted and found with their breasts cut off only added to their justification. What one scholar has written about the rape of minority women in Surat in the wake of the riots in 1992-93 after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, holds absolutely true 10 years later – *"The heroes in Surat were thus trying to do away with this perversion,*

which is responsible for their humiliation, as they have been enjoined to do. They were not raping innocent female individuals but were punishing the active abettors of crimes against the Hindu nation, particularly against Hindu women. They were not rioting, but fighting a millenium – old war." [19] In the wake of such logic, it is not surprising that the rapes in Gujarat have been systematically ignored.

Finally, one must note, with great concern, the participation of Hindu women in the Gujarat carnage, either actively, or in silent complicity. This is a trend that has become increasingly evident after the successful mobilizations of women by the Hindu right in the *Rath Yatra* and the *Kar Seva* leading up to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992, and the subsequent riots that the country has periodically witnessed thereafter. Here it must be acknowledged that women's identity is multi-layered – class, caste, gender and community are intertwined in its construction. In addition, women have traditionally been the carriers of religious ritual. It is precisely on this space that the Hindu right has made inroads, converting women's religiosity into a communal identity. The rising insecurities in this era of globalization, where growing inflation and unemployment are causing a deep crisis, are leading more and more women to seek solace in *satsangs* and other such spiritual gatherings. Unfortunately, such collective gatherings are also the breeding ground for communal passions. It is interesting to note that the women who travelled to Ayodhya for the *Yagna* held for the completion of the Ram Mandir were actually members of *bhajan mandals*, basically groups of women who sing spiritual songs. In such times of economic tension, it is relatively easy to convert one's frustrations into a hatred of the (Muslim) "Other". No doubt these processes are at work, not just in Gujarat but elsewhere in the country. How they should be countered is a major challenge to the secular and democratic people of this country.

Secularism – The Only Way

For all those who are united in their condemnation of the Gujarat carnage, there is only one way to ensure that it is never repeated – the upholding of the secular principles of the Constitution of India. Here, we must be clear that secularism as a concept is in no way contradictory to religious belief. Secularism, as we understand it, is not simply an "equal tolerance" of different religious denominations, "*sarva dharma sambhav*" as it is popularly understood to be. The true meaning of secularism is that the state shall not discriminate amongst its citizens on the basis of religion, and in the Indian context, caste, language, etc. In a multi-religious society that has been further segregated by the caste system, the true meaning of democracy is that no single group shall dominate over the other. Therefore, the freedom to practise the religion of one's choice (or not to practise, as the case may be) is best protected in a secular system. No religion preaches violence. There must be a clear distinction between religion as an individual's means to attain spiritual peace, and the use of religion by communal forces as a political instrument to gain and remain in

power. With women increasingly becoming the targets of communal violence, the need to conduct a campaign to uphold secular values amongst them has achieved prime importance today.

Notes

1. See for example, "Ethnic Cleansing in Gujarat, Report of the SAHMAT Fact Finding Team to Ahmedabad", 10-11 March 2002, "AIDWA-CPI(M) Report on Gujarat, Report of the Visit of the Delegation on March 10-13", "How Has the Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women: The Survivors Speak", Syeda Hamid and others, Report of the Women's Panel, April 2002, etc.
2. "Communalism Combat", March-April 2002.
3. "Cry, The Beloved Country, Reflections on the Gujarat Massacre", Harsh Mander, from website groups.yahoo.com/groups/gujaratdevelopment,March 2002
4. Women's organisations observed 13 May 2002 as a National Day to highlight specifically the atrocities against Muslim women in the Gujarat carnage and to draw attention to the fact that virtually no FIRs had been registered by the police.
5. See Report of Women's Panel, April 2002.
6. Report of Women's Panel, April 2002.
7. See Vasudha Dhagamwar's two-part article in *The Hindu*, May 22 and 23, 2002
8. See SAHMAT and AIDWA-CPI(M) reports and many other eyewitness accounts
9. See "What the Hindu Hero has Done for the Majority Community", Digant Oza, from Website on Gujarat mentioned above.
10. See Sharmila Rege, Vaishali Diwakar and Anagha Tambe, "Gujarat Carnage (2002): Outlining the Gendered Character of Communal Stereotypes, Strategies and Violence", Paper presented at a Seminar organised by the Vikas Adhyanan Kendra, July 2002.
11. See Report of the Left Front Team Visit to Gujarat, People's Democracy, 10-16 June 2002.
12. See Sharmila Rege, et al, July 2002.
13. See Left Front Report, June 2002.
14. See Sharmila Rege, et al, July 2002.
15. As quoted in Purushottam Agarwal, "Savarkar, Surat and Draupadi, Legitimising Rape as s Political Weapon", in *Women and the Hindu Right*, Ed Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia, Kali for Women,1995.
16. For a detailed exposition of Golwalkar's writings, see Sitaram Yechury "What is This Hindu Rashtra", *Frontline Publications*, 1993.
17. See several articles in *Women and the Hindu Right* and "RSS: The Ideological Onslaught on Women", *AIDWA*, December 1998.
18. For an excellent analysis of Savarkar's approach to rape, see Purushottam Agarwal in *Women and the Hindu Right.*
19. Purushottam Agarwal, *Women and the Hindu Right.*

JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 97-108

The Inquisition and Intolerance

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During certain periods of history, the Inquisition was known to have used force or coercion to bend the will of persons so that they would affirm and abide by the officially recognized doctrine of the Catholic Church. It was not always so in the Church. The early Church also felt obliged to guard and preserve the faith but was content to proscribe heterodox doctrines or practices through condemnations of bishops and councils, and, on occasion, excommunicate persons or communities till they retracted their heresies. The period of the Inquisition generally represents that portion of history during which the Church's use of coercive methods to extract confessions from heretics reached intolerable limits. Torture and even death became part of the weaponry to which the Inquisition had recourse, at least indirectly. What could explain the adoption of this anti-gospel practice? How did it happen that the Catholic Church countenanced such actions by the Inquisition? This article seeks to explore the spirit that informed such actions by the Inquisition and points out how the spirit of Vatican II cannot coexist with that of the Inquisition.

The first part of the article deals with the origin of the Inquisition in twelfth-century Europe and traces its evolution to the present day. The second part discusses the mode in which the Inquisition spirit exists even today and concludes that a true acceptance of the vision of Vatican II can help exorcise the remnants of the Inquisition spirit in the Church.

Part One

The Inquisition: Its Origin and Evolution to the Present Day

The Inquisition grew out of an effort by the Church to preserve doctrinal orthodoxy. However, at the very beginning of the Church, a comprehensive and normative set of doctrinal propositions that reflected the body of faith did not exist. May we not suppose that different persons and groups in the early Church reflected on the Christian faith in their different contexts and gave expression to it as seemed fit? In the gospels, Jesus is not depicted as revealing a set of doctrines and practices that the apostles could take to different parts of the world (Bauer 1971: 312). The Scriptures used in the New Testament

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Churches reflected their faith experience and to that extent functioned as a norm for orthodoxy.[1] Even a believer who in time would be regarded as heretical can be viewed as a pioneer formulating the faith according to his/her own lights. Marcion, who died in the second century after rejecting the Old Testament, contributed to the Church's effort to distinguish between the true and spurious works of the scriptural canon. Mani (c. 216-276) lived as a member of a Judaeo-Christian community before he set about elaborating Manichaeism that Christians perceived as a 'Pauline heresy'. From its very inception, the Church felt the need to identify the formulations that accorded with the proclamation of Jesus from others that did not. By the second century, the notion of the *Regula Fidei* (Rule of Faith) emerged. It referred to outlines of authentic Christian beliefs that served both to exegete the scriptures correctly and to differentiate the true traditions in Christianity from the false ones. In time, some of these outlines grew into credal formulas that were also known as *Symbola Fidei* (Symbols of Faith).

The Beginning of Christendom

After the fourth century, a new situation arose. With Christianity becoming the religion of the Roman Empire, the notion of the Christian State began to emerge. Church and State worked in tandem and looked after each other's interests. Thanks to the Emperor Gratian (367-383) the Christians were given back what Julian (361-363) had taken away from them. Under Theodosius I (379-395) the Roman Empire became decidedly Christian (Grant 1985: 272-273). Through his edict promulgated from Thessalonica on February 27, 380, Theodosius gave Christianity a preeminence over other religions practised in the Roman Empire and condemned those who did not profess Christianity "to suffer divine punishment, and, therewith, the vengeance of that power which we, by celestial authority, have assumed" (Cochrane 1944: 327). By that edict, it was not as though the affairs of the State were placed in the hands of ecclesiastical authority; rather, Theodosius made space for the Church to affirm and exercise its authority in the secular affairs of the State. This was clearly understood by Ambrose (c.339-397), bishop of Milan, who asserted the authority of the Church to act and judge independently of the Emperor (Cross and Livingstone 1997: 49). Gradually, however, the action of Theodosius paved the way for the Church to have a greater say in the functioning of Roman society so that Church and State were seen as partners in the common task of preserving order in the Roman Empire. At the same time, while settling disputes in neighbouring Churches, the Church in Rome – the papacy – was making its voice heard and was recognized as the embodiment of Christian orthodoxy. In the words of Irenaeus:

> Because of its very great antiquity/ authority, it is with this church, in which the tradition from the apostles has always been preserved by the faithful from everywhere, that every church, consisting of the faithful who are from everywhere, must agree/ conform (Grant 1970: 155 footnote 46).

The Fathers of the Church did not approve of the death penalty for those who deviated from the faith, though some were not averse to extending a moderate measure of physical inconvenience to heretical groups (Maycock 1928: 3). Secular authority thought otherwise, as can be seen in the way it dealt with Priscillian.[2] As late as the 12th century, the dictum of St. Bernard (1090-1153) *Fides suadenda, non imponenda* (Persuasion, not imposition, becomes matters of faith) guided the Church in its dealings with those suspected of heresy. However, toward the end of the 12th century, Lucius III, pope from 1181-1185, in consultation with Frederick I Barbarossa formulated a decretal, *Ad Abolendam* (1184), that came to be known as the charter of the Inquisition (Kelly 1987: 180-1). Its purpose was to suppress heresy. If after being examined a person was found guilty of heresy and did not abjure it, he/she was to be excommunicated and then handed over to the secular authorities to be punished.

The Methods of the Inquisition

It is with Pope Gregory IX (c. 1148-1241) that the Papal Inquisition as different from those under episcopal authority came into existence. In a bull *Excommunicamus* (1231) that drew inspiration from *Ad Abolendam*, the pope laid down that those convicted of heresy should be given over to the secular arm 'to be punished by the appropriate penalty', *animadversione debita puniendi* (Morris: 1991: 472).[3] Since Frederick II (1194-1250) was the Holy Roman Emperor at the time and had provided in 1231 that heretics 'should be burned alive in the sight of the people,' it is possible to speculate that the punishment sanctioned by the emperor "may have been the punishment which Gregory had in mind" (Morris 1991: 472). Burning at the stake was the fate of heretics who did not recant, though death by burning had been used as a punishment even before:

> Burning alive was a penalty for certain criminal offences in late Roman and early Germanic law and was subsequently adopted in the penal code of most W. European states. In medieval English Common Law burning was the penalty for women found guilty of high treason, petty treason (i.e. conspiring against the life of a husband or employee), or counterfeiting coinage. The burning of convicted heretics was a medieval development (Cross and Livingstone 1997: 255).

In its attempt to restrict the spread of heresy, the Inquisition felt justified in using means that effectively negated human freedom. In doing so, it arrogated to itself an authority that was sanctioned by no one.

> The inquisition marked the effective introduction on an international scale of procedures of inquiry which dispensed with the existing ideas of legality. Roman law and canon law were traditionally tender towards the rights of the defendant: he was called to answer only an express accusation by a named accuser, and witnesses against him must be of good standing. This legal protection had been eroded by anti-heretical measures from *Ad Abolendam* onwards and it was now stripped away entirely. The accused was not told the names of witnesses, who might themselves be involved in

heresy or otherwise of ill repute. He could call no witnesses on his own behalf, and in practice had no way of rebutting the charge (Morris 1991: 474).

Innocent IV who was pope from 1243-54, in his decree *Ad extirpanda* (1252), sanctioned the use of torture to obtain confessions from the accused, though there is no clear evidence of this power being used in trials for heresy in the 13th century (Cross and Livingstone 1997: 836). Besides, the accused had the right to appeal to the pope. During the papacy of Paul III (1534-1549), the Papal Inquisition was called the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition (McBrien 1995: 668). In 1588, following the reorganization of the Roman Congregations, Pope Sixtus V (1521-90) named it Sacred Congregation of the Holy Inquisition. In 1908, Pope Pius X changed the name to Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office and gave it charge to oversee the Index of Forbidden Books that had been established by Pope Paul IV in 1557. In 1967, Pope Paul VI renamed it Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It was this Congregation that in 1998 sent out a Notification concerning the writings of Fr. Anthony de Mello SJ (*L'Osservatore Romano* n.34 – 26, 1998: 5-6). It also initiated a process against the book, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (1997) of Fr. Jacques Dupuis SJ and in the year 2000 issued the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*.

The task of the Inquisition has always included the conducting of an *inquisitio*. In general, the Latin term means 'a searching for' or 'an inquiry', though in legal parlance it signifies 'the search for evidence against any one'. The final goal of the Inquisition was to put an end to deviance in matters of faith and to restore orthodox faith to a community of believers. The heretic was seen to be one who broke the unity not only of the faith shared by all but also the social and political cohesiveness enjoyed by the community as a whole. By restoring unity in faith, the Inquisition was also ensuring political unity for the secular ruler and hence looked for and received help from the secular authorities. Both Church and State subscribed to the notion of Christendom which was built upon the premise that secular and ecclesiastical authorities were in partnership for the common good of all their people, and that the good fortune of one was linked to the well-being of the other.

The Inquisition in Europe

The Inquisition that conjures up images of both torture chambers and 'auto-da-fe' began in the 12th century (McBrien 1995: 123-124).[4] Such Inquisitions were set up to deal with groups of Christians who professed a set of beliefs and practised a way of life at variance with that reflected in the established Church. The Cathari who professed a dualist doctrine that linked them with the Cathari of the fifth century were dissenters from the established faith in the Europe of the 12th and 13th centuries. Also known in southern France as the Albigensians, they were ministered to by Dominic (c. 1172-1221) who tried to reform them with his preaching. But after the papal legate Peter

of Castelnau was assassinated in 1208, Pope Innocent III authorized a crusade against them led by Simon de Montfort.

> Both persuasion and force had been integral to Innocent III's grand design of preserving the unity of the Christian world and bringing peace to the church. Behind his summons to war within Christian lands lay a complex of concepts and institutions evolved over more than two centuries: associations of clergy and people to establish the Peace of God and suppress disorders in society; crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, uniting people and clergy under spiritual jurisdiction in enterprises for Christ; the extension of the concept of papal duty to supervision of justice and order everywhere. For Innocent the situation of southern France was 'an affair of peace and faith' (Wakefield 1974: 94).

In Spain, the Inquisition took on a form different from those in the rest of Europe. Ferdinand V (1452-1516) and his wife Isabella (1451-1504), the 'Catholic Kings', insisted on religious unity in the kingdom and to this end prevailed on the Pope, Sixtus IV (1414-84), to allow the Inquisition to operate almost independently of the Pope and under the Crown. With the appointment of Tomas Torquemada (1420-98) as the first Inquisitor General in 1483, the stage was set for the Inquisition to embark upon the royal policy to achieve religious unity. At the start, the Spanish Inquisition used its power first to repress the *conversos* and in 1498 finally to expel the Jews from Spain (Kamen 1985: 302).[5]

> The Inquisition was not the imposition of a sinister tyranny on an unwilling people. It was an institution brought into being by a particular socio-religious situation, impelled and inspired by a decisively Old Christian ideology, and controlled by men whose outlook reflected the mentality of the mass of Spaniards. The dissenters were a few intellectuals, and others whose blood alone was sufficient to put them outside the pale of the new society being erected on a basis of triumphant and militant conservatism (Kamen 1985: 61).

The Goa Inquisition

The Portuguese set foot in India in 1498. At least half a century would elapse before the Inquisition was established in Goa. This happened soon after the death of D. Joao III, the king of Portugal, in 1557. It was a Jesuit who first asked that the Inquisition be set up in Goa.The first demand for the establishment of the Inquisition in Goa was made by St. Francis Xavier. In a letter addressed from Amboina (Moluccas) to D. Joao III, king of Portugal, on May 16, 1545, he wrote:

> The second necessity for the Christians is that your majesty establish the Holy Inquisition, because there are many who live according to the Jewish law, and according to the Mahomedan sect, without any fear of God or shame of the world. And since there are many who are spread all over the fortresses, there is the need of the Holy Inquisition and of many preachers. Your majesty should provide such necessary things for your loyal and faithful subjects in India (Priolkar 1961: 23-24).

The Legacy of the Inquisition

By and large, the Inquisition has given the Church a bad name. What began as the Church's effort to ensure orthodoxy slowly became an instrument of control and repression. What was set up to continue Christ's proclamation of love and freedom turned into a handy mechanism for ethnic cleansing and for breeding intolerance. However, the apologists of the Inquisition point out that but for the Inquisition, many innocent persons would have been lynched and social order would have broken down. By the beginning of the 19th century, the fearsome Inquisition that began in the 12th century had been suppressed. Undoubtedly, the Enlightenment and the nationalism that was sweeping over Europe in the wake of the French Revolution contributed greatly to its disappearance.

The harmful effects of the Inquisition on society in general and the Church in particular are well captured in the following passage:

> From the Fourth Lateran [1215] creed onwards, a more precise definition of the faith emerged in line with the teaching of Paris theology [university]. While *symbolum* remained the standard term for a creed, we significantly begin to hear of 'articles' of belief: a declaration of faith was being seen less as a proclamation of a cosmic commitment and more as adherence to a set of defined propositions. This growing grasp and control rested partly upon its moral strength and acceptability, partly on the excellent legal and administrative services which the papal curia came to offer. In the last resort, however, the church became increasingly ready to turn to force. It always recognized that to enforce a decree of excommunication, or still more to repress a group of heretics, it needed the help of the secular arm. Far more strikingly than this, however, the church developed perhaps the only two effective repressive mechanisms which have ever developed from within Christianity: crusade and inquisition. In both, the role of the Roman Church was central, for Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade in 1095 and Gregory IX issued the first commissions of inquisition in the early 1230s; and crusade and inquisition both still influence our images of repression and warfare (Morris 1991: 580-581).

The Inquisition has fostered a particular self-understanding of the Church. Its fallout appears in the unwillingness of the average Catholic to raise questions and to ask for accountability from those in authority in the Church. Such a scenario bodes ill for a Church that is increasingly looking to the laity to exercise its responsibility in the Church and to live out the spirit of Vatican II. In the second part, some events are scrutinized where an inquisitorial mentality still seems to be present. To realize the objectives voiced by Vatican II, the Church must come to terms with the past over which the Inquisition had cast its shadow.

Part Two

Coming to Terms with the Past

Vatican Council II succeeded in offering to the Church a vision where change, new interpretations of theological concepts and freedom of expression

were conceived as positive expressions of divine activity in the world. When Pope John XXIII announced Vatican Council II, he spoke of it as a kind of new Pentecost that would enable the Church to update itself. It was not fear of heresy that occasioned Vatican II but the need for the Church to have a renewal, an *aggiornamento*. When in 1961, the Pope promulgated the apostolic constitution *Humanae Salutis*, he identified three aims of the Council: "the better internal ordering of the church, unity among Christians, and the promotion of peace throughout the world" (Tanner 1990: 117). But the pursuit of these aims would have to take place in a Church fearful of change: *Idem semper* (the same forever). In a very real sense, the reform movements that began in twelfth century Europe challenged the Church's accustomed way of understanding itself. At that time, the Church's immediate reaction was to defend and consolidate the ecclesiastical establishment. Political power and coercion brought stability and peace to the institutional Church at a high price. The Church became more of a political state with control mechanisms rather than a community symbolizing God's love in the world. The Church was challenged again during the pontificate of Pius IX (1846-1878) when he insisted that the patrimony of Peter could not be reconciled with the claims of Italian nationalism. Later, the Oath against Modernism (1910) so canonized tradition that it brought suspicion on those who questioned past practice or suggested innovation in the Church. The papacy of Pius X (1903-1914) left a dangerous legacy to succeeding generations of theologians. Investigative and critical theologies were given little place in the life of the Church since establishment theology alone was designated orthodox! And excommunication, suspension and interdict have played and continue to play their part in coercing persons to fall in line with the expectations of ecclesiastical authorities.

Coercion Today

Assent that is gained by persuasion enhances the freedom of both, the party that persuades and the one that is persuaded, for such assent is realized through the meeting of wills that recognize common values. Coercion needs violence to realize its goals. It uses violence to bend the will of another so that a forced assent is given to a stated point of view. It would seem that religions in general are not above using violence and even invoking divine sanction for it:

> The point is...that every religion has a vision of divinely legitimized violence—under certain circumstances. In the Semitic religions, we have the Holy War of the Christians, the Just War of the Jews, and the Jehad of the Muslims where the believers are enjoined to battle and destroy evildoers. In other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, with their greater reputation for tolerance and nonviolence, violence is elevated to the realm of the sacred as part of the created order. In Hinduism, for instance, there is a cycle of violence and peacefulness as the Kali Age is followed by the Golden Age. Buddhist myths talk of Seven Days of the Sword where men will look on and kill each other as beasts, after

which peace will return and no life is taken (Kakar 1995L: 248-249).

More often than not, coercion and violence come into play when one party makes no allowance for another's point of view and hence develops an intolerant attitude. In the age of colonialism, what was reprehensible was not the desire of Europe to have commerce and interchange with other peoples and civilizations, but the presumption that its predatory expeditions to the east and west were divinely sanctioned. The colonialist set sail with the assurance that he had the true faith and was correctly civilized. Those whom he colonized were presumed to have neither, and hence it was his burden to communicate the same to those colonized. Hence, he felt little scruple in using violence to subjugate the so-called heathen and the uncivilized. Still less did he think it important or necessary to learn from those in the colonies.

Unfortunately, the Church of colonial times thought like the rest of Europe and believed that in its doctrines, it had named God for all ages and peoples. It pictured itself as the donor who had to export Christianity and civilization to the people who were colonized. The results of such thinking are seen in the condemnation of the Chinese and Malabar Rites by the Church since they did not reflect the standard practice of the European Church. In fact, three factors: a specific systematic approach to God, a self-understanding of the Church from a European perspective and the right to impose one's religion on others, led the Church to discount the religion, culture and civilization that it found in the colonies.

> Thus the ways and attitudes of the post-Roman, medieval, then renaissance, then enlightenment, then technological West, have come to be seen as the vesture and even as the Face of God. Europe and America became the only true locus of His epiphany. Western man became in fact the manifestation of God in and as Christ. Hence the whole problem of the salvation of the world could be reduced to the task of turning everybody else into a more or less plausible replica of Western man. More grossly, to make Africa Christian, one needed only to make it Belgian, German, English, French (Merton 1968: 193).

It is a matter of sadness that in the aftermath of Vatican II, the official Church's methods of enquiry still exhibit a spirit similar to that found in the Inquisition. In 1997, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued Regulations for Doctrinal Examination (*L'Osservatore Romano*, n. 36, 1997: 2). These were to be followed when writings or teachings concerning the faith had to be examined. When detailing the way in which the examination is to be conducted, Article 10 empowers the superiors and officials of the Congregation to appoint a *relator* who will represent the person whose writings or teachings are being scrutinized. To empower the Congregation to appoint the *relator* rather than permit the person himself/herself to do so would seem to disregard the claims of natural justice! Should not the author choose the person who will represent his/her own writings or teachings? Further, Article 15 states that the decisions arrived at by the members of the Congregation including

the Cardinal Prefect "are submitted to the consideration of the Supreme Pontiff" even before the person concerned is informed of those decisions. In this eventuality, there is little scope for dialogue between the concerned authorities and the author, or for appeal to a higher authority. In fine, the Congregation alone examines an author's writings or teachings and unilaterally decides on these. It is difficult to recognize such a process as just and fair to the author in question.

A Case of Coercion?

The case of Fr. Jacques Dupuis SJ merits consideration since it illustrates well the severe limitations of the Regulations for Doctrinal Examination (*Indian Currents* 2001: 10-16).[6] In keeping with Article 17, Fr. Dupuis was officially informed about the difficulty concerning his book: "there are in this book [*Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (1997)] serious errors against essential elements of Divine and Catholic faith." (*Indian Currents* 2001: 11) Secrecy was imposed on Fr. Dupuis. After answering two sets of questions, Fr. Dupuis was summoned to appear for an official meeting of the Congregation during which he was asked to sign a notification concerning his book. He declined to sign both: the notification about his book in which the errors would be clearly pointed out, or a statement saying that his book would be interpreted in the light of the declaration *Dominus Iesus*. Later, a new version of the notification was given to Fr. Dupuis to sign. The new version stated that in the future, he would take into account "the Church documents, the *Dominus Iesus* and the notification itself." Fr. Dupuis himself explains why he decided to sign the new version:

> The only reason was the nature of the work I am engaged in. My research is very important to me. Besides, there was a substantial change in the charges raised against my book. In the past two years and even in the first version of the notification I was repeatedly accused of writing a book containing serious errors against faith. While according to the new version, that of December 2000, the text spoke only of 'ambiguities' which could lead the reader into error. I accepted to sign the notification not because of any change of mind on my part, but because of human respect. It was the only way I could continue my theological research. I was also eager to show my loyalty to the Church. (*Indian Currents* 2001: 13).

However, more was to follow and it makes very strange reading. Fr. Dupuis continues:

> The letter of the Congregation had said that the notification that would be signed by me would be published in January in *L'Osservatore Romano*. Days and weeks passed and it was only on 26 January that the Notification was released in the *Sala Stampa*, and it was published in *L'Osservatore Romano*. A curious thing was the fact that now they had added a new paragraph to the text signed by me in December; it was not there when I signed. This added paragraph says that Fr. Dupuis has signed the document, and the meaning of his signature is that he will be bound henceforth by the norms contained in this notification. While by placing my signature I intended to

> say that 'I will take the document into account'. Now, between 'taking into account' and 'being bound by' there is a big gap. And moreover, I was also ordered to have this notification printed in every new edition or any translation of my book. All these were written into the text after I had signed it (*Indian Currents* 2001: 13).

Charting a New Course

During Vatican II, the role of the Roman Curia was questioned. If one of the foundational documents of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, set forth the Church's understanding of itself as People of God and viewed the Magisterium in terms of a collegial setting, how would the Roman Curia succeed in reflecting this new understanding without a change of structure and function? While the internationalization of the Curia after Vatican II was a helpful step, it did little to situate the Church of Rome in a Communion of Churches. The pre-Vatican II mindset of the Curia would remain unchanged and it would be difficult for the Curia to see itself as more than a mere extension of the papacy buoyed by Vatican I's *Pastor Aeternus* (1870) that affirmed the direct and universal jurisdiction of the pope over all the members of the Church.

If Vatican II's doctrine of the Catholic Church as a Communion of Churches was to be meaningful, allowance had to be made for those Churches to understand and express the Christian tradition in cultures and thought patterns different from those of the established Church. Otherwise, adaptation, inculturation and reinterpretation of the Christian tradition would be impossible! But such allowance has been made. Hence, would it not be proper for the Church of Rome to learn from others?

Learning from others implies that there is a pluralism of cultures and theologies in which the meaningfulness of the Christian message can be expressed. The historical consciousness that is present in the theology of Vatican II allows the Church to profess the same Christ 'yesterday, today and tomorrow' but in accents drawn from thought patterns, cultures and civilizations that are not necessarily Roman. Would it not be proper for the Church that seeks to shape itself anew after Vatican II to encourage dialogue between Rome and its sister Churches?

At one level, the process of dialogue is an implicit admission that two parties can learn from and enhance each other. In *Ecclesia in Asia*, Pope John Paul II clearly announces that dialogue is the way of being Church in Asia (1999: no.3).[7] This announcement of the Pope clearly reflects the spirit that imbued the Council Fathers.

Conclusion

Dialogue is the antithesis of the Inquisition. The Inquisition saw itself as an organ of the Church that was meant to keep God's revelation in Jesus Christ pure. In its efforts to realize this goal, the Inquisition did not pay attention to the real interests it was serving. In Spain, it ended up by being a party to ethnic cleansing and elsewhere it violated the God-given freedom of persons. Its intolerance of views that were different from its own derived from its understanding of the nature of religious truth.

Such an understanding saw God's providence restricted to parameters that were ecclesiastically constricted and territorially European.

In the spirit of Vatican II, dialogue begins with the understanding that God reveals himself to all peoples and that religious pluralism is a matter for celebration. To appreciate and benefit from such revelation, a Church needs to dialogue with other Churches and with other religions. The Pope himself gave an example of this at Assisi when representatives from different religions gathered together to pray for peace. The inquisitorial spirit must give way to one of dialogue that was discovered in Vatican II.

Notes

1. We shall not discuss the controversial questions concerning the formation of the canon of Scripture nor the relationship between Scripture and Tradition during the period of the New Testament.
2. Priscillian, the founder of the heretical sect, failed to get the support of both Pope Damasus (c.304-84) and Ambrose (c.339-97), and was finally tried at the Emperor Maximus' court on the charge of sorcery. He was convicted and executed along with several of his followers by the State.
3. The present section of this essay depends heavily on the matter in pp. 472-475.
4. "auto-da-fe...a solemn public ceremony of the Inquisition at which judgment was pronounced on heretics and other sinners. The auto-da-fe included a procession of the condemned along with the bones of dead miscreants and pictures of absent ones. A sermon, announcement of sentence, and public confession followed. A full range of penances were imposed. Heretics were handed over to the secular authority to be burned at the end of the ceremony. Heretics who recanted at the last moment were garroted in an act of mercy. The auto-da-fe took place in southern France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and their colonies but disappeared after the middle of the eighteenth century."
5. "*conversos*: Christianized Jews and their descendants; the term could also be applied to converted Muslims."
6. On March 17, 2001 Fr. J. Dupuis SJ gave an interview to three persons from ICAN (*Indian Currents Associate News*) in the parlour of the Gregorian University, in Rome where Fr. J. Dupuis taught. The claims made here are on the basis of that interview.
7. "The actual celebration of the synod itself confirmed the importance of dialogue as a *characteristic mode of the Church's life in Asia.*"

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JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 109-120

Death of Art: Truth of Art

The Postmodern Transition

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Postmodernism occupies today the centre of contemporary intellectual debate, at least in the West. It is generally accepted that the hitherto western ways of seeing, knowing and representing have irreversibly been altered in recent times. The change marks the *end* of one era (modern period, characterized by 'order' under the dictatorship of reason) and the *beginning* of another (postmodern period, characterized by 'uncertainty' in the celebration of contingency and plurality). This new culture, widely known as *postmodernism* or *postmodernity,* has crept into almost all the spheres of human existence. The vast domain of art and aesthetics too has taken a (post)modern[1] turn. How 'turned' is this postmodern turn of (post)modern art? Is art *dead* in the postmodern period? Or, has it become more *alive* as the powerful means of truth? This paper is a modest investigation into these questions.

1. 'Death' of Art

'Death of art' points to the epoch beginning with the end of metaphysics, the philosophical announcement of which was made by Nietzsche by his proclamation of the 'death of God'.[2] Just as 'death of God', so also 'death of art' cannot be understood by means of a notional clarification; it points rather to the historical 'event-ing' (*Ereignis*)[3] of the transition or change of the *old* to the *new*. We look at this 'change' from the perspective of 'art and aesthetics'.

When we speak of the 'death of art' in the postmodern period, we take 'art' in the specific sense of traditional and institutionalized art, as different from (post)modern art. A few general characteristics of the 'death of art' are given here as a basis for the second part of our study, which will consider the salient ways in which the 'transition' takes place. Gianni Vattimo[4] gives three main features of the 'death of art'.

First of all, at the end of modernity art has ceased to be an autonomous realm, confined to the bourgeois institutions such as the museum, the art-gallery, the theatre, the concert-hall, etc. There has been "an 'explosion' of aesthetics beyond the institutional limits" (Vattimo 1988: 53), which has found

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itself in the form of body-art, street theatre, earth-works, etc. When (post)modern art disdains the pomp of marble and uses discarded materials like rope, steel wire, bolts, 'unshapely' stones and logs of wood, it is bringing us, humans, back to the inexhaustible, contingent, brute world that surrounds us (Barrett 1958: 46). Art has come out of its institutional 'sanctuary' to the public realm that is accessible to all, and has opened up its borders to the plurality of discourses in contemporary culture. Thus art with its *aura* and glory, with its mono-tonal expression and meaning, is dead; whereas the (post)modern art – whether or not it is recognized as 'art' by the bourgeois establishment – with its banality and 'earthliness', with its plurality of expressions and meanings, has emerged.

The impact of technology is a decisive fact in the passage to the death of art. With the advent of the ability to reproduce art by mechanical means, where a potentially infinite number of identically reproduced images may coexist, art has lost its uniqueness and authenticity.[5] The work of art, together with the artistic genius and the individual originality of the artist, is dead; in its place we have today 'artistic products', which have undermined the traditional definition of art as a unique product of individual genius (Snyder's Introduction in Vattimo 1988: xxix). Thus, it is more accurate to speak today of the *decline* of art, in the sense of its dissolution into a world of hybrid 'artistic products' contaminated by mass culture and mass media.

The way in which artists often respond to the death of art at the hands of the mass media points to its third feature. As a protest against the manipulative mass culture, authentic art has often refused to communicate anything. To put it in the words of Vattimo, "in a world where consensus is produced by manipulation, authentic art speaks only by lapsing into silence, and aesthetic experience arises only as the negation of all its traditional and canonical characteristics, starting with the pleasure of the beautiful itself" (Vattimo 1988: 56). Thus (post)modern art shows itself more as concealing and absent, and less as revealing and present.

Thus, by 'death of art' is meant the decline of the glorious period of aesthetics, during which 'art', which was nothing but an expression of bourgeois culture, was installed on the high pedestal of 'ideal beauty'. The 'fall' of such a pompous conception of art to the level of the 'ordinary' in the postmodern period is taken to be the 'death of art'.

2. Various Expressions of 'Transition'

The change or transition of art from the *old* to the *new* is variously referred to, highlighting one or the other aspect of aesthetics. It is expressed in the form of binary notions. Some of the important ones are the following.

2.1. Monument to Ornament

Traditional art has been *monumental*, in the sense that its focus of attention has been on the eternal, essential, unchanging aspect of the work of art. The value of an art-work is based on its

'substance' rather than on its 'accidental' or ornamental aspects. 'Monument' stands for the 'institutionalized' or 'structuralized' dimensions, such as the established criteria and laws – in poetry, for instance, the poetic versification and stansification – by which a piece of art is created and judged. These established structures give a piece of art its *perenniality*, making it what it is, its essence, its meaning. Art, perceived through the perspective of monumental dimensions, is reduced to its residue, and is capable of enduring through time, of being perennial.

In the traditional art, which has been eminently monumental, the ornamental or decorative features are considered artistic surplus or excesses, and thus they are generally thought to serve only as a backdrop to the work of art. "The so-called ornamental and decorative elements of the work of art have in point of fact been pushed to the periphery and devalued in traditional thinking about art, precisely on the basis of a strong metaphysical notion of Being as that which 'truly is'..." (Snyder's Introduction in Vattimo 1988: xxxiii). In such a conception there exists a binary opposition between the centre and periphery, foreground and background, essence and appearance, monument and ornament, etc.[6]

Postmodernism does not accept a distinction between the centre and the periphery, which has its basis in metaphysical thought. (Post)modern art too does away with the distinction between monument and ornament; nay, it goes even further: art is essentially ornamental. The destructuring analysis by Vattimo comes to the paradoxical conclusion that art in general has a "decorative and 'marginal' essence" (Vattimo 1988: 85). The collapse of the hierarchical difference coincides with the birth of a paradox: ornamental monument or monumental ornament. The ornamental aspect, that was brushed aside during the metaphysical period as non-essential, becomes the central element of aesthetics and, in the last analysis, of ontological meditation itself. The liberation of the ornamental character of art is the discovery of the (post)modern aesthetics.[7] This transition in art is well in keeping with the *Ereignis* of Being in Heideggerian thought, a marginal, background event.

2.2. Logos to Mythos

Western metaphysical philosophy was forcibly born to replace the *mythical* thinking of the Greeks. According to Heidegger, the beginning of the classical period in Plato and Aristotle marks the end of the 'great beginning' of Greek thought (Heidegger 1959: 179). This 'great beginning' was nothing other than the poetico-mythical thought that was prevalent in ancient Greece. With the birth of 'metaphysical philosophy,' *logos* with its conceptual-logical clarity and precision set in, and *mythos* with its poetico-mythical freedom and profundity was made to die. Thus, begins the reign of *logos* for the last two millennia, not only in philosophy but also in art. The classical art with its monosignificance of eternal and perennial beauty has been but another manifestation of the monolithic structure of 'logos'. According to such a conception, works of art are meant to be near imita-

tions of the ideal of beauty in the ideal realm. It has been a representational or imitative art, trying to point to the one direction of 'ideal beauty'.[8] Hence, it is mono-functional in character. It is thus quite understandable why classical art has been constantly trying to be as pompous, grandiose and 'un-earthly' as possible, in the 'what' and 'how' of its expression.[9]

With the 'end' of the reign of *logos* in postmodern thought, *mythos* is slowly making its appearance in philosophy, culture, religion and art. But today it is no longer to be understood as in the metaphysical tradition, namely, as a primitive thought-pattern, playing more on the emotions, with little or no pretence to objectivity. The way *mythos* has to be understood in the postmodern period may be expressed variously.[10] An elucidation of *mythos* in the contemporary culture will enable us to understand the 'transition' from *logos* to *mythos* in the field of art as well.

Mythos, first of all, is an invitation to 'archaism' or pristine purity, uncontaminated by the techno-scientific culture with the Eurocentric ideology of progress, wherein our relation to humans and Nature is inextricably bound to capitalist exploitation and its imperialistic tendencies. It is a call "in favour of a form of thought retrieving the 'authentic' relation between man and nature" (Vattimo 1992: 32), inspired by ecological concerns. The re-emergence of the archaic mythical thought is made possible by the desire for a possible release from the distortions and contradictions of techno-scientific civilization.[11] Quite rightly are Nietzsche and Heidegger considered to be points of departure for an attempted recuperation of myth.[12] Whether or not this transition from *logos* to *mythos* is fully realized, its impact is visibly felt in the various aspects of life. Secondly, *mythos* can be understood as a return to 'cultural pluriformity'. It has to be seen against the univocal and universal rationality that 'cuts' everything to the 'uniform' of a single culture and thought-pattern. With the decline of metaphysical rationality or *logos*, which has been creating the one cultural universe, *mythos* with 'plurality' has gained acceptability in philosophical and cultural circles. Thirdly, *mythos* today is closely linked to the postmodern 'non-rationalism'. Myths display equivocalities and contradictions; in other words, they incorporate the binary opposites (MacIntyre, "myth" *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 1972) transcending the principle of contradiction. In the rational thought-structure, such an approach to *mythos* is irrational and sacrilegious. By its capacity to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable poles and to break open the 'boundary of precision' (Puthenpurackal 1999: 201) *mythos* stands for poetico-mythical freedom, spontaneity and profundity. Thus, the present understanding of *mythos* can be summed up as '*an invitation to original purity*', '*a celebration of plurality*' and '*an exodus from rational rigidity*'.

The transition to *mythos* is evidently present in art and aesthetics. (Post)modern art is more symbolic and two-dimensional, rather than representational and realistic. It is a visual image with its own independent value alongside that of nature (Barrett 1958:

49). Thus it is a 'going back' to the way in which traditional art expressed itself.[13] Such an art is more of a 'pointer to' than an exact 'representer of' the truth and beauty of reality. Today's art is eminently a celebration of plurality, insofar as a piece of art is not a means for the artist to express his/her intended meaning. The art-work 'speaks' in the way in which it is enabled by the 'beholder/listener' to speak. Meaning emerges from the merging of the object (art-work) and subject (beholder); and such 'merging' is not so mono-jacketed as to have just one meaning. The transition of art from *logos* to *mythos* thus gives a relief from the conceptual rigidity of the classical art.

2.3. Utopia to Heterotopia

The transition from the 'old' to the 'new' in (post)modern art may also be seen as that from *utopia* to *heterotopia*. According to some thinkers, this can be considered the "most radical transformation in the relation between art and everyday life...." (Vattimo 1992: 62). Thomas More who published his famous *Utopia* in 1516 coined the term 'utopia'; and thereafter the term came into popular use. Etymologically it is compounded of *u* (no) + *topos* (place), meaning, 'nowhere'. 'Utopia' refers to an ideal situation that is not actually present; the inspiration for the 'ideal future' is received from a 'golden past' that is said to have existed in remote antiquity (Kateb, "Utopias and Utopianism," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 1972). In Marxist ideologues we find the most radical form of utopia, and with them the term began to be used as linked to art. According to Ernst Bloch's *Geist der Utopie* (1918), utopia stands for the meaning of the artistic avant-garde of the early twentieth century. Marxist theoreticians hold that "the experience of the beautiful is linked to the perception of a *fulfilment* that could not survive a separation from the concreteness of everyday life" (Vattimo 1992: 62). In other words, the realm of beauty and harmony that is to be realized – the 'utopia' – should have an existential touch and flavour. Despite the existential and praxis dimension of the Marxian utopia as the aesthetic unification of the beautiful and the everyday, it "implied a framework of universal history as unilinear" (Vattimo 1992: 68). Thus, utopia remains a universal ideal of beauty and harmony, which is taken as the goal for all and to which all move unilineally. The aesthetic ideal or utopia becomes a universal ideal, insofar as all are to be so 'uni-formed' as to have the same dream, same hope, same ideal situation, same utopia. It is the outcome of the conception of a 'universal history'.[14]

In the postmodern situation the conception of a universal history and utopia can no longer be held. When the voice of the voiceless and the marginalized becomes audible and louder, when different groups with different 'uniforms' begin to assert themselves, it is impossible to think of history as genuinely universal and unilinear. In the (post)modern aesthetics, "the beautiful is the experience of community [of the world]; but community, when realized as 'universal', is multiplied and undergoes an irreversible pluralization" (Vattimo 1992: 68). Unlike in science – at least as Habermas

speaks of science, where teleological activity presupposes a sole objective world – aesthetic experience shows that the world is not one, but many, with different tones and shades of meaning. This implies that we cannot delimit '*a* world', or project '*a* utopia'-expression of a unitary system. We are today faced with a multiplicity of models (Vattimo 1992: 70), aesthetic *utopia* articulated as *heterotopia*.[15] 'Heterotopia' as the plurality of aesthetic models, emanating from the plurality of the worlds or communities, becomes inauthentic, when community is identified with humanity, or *my* world with *the* world.[16]

What is referred to as 'heterotopia' is described variously in literary genre as anti-utopia, dis-utopia, counter-utopia, etc. Works such as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1948), Aldus Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, etc. give negative images of the world that nonetheless retains the 'optimizing' character of utopia, and thus they are, in reality, counter-utopias, deviant utopias or heterotopias. What is common in their variety of projections is neither the creation of a terrestrial paradise nor the return to primitive barbarism, but a contemplative attitude to the talismans of progress. (Vattimo 1992: 84). The post-historical humanity does not regard the course of history with the tension of hope or fear; it tries to live the progress poetically. The artforms in this context are born of a postmodern scenographic imagination.

Let us recapitulate the point that we want to emphasize in our consideration of (post)modern art in terms of the transition from *utopia* to *heterotopia*. Utopia that stood for the ideal of aesthetic unification of beauty and harmony has made a transition to 'heterotopia' in the postmodern period, insofar as postmodernism is a celebration of plurality. Works of art today 'speak' to us variously, point to different ideals and enable us to dream different dreams.

2.4. Literacy to Oracy[17]

Human beings began first to sing and to speak, and then they started to write. In other words, 'oral culture' (*oracy*) is more original than 'written culture' (*literacy*). The freedom and spontaneity inherent in the oral culture of the primal people[18] was replaced by a more precise and systematic written culture, which continued to wield its power and domination until the twentieth century. The birth and growth of metaphysics and science (*logology*) was the result of a response of distanciation from *mythology*, which employed more of an oral culture. With the 'end of metaphysics' there took place the transition to postmodernism, gradually shifting the emphasis from *literacy* to *oracy*. 'Literacy' (written culture) relies on *seeing*, whereas 'oracy' (oral culture), on *hearing*. The written consciousness is *linear*, as the light waves travel as ina straight line; the oral consciousness is *circular*, as the sound waves do not necessarily travel straight. This difference points to that between the reign and end of a linear universal history.

The transition from literacy to oracy is clearly present in the postmodern transition of art. A written

story or a play creates a spatio-temporal distance between the writer and the reader. As the 'space and time' of the narrator is different from that of the narrative, the efficacy of communication by the written text too is minimized. But in an oral culture, for instance a street-play or a story-telling, the narrator's space and time is included in that of the narrative.[19] The 'being' of the narrator is 'immediately' – without the barrier of a medium – translated and communicated to the listener. The so-called medium of 'sound' in oral culture is a transparent one. Besides, *sound* is much more primordial, powerful and gripping (Ihde 1976: 3-15). In humans primal communication takes place through uncontaminated sound.[20] Sound envelops and surrounds us; human existence begins and ends with sound.[21] This being the power of sound, art-forms in the medium of sound carry greater immediacy and efficacy of communication, and have greater plurality of expression. This is the reason why (post)modern art tends more towards oral culture (oracy) than written culture (literacy).

We have been looking at the postmodern transition of art, seen through different expressions of transition, such as monument to ornament, logos to mythos, utopia to heterotopia, and literacy to oracy. The list is not exhaustive.[22] From all these ways of transition we note that (post)modern art is taking a 'step back' (*Schritt zurück*) to what has been primordially present. But it is not a mere 'flat' repetition of what has been in the past, rather a reclaiming or fetching back of the metaphysically uncontaminated pristine form of thinking, culture and art. Postmodernism is, to a great extent, an aesthetico-cultural transition.

3. The Truth of Art

The apparent death of art that happened at the birth of postmodernism has brought about a 'change' in the way truth is considered. In postmodern thought the experience of truth has become more artistic and poetic in character. The model for postmodern or post-metaphysical experience of truth is the one provided by poets and artists, who set truth into works of art, through poetic language and symbols, artistic expressions and images. This way of considering truth aesthetically was initiated by Nietzsche, and was worked out mainly by Heidegger at a later stage of his thought.

In the lecture, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," delivered towards the end of his transitional period (1935), Heidegger shows us the direction in which we have to take our thinking on truth, by his philosophical meditation on the work of art. He makes use of two examples: a pair of shoes of a peasant-woman in the painting of Van Gogh, and a Greek temple. The pair of shoes, while remaining rooted on the *earth*, opens to us the *world* of a peasant-woman; the Greek temple, standing on the *earth*, opens up a *world*. The *world* as 'opening up' is limited by the *earth* as concealing. "Truth is present only as the conflict between lighting and concealing in the opposition of world and earth" (Heidegger 1972: 51; Hofstadter (trans) 1975: 62). Thus in "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes" Heidegger has set the tone for his later thought on truth,

namely as a strife or dialectics between revealing and concealing – an aesthetic meditation. This thought-pattern is carried further in his later thought, insofar as he thinks of truth as *essencing* or *unconcealing*, or even in terms of 'Eventing' (*Ereignis*).[23] It implies a two-fold relation: on the one hand, the 'belonging-together' or 'complementarity' between Being as *giving* or *presencing* and man as *receiving* or *responding*, and on the other hand, the 'difference' or 'unconcealing' between Being as *concealing* and entities as *revealing* (Puthenpurackal 1987: 144-45, 175-225). In such a thought-structure, Being/truth presences itself to the receptive mortals. "Mortals are irrevocably bound to the revealing-concealing gathering which lights [opens, *lichtet*] everything present in its presencing" (Heidegger *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 273; Krell & Capuzzi (trans) 1975: 122). Standing in the Open of the clearing, man looks into the Open; a human being thus becomes the genuine 'seer' (*Seher*)[24] of the revealing-concealing process. The role of humans in the event-ing of truth is made clear by Heidegger by his use of the term 'the shepherd' (*der Hirt*) as different from 'the lord' (*der Herr*). Man is not the *lord* that dictates, but the *shepherd* that cares for and receives the happening of truth as *a-letheia*.

According to the traditional conception, truth is absolute, immutable and universal (Mercier 2000: 48-50) – untouched by the limiting elements of time and space – distancing it from the other alternative attributes; in other words, truth can never be relative, changing or particular. Such a thought-pattern is functioning in the 'either/or' structure. It considers truth merely in positive terms, i.e., truth as opposed to untruth, presence as opposed to absence, revealing as opposed to concealing. Heideggerian thinking of truth goes beyond the distinction between absolute and relative, immutable and mutable, universal and particular, revealing and concealing, presencing and absencing.

Our sketchy look into the way Heidegger considers truth enables us to understand that in the postmodern period *art is the way in which truth shows itself*. In the eyes of metaphysical philosophy, the postmodern understanding of truth is illogical, unclear, imprecise and vague; it is no truth! So also for the traditionalists, (post)modern art too is no art! Instead of making counter-statements of condemnation, sweeping the traditional understanding of art and truth into non-existence, Heidegger thinks of the 'essencing' (*Wesen*) or the 'eventing' (*Ereignis*) of art and truth – the ways in which art and truth show themselves. Here, they meet together: truth in the postmodern thought can show itself only in the way of art.

In this short study we have been looking into the question of 'postmodernism' which points to a *transition* from the 'old' to the 'new'. We are not yet clear where this 'new' is leading us to. Perhaps, postmodernism is nothing other than a 'Great Transition'! We have yet to wait and see. Our consideration of the transition of postmodernism has been from the perspective of the transition of art from the modern to the (post)modern. The postmodern transition is primarily a

cultural transition, which envelops almost all spheres of human existence. The aesthetic sphere with its encompassing nature carries an added importance.

(Post)modern art, in keeping with its nature, has not established or defined itself with clearly marked out boundaries. Hence, we have considered it as a 'transition' from the traditional (modern) to the (post)modern, and our study has to be taken merely as a '*pointer to*', rather than a '*definer of,*' this realm. (Post)modern art is a movement – a movement that is still on the move. Hence, by referring to the *terminus a quo* (monument, logos, utopia, literacy, etc.) and the *terminus ad quem* (ornament, mythos, heterotopia, oracy, etc.) of the movement, it is not contended that the movement has come to a stop. Art today is in a constant 'move' from the old to the new. This 'movement' or transition was mistakenly taken by the established aesthetics as the 'death' of art. The so-called 'death' of art has been but a 'decline' of art from the high pedestal of monumentality, logology, utopianism, literacy, etc. On a closer look, with the help of Heidegger, we note that this 'decline' has not been a regress but a progress, insofar as (post)modern art is well suited to 'house' truth in the post-metaphysical period.

With the demise of the idea of a unilinear history and universal rationality in the postmodern period, there takes place an explosion of the multiplicity of local rationalities – ethnic, sexual, religious, cultural or aesthetic minorities – that finally speak up for themselves. With the liberation of diversity and plurality, truth and art too get liberated from the clutches of universality and uniformity. The liberated truth and art, in the liberated era of postmodernism, begin to manifest themselves in the brute immediacy of time and space. The accessibility to truth and art is no more limited to the monopolizing few, but to anyone and everyone; their expressivity is extended even to ordinary things and events. Art and truth are no more far apart, but bordering upon each other. Using a Heideggerian style of expression we can say, *art 'arts' in the way of truth, and truth 'truths' in the way of art.*

Notes

1 In the realm of art, the contrast is made between 'traditional art' and 'modern art' with their specific and differing characteristics. But in the area of thought, philosophy and culture, the contrast is between 'the modern' and 'the postmodern'; and the adjective 'modern' means 'belonging to that period and trend of thought that ended during the first half of the 20th century'. Thus 'modern art' and 'postmodern art' have the same reference. To show this link, we use the term *postmodern* with the prefix 'post' within brackets.

2 Nietzsche and Heidegger are considered the great stalwarts who made a radical critique of the traditional philosophical trend, generally referred to as 'modern thought' and announced the advent of a new beginning; thus the transition to postmodernism is launched by them. SeePuthenpurackal 2000: 96-112.

3 *Ereignis* is a Heideggerian expression, which is better rendered by 'event-ing' rather than mere 'event'.

4 He is one of the Italian exponents of the postmodern thought through his various books. He speaks of the transition to (post)modern art in his *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in the Post-modern Culture* 1988 and *The Transparent Society* 1992.

5 Vattimo acknowledges his indebtedness to Walter Benjamin's study of 1936: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical reproduction," for this characteristic of the death of art.

6 Postmodernism vehemently opposes the 'either/or' conception of such binary opposites of modern Western philosophy. Rather than a philosophy of either/or, postmodernism opts for a philosophy of 'difference' that transcends the principle of contradiction.

7 For more on the various cultural and aesthetic expressions in the postmodern period, see Sarup 1993: 168ff.

8 According to the classical understanding, 'the beautiful' is to be taken as different from 'the ugly'—an either/or conception. In postmodernism this dichotomy is transcended. For more on this question, refer Puthenpurackal 1999.

9 By the 'what' of classical art, we refer to the materials used for works of art, such as marble, gold, and other precious and rare materials. Besides the material used, the themes represented in art too are far apart from the ordinary life of the people. Usually they are centred on gods and goddesses, saints and heroes, popes and kings, power and victory, etc. By the 'how' we mean the *way* art is expressed; for instance, it is expressed in a very 'refined' and 'sophisticated' manner.

10 According to Gianni Vattimo, myths may be understood in the contemporary period in terms of 'archaism', 'cultural relativism' and 'tempered irrationalism'. Refer Vattimo 1992: 31ff.

11 Nietzsche and Heidegger became so popular in the contemporary European culture, because of their critique of the scientifico-metaphysical culture, and of their thirst for archaic thought.

12 Despite their critique of the existing metaphysical thought and avowed interest in mythical thinking, at least Nietzsche has not succeeded in putting forward an alternative thought in his philosophy.

13 If we look at the primitive art in the ancient cultures, we note that it was a 'flat' art, with space and time, climaxes and values flattened out. Refer Barrett 1958: 50ff.

14 Marxian philosophy, despite its concreteness, follows the Hegelian tradition of a universal history.

15 'Heterotopia' is not a commonly used term. It is coined with the suffix, '*hetero-*' (other, different, etc.) and '*topos*' (place). Thus, its meaning may roughly be expressed as a different place, plurality of places, a place other than the normally considered, etc. Refer *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1979 ed., s.v., "hetero-".

16 The transition is evident in Heidegger, when he speaks of '*the* world' in his *Being and Time* (1927), but of '*a* world' (implicitly many worlds) in his *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1936).

17 The inspiration for this section is received from an APFF seminar-cum-workshop on "Folkculture and Folklore," conducted at *Vijnananilayam*, Janampet, A.P., (28-29 July 2001), by the Folklore Resource and Research Centre, Palayamkottai, T.N. For stylistic reason, I have changed the term 'orality' into 'oracy'.

18 This was a phenomenon present in all the ancient cultures of the world. But the 'distanciation' from oracy to literacy was more evident in the ancient Greek culture. In the Eastern cultures oracy continued to be dominant, despite the introduction of 'literacy'.

19 In the language of Gadamer, there takes place a fusion of horizons of the text and of the reader.

20 According to Heidegger, fundamental hermeneutics takes place in Dasein's existential dealings, which may be expressed in un-thought-out sounds.

21 Life begins with the 'sound' of the lullaby, and ends with the 'sound' of lamentation.

22 We can add to this already considered list, transitions such as metaphysics to metaphor, intellect to intuition, enchantment to disenchantment, imitative to creative, etc.

23 Although the present author has rendered *Ereignis* as 'Event of Appropriation' in his book, *Heidegger: Through Authentic Totality to Total Authenticity 1987*, he is inclined to render it now as 'Event-ing'.

24 Heidegger introduces this notion in his "Der Spruch des Anaximander," *Holzwege*, p. 318; *Early Greek Thinking*, p. 33. The term 'seer' goes well with the Indian thinking, according to which the philosopher is called a 'seer' (*darsanika*), and philosophy is termed as 'seeing' (*Darsana*). For more on this, refer Puthenpurackal 1987: 201, note 226.

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JPJRS 5/2 (2002) 121-135

Grace And Social Science:

Nonsensory Perception of God in a Constructive Postmodern Wesleyan Philosophy

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In this essay, I endeavor to accomplish three tasks. The first involves briefly introducing the creative and complex constructive postmodernism of David Ray Griffin. Given that Griffin has written and/or edited massive amounts of material in advancing his distinctive postmodern proposals, I cannot cover many pertinent ideas in our present time constraints. I will, however, focus on one notion that Griffin believes crucial to his postmodern proposal: nonsensory perception. This focus amounts to the second task I endeavour to accomplish. My third task entails briefly exploring how this insight – nonsensory perception – relates to a central element in Wesleyan philosophical theology: prevenient grace. I am convinced that the hypothesis that prevenient grace is perceived through nonsensory perception can aid theists in general and Wesleyans in particular as they traverse the unpredictable postmodern epistemological terrain.

I. Postmodernism According to David Ray Griffin

With the variety of postmodernisms espoused or referred to in recent times, a short excursus into what David Griffin means by postmodernism, and how his is a constructive version, seems necessary. Postmodernism, according to Griffin, refers to a diffuse sentiment — that humanity can and must go beyond the "modern" — rather than to any common set of doctrines (Griffin 1993: vii-viii). In philosophical and theological circles, there are at least two different positions labeled "postmodern" and each seeks to transcend the modern worldview developed out of the seventeenth-century Galilean-Cartesian-Baconian-Newtonian science (Griffin 1993: viii). However, the manner in which diverse postmodernisms seek to transcend modernity varies.

Griffin refers to the postmodernism inspired variously by pragmatism, physicalism, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, and many recent French thinkers as "deconstructive" or "eliminative" postmodernism. This postmodernism, according to Griffin, "overcomes the modern worldview through an antiworldview" (Griffin 1993: viii).

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> Deconstructive postmodernism deconstructs or eliminates the ingredients necessary for a worldview, such as God, self, purpose, meaning, a real world, and truth as correspondence. While motivated in some cases by the ethical concern to forestall totalitarian systems, this type of postmodern thought issues in relativism, even nihilism. It could be called *ultramodernism*, in that its eliminations result from carrying modern premises to their logical conclusions (Griffin 1993: viii).

To say it in another way, deconstructive postmodernists deconstruct various notions, such as rationality, empirical givenness, and truth as correspondence, without which a worldview is impossible (Griffin 1993: viii). The attempt to undermine horror-producing worldviews is admirable and even necessary. The strategy of deconstructive postmodernists, however, involves eliminating the presuppositions of worldviews as such (Griffin, Beardslee and Holland 1989: 52).

Therefore, the deconstructionist approach is both inconsistent and counterproductive. It is inconsistent because freedom, purposive agency, realism, truth, and the distinction between better and worse are presupposed in the very attempt to eliminate them. It is counterproductive because freedom for good cannot be promoted by the approach (Griffin, Beardslee and Holland 1989: 52). The type of postmodernism Griffin suggests can, by contrast, be called "constructive" or "revisionary" postmodernism. "It seeks to overcome the modern worldview," he says, "through a revision of modern premises and traditional concepts" (Griffin, Beardslee and Holland 1989: viii). It is concerned with constructing a new worldview involving postmodern persons *and* a postmodern society with a postmodern spirituality. "Going beyond the modern world," Griffin explains,

> will involve transcending its individualism, anthropocentrism, patriarchy, mechanization, economism, consumerism, nationalism, and militarism. [This] constructive postmodern thought provides support for ecology, peace, feminist, and other emancipatory movements of our time, while stressing that the inclusive emancipation must be from modernity itself. The term *postmodern*, however, by contrast with *premodern*, emphasizes that the modern world has produced unparalleled advances that must not be lost in a general revulsion against its negative features (Griffin 1993: ix).

Griffin's postmodernism, therefore, involves a creative synthesis of modern and premodern truths and values. It differs significantly from deconstructive postmodernism in its insistence upon the necessity and possibility of constructing a new worldview for future generations (Griffin 1993: 1).

It is crucial to note that Griffin's proposal does ***not*** hold to "the naively utopian belief that the success of this movement would bring about lasting peace, harmony, and happiness, in which all spiritual problems, social conflicts, ecological destruction, and hard choices would vanish" (Griffin 1993: x). There is truth in the testimony of the world's religions that a deep evil is present within the human heart, an evil that no new worldview will suddenly

eliminate (Griffin 1993: x). However, Griffin says, we should not reconcile ourselves "to the present order as if this order were thereby uniquely legitimated . . . . The human proclivity to evil in general, and to conflictual competition and ecological destruction in particular, can be either greatly exacerbated or greatly mitigated by a world order and its view" (Griffin 1993: x). While modern worldviews exacerbated it, a reconstructive postmodernism may envision, without being naively utopian, a far better world order than the one we now have.

> (See the appendix for a chart that I constructed that indicates the general characteristics of modernism, ultramodernism, and Griffin's postmodernism.)

II. Nonsensory Perception in Griffin's Constructive Postmodernism

While David Griffin believes that a constructive postmodernism builds upon the thought of several recent philosophers, he admits that his own postmodern agenda takes its primary orientation from Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy and only slightly less from Charles Hartshorne's (Griffin 1993: 2). From this perspective, says Griffin, "the two fundamental flaws in modern philosophy have been an ontology based on a materialistic doctrine of nature and an epistemology based on a sensationalist doctrine of perception" (Griffin 1993: 3). He explains:

> The sensationalist doctrine of perception said not only that all knowledge is grounded on perception (with which constructive postmodernists agree), but also that perception is to be equated with sense-perception (with which they do not agree). The materialistic doctrine of nature — whether part of a materialistic ontology of reality in general or of a dualism between "mind" and "nature" — said that the ultimate units of nature are, in Whitehead's words, "vacuous actualities." That is, they are actualities (*contra* Bishop Berkeley), but they are completely devoid of experience (Griffin 1993: 3).

An exposition of Griffin's argument against the sensationalist doctrine of perception and his alternative proposal — a doctrine of sensory and nonsensory perception — serves as the subject for this segment.

The epistemological side of Griffin's constructive postmodernism involves the idea that sensory perception is not our only means of perceiving the world. In fact, it is not even our *primary* means of perception, because sensory perception is derived from nonsensory modes of perception (Griffin 1993: 14). The key epistemological revision for overcoming deconstructive postmodernism's epistemological chasm - a chasm whose depths have spawned numerous philosophical and theological inadequacies - involves a postmodern affirmation of nonsensory perception.

The recent obituaries for constructive epistemology written by deconstructive postmodernists have resulted primarily from what Whitehead called "the tacit identification of perception with sense-perception" (Whitehead

1968: 231). Modern philosophy's doctrine of perception was based on two premises: (1) the only possible source of information about the world beyond our own experience is sensory perception, and (2) sensory perception gives us nothing but sense-data. Griffin notes that, given these premises, it is hard to see how one could escape solipsism Griffin, 1993: 17). For instance, David Hume concluded that we must be content with solipsism, which is based upon a radical bifurcation between theory and practice. In practice, says Hume, we assume that a real world exists while, in theory, we realize there is no justification for this belief.

The equation of perception with sensory perception has led to the shallowness of modern philosophy of religion. If perceptual experience is equated with sensory perception — thereby denying non-sensory perception — we have no perceptual experience of causation, the actual world, or the past. There can be no religious experience, in the sense of a direct awareness of God. There can be no perceptual experience of normative ideals, whether moral, aesthetic, or cognitive, and, therefore, what remains is a multiplicity of perspectives, none of which is more normative than the others (Griffin 1989: 32).

The idea that sense-data are *constructed* by the perceiver, not passively received, has been, according to Griffin, "a central plank in the extreme antifoundationalism that is central to deconstructive postmodern philosophy" (Griffin 1993: 19). He responds to this idea by noting that, on the one hand, if *nothing* is given in perception, then all our beliefs about the world are arbitrary. Furthermore, the very idea that there is a reality beyond ourselves, to which our ideas could somehow correspond, is groundless. Extreme antifoundationalism leads to extreme relativism. On the other hand, various foundationalists have insisted that the outer world is *directly* given in *sensory* perception. Contemporary philosophers and theologians, says Griffin, seem to be at an impasse:

> On the one hand, there are good reasons to believe, from what we all presuppose in practice (e.g., that a real world exists, that its reality is given to us in perception, and that our ideas are true to the extent that they correspond to this world), that perception must include an element that is given. On the other hand, there are good reasons to believe that sense-data are constructed by the perceiver (Griffin 1993: 20).

The way beyond this impasse is to recognize that sensory perception is not our primary mode of perceiving the world; nonsensory perception is more basic. In this nonsensory mode, we directly (ap)prehend "other actual things as actual and causally efficacious for us," says Griffin (Griffin 1993: 20). But the *way* we prehend other actual things plays a role in our perception. On this basis, we see that there is a constructed character of sense-data without concluding that nothing is given to perceptual experience as such. One can agree "with the direct realists," says Griffin, "who have insisted that, in perception, we directly apprehend other actual things

beyond our own experience, while agreeing with phenomenalists that sensory perception, in providing us with sense-data, does not give us this direct apprehension" (Griffin 1993: 20). The alternative position is open to constructive postmodernists by "either saying that sensory perception is based upon a more primitive mode of perception in which that direct perception occurs, or by saying that sensory perception is a mixed mode of perception comprised of two pure modes, one of which provides (constructed) sense-data and the other of which provides causally efficacious actualities" (Griffin 1993: 20). Griffin's position, then, "comes out about half-way between modern phenomenalism and the sensory realism of pre-Humean philosophy" (Grifin 2000: 491).[1]

Griffin argues that we get direct apprehension of the world in three ways. First, we directly apprehend particular parts of our own bodies as causally efficacious for our sensory perceptions. The most direct perception of one's body is ***not*** one's perception of sensory organs; it is one's perception, albeit unconscious, of the brain. "We know from physiology," Griffin argues,

> that our sensory perceptions depend directly upon the brain. Sensory perceptions can be induced, for example, by direct stimulation of certain parts of the brain. By combining what we know from immediate experience with what we know from science, accordingly, we must conclude that it is primarily by means of a nonsensory perception of the brain, with which the mind is contiguous, that we perceive the causal efficacy of various parts of the body for our experience (Griffin 2000: 74).

Furthermore, the direct apprehension of our own bodies can serve, by analogy, to ground our talk about actualities beyond our bodily members. In other words, one can know, by analogy, the actuality of the world beyond one's body.

The second way we apprehend the world occurs by prehending our own bodies. When we prehend our own bodies, "we indirectly apprehend the actualities beyond our bodies *insofar as those actualities beyond our bodies are present within actualities comprising our bodies*" (Griffin 1993: 22). This panexperientialist hypothesis involves the belief that each actual entity is an experience that prehends, thereby including into itself aspects of prior actualities. For instance, visual images are present in the eyes by way of the eye's apprehension of them. The brain apprehends the images present in the eyes; the mind apprehends the brain.

The third way we get direct apprehension of the world is through direct prehension of actualities beyond one's own body. Although this type of direct prehension of remote actualities is negligible in the conscious experience of most people most of the time, Griffin's study in the field of parapsychology has led him to believe that authentic instances do occur.

Perhaps the main explanation of our awareness of nonsensory perception lies within the type of perception we call

"memory." Griffin suggests that memory might be better called "past-self-perception" (Griffin 2000: 75). Through memory, we directly prehend our own past experiences. It is our prehension of the immediate past (one second ago, for instance) that best illustrates our non-sensory perception that the past influences the present. Philosophers in the past have generally failed to think of memory as a type of perception, because they assumed that the human mind is a single, enduring substance. A hypothesis that more adequately accounts for the diverse activity of the mind, however, is one that considers it a serially-ordered society of distinct occasions of experience. Memory is the enduring mind's perception of prior moments of experiences as antecedent objects (Griffin 2000: 494-95). The vision in our "mind's eye," then, is not immediately derived from our sensory organs.

If direct, albeit often unconscious and non-sensory, apprehension of that which is both inside and outside one's body occurs, we have reason to believe that our notions of truth, beauty, and goodness are rooted in our prehension of a realm of values beyond ourselves. Thus, complete relativism is denied. Such direct nonsensory perception also provides a basis for claiming that it is possible to directly perceive God, who is often described as a Spirit undetectable to our five senses. Griffin claims that perception of the divine occurs in this way and his notion will be explored further in my discussion of a postmodern Wesleyan philosophy.

III. Perception of Prevenient Grace in a Postmodern Wesleyan Philosophy

So, what does all this have to do with a postmodern Wesleyan philosophy? I propose that Wesleyans, who aspire to offer a postmodern philosophical alternative to modernism and deconstructive postmodernisms, should utilize various elements in Griffin's constructive postmodern vision. Postmodern Wesleyans can more easily appropriate Griffin's constructive vision than those in other religious and nonreligious traditions, because this vision is congenial to many distinctives and theological implications in Wesleyan thought. My discussion in this segment will centre on what I believe is one issue central to a postmodern Wesleyan philosophy: one's apprehension of prevenient grace through nonsensory perception.

The issue at hand can be put in question form: How can Wesleyans account philosophically for their distinctive claim that God's prevenient, gracious activity necessarily affects all humans (and, perhaps, all creatures) if such affection requires that humans perceive it? How can Wesleyans account for this if God, as an invisible Spirit, is unavailable for apprehension through sensory perception?

John Wesley's answers to these questions were framed in response to prominent philosophers of his day: John Locke and David Hume. The thought of these two, but especially the latter, provides much of the basis for the dilemmas besetting modern and deconstructive postmodern

epistemologies. Although Wesley has little in common with Hume, he self-consciously sided with Locke[2] (and Aristotelian philosophy)[3] who famously expresses the empiricist denial of innate ideas. Wesley several times quotes the empiricist slogan "nothing is in the mind that is not first in the senses."[4] He argues that "our senses are the only source of those ideas, upon which all our knowledge is founded. Without ideas of some sort or other we could have no knowledge, and without our senses we could have no ideas" (1823: 2, 431).

Wesley's strong empiricism leads Randy L. Maddox to conclude that "Wesley believed that all human knowledge of God is derived from experience: (1) our experience of God's restored initial revelation in nature, (2) our experience of God's definitive revelation recorded in Scripture, and (3) our experience of God's direct address to our spiritual senses" (numbers added).[5]

The knowledge of God available in (1) the revelation of nature is indirect because such knowledge is secured through inference from the created order. Wesley is far from alone in arguing for this type of knowledge. In fact, many of his contemporaries — including the deists he opposed — joined him in acknowledging this manner of obtaining knowledge of God. Inferential knowledge is based upon a different kind of perception than direct experience of God suggested in ways (2) and (3). This difference pertains to the mode of perception involved. Knowledge of God through inference is available through (natural) sensory perception and, because the invisible God is not *directly* available through the natural senses, inferential knowledge of God is indirect.

The final two avenues for gaining knowledge of God – (2) and (3), i.e., our personal experience and our experience of Scripture — were more important for Wesley, and these two are more important for my present purpose. As Maddox says, "it was to the latter two that Wesley typically turned for the 'content' of our knowledge of God" (48-49, 31). These two are related to one another in that both are predicated upon the notion that humans *directly* perceive God. This means that God's direct address to each person (sometimes called the "internal witness of the Spirit")[6] is of the same kind as God's direct address to the writers of Scripture.[7] According to Wesley, this direct knowledge of God comes through a special kind of perception: "spiritual" sensation.

Wesley postulated that God has given humans a spiritual sense so that they may perceive spiritual realities not available for apprehension through (natural) sensory perception.[8] Through our spiritual senses, we can have direct knowledge of God.[9] In *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Wesley explains this perceptual faculty:

> Seeing our ideas are not innate, but must all originally come from our senses, it is certainly necessary that you have senses capable of discerning objects of this kind — not only those which are called "natural senses," which in this respect profit nothing, as being altogether incapable of discerning objects of a spiritual kind, but *spiritual* senses, exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. It is

> necessary that you have the *hearing* ear, and the *seeing* eye, emphatically so called; that you have a new class of senses opened in your soul, not depending on organs of flesh and blood to be 'the *evidence* of things unseen' as your bodily senses are of visible things, to be the avenues of the invisible world, to discern spiritual objects, and to furnish you with ideas of what the outward 'eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard' (32, also *Works* 11:56-57).

Wesley was not the first to claim that humans possess spiritual senses. The hypothesis of spiritual senses, as Rex D. Matthews notes, has enjoyed a long and extensive history in Christian theology (Matthews 1986: 234. See also Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 27-28, 262-63). Wesley's positing of a spiritual senses was a peculiarly eighteenth-century solution to the epistemological problem, however (Dreyer 1983: 26). His postulation of spiritual senses was a response to the dominant Lockean empiricism of Wesley's day. Locke's empirical philosophy limited perception to the acquisition of knowledge through the (natural) senses alone (Matthews 1986: 186; Brantley 1984: 29). Because God cannot be sensed by a creature's five natural senses, Wesley's spiritual sensation hypothesis provided him a way to account for how creatures commune directly with God.

The hypothesis that humans possess spiritual senses raises a question expressed well by Matthews: Does Wesley regard the spiritual senses "as an *addition to* the natural senses (implying a metaphysical and epistemological dualism), or as an *enhancement of* the capacity of the natural senses" (Matthews 1986: 248)? On the one hand, Wesley sometimes speaks as if these spiritual senses are common to all humans as a natural part of what it means to be.[10] On the other hand, he sometimes speaks as though a person is incapable of perceiving spiritual data until God has implanted the capacity to perceive this data.[11] This diversity leads Mitsuo Shimizu to argue that Wesley was both a metaphysical and an ontological dualist (Shimizu 1980: 171), while leading Richard E. Brantley to argue the contrary (Brantley1984: 99). Matthews concludes:

> It must be acknowledged that Wesley himself uses an inconsistent and sometimes confusing mixture of language about the "spiritual senses," sometimes speaking of their "opening" or "enlightening" (as if they were already present but simply "latent in human nature — the "liberationist" theme), and sometimes speaking of the "natural man" as "receiving" them (implying that they do not in fact exist in human nature prior to the prevenient action of the Holy Spirit in creating them — the "transformationist" theme (Matthews 1986: 306; Thorsen 1990: 193).

Wesley addresses the natural/supernatural scheme underlying this issue in other contexts. For instance, he says of one's conscience that, "in one sense, it may be termed natural, because it is found in all men; yet, properly speaking, it is not natural, but a supernatural gift from God, above all his natural endowments" ("On Conscience," Vol 1.6, *Works*, VII, 187-88). Regarding prevenient grace, he says famously:

> For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called natural conscience. But this is not natural: It is more properly termed prevenient grace. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man. . . . So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath.[12]

Despite the confusion of his language regarding the natural and supernatural, one thing seems clear: Wesley remained an empiricist by arguing that knowledge is gained through perception. Because natural sense perception cannot provide the necessary data for apprehension of the unseen divine, however, Wesley adopted the notion that persons possess unique spiritual faculties by which to perceive the spiritual activity of God directly.[13]

It is my belief that a postmodern Wesleyan philosophy should accept neither the metaphysical and epistemological dualisms implied in the notion that God implants supernatural senses alongside natural ones, nor the notion that humans "naturally" possess spiritual senses that need only to be enhanced by a movement of God.[14] However, Wesley's basic empiricist notion, that knowledge of God — like all other knowledge — comes through perception, *should* be accepted by postmodern philosophers. What seems to be required is a Wesleyan empiricism that accounts for direct perception of God. Such an empiricism must also be postmodern in the sense that it must not fall victim to the incoherence of modern and ultramodern epistemologies which limit the acquisition of knowledge to *sense* perception alone.

Enter the constructive postmodern epistemology of David Ray Griffin outlined earlier. Griffin agrees with Wesley and other empiricists that knowledge is gained only through perception. He agrees with Wesley that humans have direct knowledge of God through perception. Both Griffin and Wesley could be labeled "theistic empiricists" in that both are adamant not only that God exists, but also that direct perception of God is possible. Both agree that this direct perception of God is unavailable through natural sensory perception. Because of this, both reject the epistemological claim of Locke, Hume, and other modern and deconstructive postmodernists that *all* knowledge is garnered through *natural sensory* perception alone.[15]

Wesley and Griffin differ, however, in accounting for how God can be directly perceived. Wesley is obliged to postulate a sense faculty that pertains to "spiritual" data. Griffin, however, argues that humans, in fact all creatures, perceive God through natural *nonsensory* perception. Perception of God, according to Griffin, "requires no implanted *Sensus Divinitatis*, in fact no special religious sense of any sort, given the recognition of a nonsensory mode of perception" (2000: 501).[16] Genuine experiences of God, says Griffin, require "no special religious sense, *a priori* or otherwise, no supernatural inter-

vention into the normal causal processes involved in human experience, and no special pleading in terms of the beliefs and practices of a particular religious community" (2000: 98).

Process (and Wesleyan) theologian John B. Cobb, Jr., explains this well: "If God is present and working in us, as Wesley (and also process philosophy) affirms, there is nonsensory perception of God all the time.... Instead of speaking of new spiritual senses, we can think of nonsensuous experience of the divine presence in our lives and awareness of its salvific effects" (2000: 75). Although modern philosophers, due to their sensationalist proclivities, tend to assume that nonsensory perception must be supernatural, Griffin's .constructive postmodernism offers an account that is theistic and naturalistic. This hypothesis finds evidence for its plausibility in the way we live our lives, i.e., we all act as if we possess knowledge unavailable to sensory perception.

The hypothesis that we all perceive God directly through nonsensory perception provides an additional basis for Griffin's collapse of the classic natural and supernatural dualism. In its place, he suggests a naturalistic theism or theistic naturalism. General precedence for such a collapse can be found in Wesley's own writings, noted above, as well as in early Greek theologians and the continuing Eastern Orthodox tradition. Precedence can be found in the writings of contemporary Wesleyans as well. For instance, H. Ray Dunning contends that "the distinctiveness of the Wesleyan view is that nature is so graced that the natural man is but a logical abstraction. The grace extends to the whole of human existence" (Dunning 1988: 159; 432). Mildred Bangs Wynkoop and John E. Culp also push for such a collapse (Wynkoop 1972: 213-221; Culp 1996: 147-166. See also, from a Wesleyan-Process perspective, Cobb's *Grace and Responsibility* and Suchocki 1987: 31-43).

It is my argument, then, that Wesleyans endeavoring to propose a postmodern Wesleyan philosophy are wise to adopt Griffin's hypothesis that direct knowledge of God is available through nonsensory perception. This hypothesis is postmodern in that it overcomes the difficulties inherent in modernity's and deconstructive postmodernity's reduction of perception to sensory perception alone. It is Wesleyan in that it corresponds with (1) Wesley's empiricist philosophy, (2) insistence upon direct perception of God, and (3) recognition that direct perception of God is unavailable through the natural senses. Its further benefit is in overcoming the spiritual/natural dualism that Wesley's language sometimes supports. The hypothesis that God can be perceived through nonsensory apprehension allows Wesleyans a realistic and nondualistic basis upon which to articulate their convictions regarding the efficacy of prevenient grace in our postmodern world.

Notes

1 My essay's pagination reference corresponds to a rough draft version of this book.

2 It is generally agreed that Wesley was profoundly influenced by Lockean empiricism through Peter Browne's *Procedure, Extent, and Limits of Human Knowledge* (London: William Innys, 1728). Some who have explored deeply the connections between Locke's and Wesley's epistemologies include Richard E. Brantley, *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1984), Frederick Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley," *American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 12-30, Clifford J. Hindley, "The Philosophy of Enthusiasm: A Study in the Origins of 'Experimental Theology,'" *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 182 (1957): 99-109, 199-210; Rex D. Matthews, "'Reason and Religion Joined': A Study in the Theology of John Wesley" (Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986), Yoshio Noro, "Wesley's Theological Epistemology," *Iliff Review* 28 (1971): 59-76, Mitsuo Shimizu, "Epistemology in the Thought of John Wesley" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University, 1980), Donald A.D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990); Laurence W. Wood, "Wesley's Epistemology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 10 (1975): 48-59.

3 That Wesley was influenced in this matter by his study of Aristotelian philosophy is an argument championed by Matthews, "Reason and Religion Joined," 260-280.

4 Wesley mentions this in his sermons "On the Discoveries of Faith" (Works 4:49); in "Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith," (Works: 4:51); and in *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (Works 11:56)

5 Maddox, *Responsible Grace,* 48. Thorsen comments similarly: "In substantial agreement with the British empirical thinking prevalent in his own day, Wesley believed that there is an experiential dimension to all knowledge, both natural and supernatural," (*The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 83).

6 The notion of direct perception of God is important for Wesley's distinctive notion that one can be assured of their status as children of God through the internal witness of the spirit. See Matthews, "Religion and Reason Joined," ch. 5.

7 See *NT Notes*, 2 Tim. 3:16. Donald Thorsen notes that the apprehension of the Spirit is a means whereby the believer can be assured of the truth of biblical revelation as well (Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral.* 132-33.

8 Maddox, 27. See Wesley's sermons "The New Birth" and "On Living Without God"

9 Or, in the words of Donald A. D. Thorsen, the felt experience of God "originated in the 'direct testimony of the Spirit,' for which Wesley primarily argued from 'the plain meaning of the text' of Scripture and from Christian experience." Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, 186. The phrases Thorsen quotes from Wesley are found in "The Witness of the Spirit, II" (1767, sermon 11), *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:288-98.

10 Because of this, George Croft Cell describes Wesley's religious epistemology as "transcendental empiricism" (*Rediscovery of Wesley* [New York: Henry Holt, 1935], 93), and Albert C. Outler calls it "transempirical intuition" (*Works* [Bicentennial ed.], 3:361n1).

11 Although Wesley sometimes argues for the implantation of spiritual senses, he rejects the notion that God has implanted innate ideas of Godself in humans (see "The Imperfection of Human Knowledge" [1784, sermon 69] *Works* [Bicentennial ed.], 2:571). This demonstrates his rejection of a Reformed epistemology which appeals to Calvin's notion that God has implanted in all persons a certain understanding of Godself so that they might know that there is a God and that God is the Creator.

12 Sermon, 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," 6: 512. In his letter to Mr. John Mason, Wesley writes of the relationship between prevenient grace and the "natural" person: "One of Mr. Fletcher's Checks considers at large the Calvinistic supposition, 'that a natural man is as dead as a stone'; and shows the utter falseness and absurdity of it; seeing no man living is without some preventing grace; and every degree of grace is a degree of life" ("Letters to Mr. John Mason," Nov. 21, 1776, 12: 453).

13 I have used the notion that God is Spirit (analogous to the human soul or mind) as a crucial element for an adequate theodicy. See my essay "A Process Wesleyan Theodicy" in a forthcoming book *Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love: Wesleyan and Process Theologies in Dialogue* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, forthcoming).

14 Both John B. Cobb, Jr., (*Grace and Responsibility: A Wesleyan Theology for Today* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1995], 75) and H. Ray Dunning (*Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* [Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1988], 163) join me in rejecting Wesley's spiritual senses hypothesis.

15 Process thought in general, and Griffin's constructive postmodernism in particular, can agree with the Wesleyan notion that God is the initiator of relationship through prevenient grace (See John B. Cobb, Jr., *Grace and Responsibility*, ch. 2). In process terms, this refers to God's activity of providing an initial aim (comprised of various possibilities which can be instantiated) to each actuality prior to each moment of that actuality's experience. Process thought differs from Pelagianism in that it affirms that God's graceful action to establish a richer relationship always occurs prior to a creature's action, thereby making the action of creatures a response to God. It differs from the thought of most in the Reformed tradition, however, in insisting that this response is uncoerced, i.e., resistible.

16 Regarding Wesley's notion of "spiritual senses," John Cobb argues that "few today will find it convincing. It affirms a radical difference between the bases of natural and of spiritual knowledge that does not fit our experience. We can hardly avoid being skeptical of the existence of this second set of senses" (*Grace and Responsibility*, 72).

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Appendix

Modernism (in general)	Ultramodernism(in general)	Griffin's Postmodernism
God: Supernaturalistic or Deistic	**God:** None, Cipher, Unknown. De-onto-theology	**God:** Naturalistic Theism, De-"classic onto"-theology
God: Essentially Independent	**Epistemology:** Either solipsistic, because knowledge comes through sense perception, or confined to language game rules.	**God:** Essentially related
Epistemology: Limited to knowledge gained from 5 senses	**Nature:** Mechanism/Materialism	**Epistemology:** Knowledge gained through sensory and non-sensory experience.
Nature: Materialism: Actualities are vacuous, devoid of experience	**Self:** No self or Solipsistic	**Nature:** Panexperientialism
Self: Individualistic	**Anti-centric**	**Intrinsic value** of nonhumans
Anthropocentric	**Anti-totalitarian**	**Self:** Individual-in-Community
Patriarchal	**Purposeless/Determinism**	**Aesthetic-centric, Common Good**
Determinism	**Values:** Ultimately relative to the individual or community	**Purposive organicism/ Limited freedom**
Values: Consumer-driven Rational or Revelational Foundationalism	Extreme Anti-foundationalism, self or community constructs meaning	**Values:** Derived from God and actualized in various actualities
Truth: one-to-one correspondence	**Truth:** Ultimately perspectival	**Hardcore** Commonsense Notions are practiced universally, even if denied verbally.
Uniformity	**No correspondence, difference**	**Truth:** God fully knows the satisfaction of all actualities
Utopian: Progress inevitable	**Pessimism:** Ultimate irony	**Unity-in-difference**
Mind-Body: Ontological dualism	**Mind-Body:** Materialistic Monism	**Realism:** Pro or regress possible
Religious truth guaranteed by supernatural authority.	**Religious truth** denied insofar as it is based upon Divine Reality. If affirmed, most often based on claims of one's community.	**Mind-Body: Mind** ontologically same as body but numerically distinct
		Religious truth obtained naturally because God is essentially related
(Constructed by Thomas Jay Oord)		

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The New Renaissance and Postmodern Reformation

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If there is one lesson from history it is that history has no lessons. The past is no help in trying to predict the future. Nevertheless, an understanding of the past can help us to understand the present and by so doing help us face up to our future. It is through such understanding that our hopes can be achieved. We should look forward, not with misty eyes to a golden dawn, but clear eyed from where we are. At first glance, there may not seem to be much cause for hope. We live in extraordinary times. The world around us seems chaotic and contradictory: secularisation and religious fundamentalism, technological fantasies and poverty-stricken realities, globalisation and fragmentation into conflicting tribal loyalties. However, in looking into the past we can find similar periods of incoherence and instability, and one period in particular is noted not only for its sense of disruption and dislocation but also for its excitement and creativity. If we can look at our own times in the same way that we look back to The Renaissance, perhaps then we might feel more hopeful about our future. What I propose is to draw out the parallels between then and now, to see if we are justified in seeing ourselves as part of a "New Renaissance". If the account that follows at times seems unsettling, then we must accept that radical change whether it be 'old' or 'new' is indeed an uncomfortable process to experience. However, such realism should not make us any the less hopeful. We do indeed live in extraordinary times, but if we see ourselves as part of a cultural transformation equal to one of the greatest flourishings of endeavour and creativity in the history of civilisation, then perhaps that should be as much cause for hope as concern.

Renaissance and Reformation

There is no period in history which is autonomous and self-contained. We will always be able to search for origins and assess outcomes, pick out precursors and trace influences. Nevertheless, it is part of the historian's craft to arrange what might otherwise be an incomprehensible flow of complex interactions into suitably sized chunks. One such chunk which finds favour with most historians is "The Renaissance",

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though that might well be the limit of historiographical consensus. The nature and timing of the Renaissance are much disputed, as indeed is its singularity, that is, whether we can talk of "the" Renaissance since there are other periods which witnessed a similar flourishing of ideas and activities. However, I believe the term as commonly understood does have some merit in helping to mark a major transformation in European (and ultimately world) history.

There are, as I said, no self-contained periods in history and so one should not expect clear cut start and finish points. However, there are two convenient moments which suggest themselves: the printing of the Gutenberg Bible in 1454 and the publication of Copernicus's De Revolutionibus in 1543. This may be a little late for some tastes (missing out as it does the work of men such as Brunelleschi and Alberti) or a little too early for others (leaving out the most important work of the scientific revolution), but I believe that what it might lack in detail is made up for in convenience, and if we accept the permeability of historical periods we should feel no qualms about making reference to earlier or later events and people. Dates and periods should be our guides not our gaolers.

The importance of the period seems quite clear. The disintegration of mediaeval society brought a major dislocation and readjustment in the European worldview in social relations, international relations, politics, religion, economics, demography, intellectual life, the arts. According to T.K. Rabb "...the ubiquity and simultaneity of these radical departures stamp the decades around 1500 as a fundamental dividing point in European history" (Rabb 1975: 36). The sixteenth century, says Rabb, was a time of anguish, disarray and bewilderment with a sense of disorder and incoherence, mixed with doubt, misgivings and insecurity such that "no succession of events so disruptive of safe and comfortable suppositions had occurred for hundreds of years"(Rabb 1975: 37). The effects of such radical change dominated Europe for the next century and a half, that is, until the crisis and resolution of the middle third of the seventeenth century.

What distinguished this from earlier periods was the extent and rapidity of these radical changes. In large part this may be ascribed to the advent of printing. There were a number of obvious advantages with the new technology. It reduced the time and cost of reproduction, it increased the number of copies and removed the possibility of copying errors though, of course, reproducing any errors in the 'original' text. Indeed, it was often efforts to establish what was the "correct" text that gave rise to so many theological and political discussions, and because of the new technology such discussions could now take on more than mere local significance. For example, previous challenges to church authority such as those of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus had to rely on oral or handwritten dissemination and their influence was largely confined to their own regions. Luther, however, had the power of the printed word, and the impact of his challenge shook the whole continent. More of this later.

It is a much overused term, but it would not be too much say that the coming of print really did bring about a cultural revolution. It could even be argued, says Peter Rietbergen, that "it was the beginning of the most important cultural revolution which western man had experienced in many thousands of years" (Rietbergen 1998: 200). Religious publications dominated the new trade, but hardly any aspect of life was left untouched with manuals and guides being published covering almost everything from dress conventions and etiquette to architecture and horsemanship. The result was increasing uniformity in tastes if not in culture. Similarly, in the hands of the state, print was instrumental in bringing greater centralisation and standardisation. For example, helping to establish a single national language in France. In the hands of the Church, printing became an effective medium for spreading dogma and doctrine, though which doctrine would naturally depend on which church. The Catholic Church seized on the power of the press in its campaign against the spread of Turkish power into the Balkans, while on the other side of the confessional divide, Luther declared that "print is the best of God's inventions". Within three years of nailing his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg 300,000 copies of his works were on the market.

Like a genie from a bottle the power of print was not something that could be contained or controlled (at least not easily) and it showed no favouritism or loyalty in just who should wield that power. True, it gave more power to those who already had the power to control it - the Church and State - but it also gave voice to those who would otherwise be unheard. For all the attempts at censorship, and there were many, subversive and clandestine presses would still operate. For every broadsheet in support of the Pope there would be a scatalogical print attacking him. The new technology was more than a technology of information, communication and reproduction, it brought a new democratisation of word and image. Indeed, among some circles it generated a new fear, a new spectre - the educated commoner. Undermining the monopoly of knowledge by spawning its own new and diverse authority, might not the printed word undermine other bases for authority? Might not the common people, says Rietbergen voicing the concerns of contemporary intellectuals and politicians, "given the chance to acquire new ideas and test them against their own opinions of their present position, come to voice their criticism?" (Rietbergen 1998: 224).

Such democracy was not a renaissance ideal. It was not until the nineteenth century that "democracy" would be seen as anything other than rule by the "mob". Nevertheless, the cultivation of individuality was something that the educated elite did strive for. As Burckhardt pointed out long ago, to be a "singular man" or a "unique man" were both the highest levels of individual development and the highest levels of praise (1860). We see this humanist concern for the individual equally in the autobiographical efforts of Cellini as well as the naked self-interest in Machiavelli's Prince. The ideal was "l'uomo universale", what we nowadays would simply call a "renaissance

man" and, more generally, the studium humanitatis generated a deepening interest in what it was that made man more civilised. Braudel has written:

> The intellectual ferment of the Renaissance, and that of the reformation in so far as it raised the principle of individual interpretation of revealed truth, laid the bases for freedom of conscience. Renaissance humanism preached respect for the greatness of the human being as an individual: it stressed personal intelligence and ability (1993: 325).

Indeed, our modern conception of what it means to be an individual can be seen as stemming from this period in the complex interrelationship of renaissance, reformation and the birth of capitalism. The mediaeval idea of an individual was simply as a particular member of a group, a particular instance of a generality. The modern idea, as Raymond Williams has written, brought a change in emphasis which "enabled us to think of 'the individual' as a kind of absolute without immediate reference.....to the group of which he is a member"(Williams 1961: 90-1).

Renaissance humanism may have fostered individualism, but it also reconciled, or at least attempted to reconcile, this new individualism with an older, largely mediaeval, sense of order. Thus, the great challenge of the Reformation was not a secular individualism but rather the challenge of individual faith. Reviving the Pauline metaphor of the Christian soldier armed with Bible and prayer, it was the wish of Erasmus that "the humblest woman might read the Gospels and the Epistles of St Paul...that the countryman might sing some parts of them at the plough, the weaver chant them at his loom, the traveller lighten with them the weariness of his journey"(Erasmus quoted in Mandrou 1978:76). For Erasmus (as in Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ") true veneration of saints was best achieved through imitation, through inner spiritual development, not outward ritualistic show. This emphasis on the subjective religious experience was a common feature of the Devotio Moderna and highlights the personal quality of the new religious ideas. As Williams has pointed out: "A change in the conception of relationships - crudely from man-church-God to man-God - is recorded by the new sense of what it is to be 'an individual'."(Williams 1961: 91-2). Truth, and in particular spiritual truth, was to be found in one's own reading of the Bible, not in papal proclamations. Likewise, the priesthood of all believers meant that the individual now had direct access to God unmediated by pope or priest.

For Luther, who abhorred the economic individualism of the age, the "Church" should be recognised as consisting of Clergy and Laity. "It is pure invention", Luther wrote, "that pope, bishop, priests and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans and farmers are called the temporal estate.....all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office." In this "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" of 1520 he makes it quite clear that "baptism, gospel and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people". The pope or bishop may anoint, ordain, con-

secrate "but he can never make a man into a Christian or into a spiritual man by so doing"(Luther reproduced as document 11 in Johnston, Andrew 1991). Luther's justification by faith was more than an attack on the power of the Catholic Church, it was a rejection of its spiritual authority.

> I wish to be free. I do not wish to become the slave of any authority, whether that of a council or of any other power, or of the University or the Pope. For I shall proclaim with confidence what I believe to be true, whether it is advanced by a Catholic or a heretic, whether it is authorised or not by I care not what authority"(Luther quoted in Bronowski and Mazlish, 1960: 110).

Luther's early anarchic individualism. however, did not generate the freedom and tolerance that one might hope for and expect. "In breaking down papal authority," says Chadwick, "the Reformation seemed to have left the authority of the Christian ministry vague and uncertain"(Chadwick 1972: 83). The answer for Luther (and more particularly for Calvin) was the organisation of a new and equally authoritarian church - or in Calvin's case an organised church even stricter than the one it replaced(Bronowski and Mazlish 1960: 114-5).

The burning of Michael Servetus in Geneva is a useful corrective to any simplistic elision of Protestantism with freedom, tolerance and progress - the "new" and therefore (to modern sensibilities) the "good". The same can be said if we examine any supposed parallel between new ideas in religion and new ideas in science. The relationship between Protestantism and the rise of modern science has long been debated, but John Brooke rightly suggests caution in any attempt to link the two. In his insightful historical analysis of science and religion he draws out the complexities of the relationship and avoids neat conclusions. "It must not be supposed," he writes, "that the desire of Protestants to dissociate themselves from Catholic Christianity automatically created a disposition in favour of free thought"(Brooke 1991: 97). The complexities are nowhere more evident than in the reception of the Copernican cosmology. Doctrinal differences did not readily translate into philosophical differences about whether or not to accept the new astronomy. Catholics like Diego de Zuniga readily adopted the Copernican system as did Protestants like Kepler. The Catholic Church may have decreed that the new system was "erroneous in faith", but equally many Protestants objected that it was an absurd rejection of common sense.

However, even without the historical convenience of being able to set the new against the old for both science and religion, we can nevertheless see in the Copernican system such a fundamental revisioning of the world that it has understandably come to stand as the archetypal case of a revolution in thought. Not only was it a landmark in the bifurcation of science from common sense, but it also marked a major shift in our understanding of ourselves and our place in nature. In Margaret Wertheim's opinion, it quite literally offered a new perspective on the world. The western mind, she says, had been trained by the development of perspective painting to

think of space in Euclidean terms. The application of geometry had enabled artisists to create the illusion of seeing in three dimensions, portraying characters in physical rather than metaphysical spaces. The task facing Copernicus, like that facing his artistic contemporaries, was to find the best place from which to view the harmony and symmetry of the cosmos. In viewing the cosmos from the sun we have, says Wertheim, "the ultimate perspective picture of the world" (Wertheim 1997: 61).

The sense of intellectual vertigo experienced by many of those coming to terms with the Copernican system was not just a result of considering the Earth's three-fold motion. I suspect it may have been more because of this displacement in point of view. It was in every respect a dislocation, a disturbing shift of locus. The pre-Copernican universe, says Koestler, was "reassuringly orderly". It was contained and centralised with a natural 'up' and 'down'. In contrast, the Copernican system opened up the possibility of infinite space and a plurality of worlds, "decentralised, perplexing, anarchic". In the Copernican cosmos, "there are no longer any absolute directions in space. The universe has lost its core. It no longer has a heart, but a thousand hearts"(Koestler 1968: 221).

It was an unsettling new world that Copernicus had opened up. In mapping the heavens it gave us a new way of understanding ourselves. It demanded that we reconsider, in a very literal sense, our place in the scheme of things. That place, however, was in a world without absolutes, without fixed points of reference, forever in motion. It was, as we have seen, a world that his contemporaries would view with bewilderment. The pluralism and relativism invited by the Copernican system would have done little to have increased feelings of security amidst the widespread sense of disorder, incoherence and instability that was concommitant with the disintegration of a mediaeval social order and the emergence of a more 'modern' one. However, the experience of disruption and dislocation, the challenges to authority, the pluralism, relativism and the loss of absolutes, I would argue, are not unlike what we might find in our own 'post-modern' times .

The New Renaissance and the Postmodern Reformation

In turning to our own times what parallels can we find with the radical transformations of 1450-1550? Are we in the midst of similar transformations? What are the modern (or rather post-modern) counterparts to the development of print technology, the Copernican revolution, Renaissance individualism, and, perhaps most importantly, the Reformation? Indeed, what are our own times and when did they begin?

The nailing of a document to a Wittenberg church door provides us with a powerful, even poetic, historical punctum. The sound of hammer on nail marked a precise moment in time and space for the start of a new era - even if it may not have been recognised at the time, and even if, as many historians believe, the story is apocryphal. Our own times have no such convenient starting point, neither poetic nor prosaic,

yet the final years of the last century do seem to constitute the start of a new period in history. In his history of the 'short twentieth century' Eric Hobsbawm says that the end of the century was qualitatively different to the start of the century in three respects. Firstly, it was no longer Eurocentric, although the rise of the USA would still mean the dominance of 'western civilisation'. Secondly, globalisation had transformed economic and social life. Thirdly, traditional patterns of social relationships were disintegrating, principally through the pressures of a-social individualism. (Each of these poses a challenge for us to have 'hope' in the future and which I will touch on towards the end of this paper). Hobsbawm divides the years since 1914 into three periods: an Age of Catastrophe from 1914 to the aftermath of the Second World War; a Golden Age of extraordinary economic growth through to the early 1970s; and finally "The Crisis Decades". For Hobsbawm, then, it is the fin de siecle gloom of the 1980s and 1990s that is the mark of our own times (See 1994).

For many, including Hobsbawm, our current period of insecurity dates from the oil crisis that followed the Yom Kippur war of 1973. The world economy was already changing before that (as early as 1967 J.K. Galbraith was writing of The New Industrial State), but it does give us a convenient marker post. In the twenty years that followed, the world "lost its bearings and slid into instability and crisis"(Hobsbawm 1994: 403). It was not simply that much of the world's economy was in recession (which was true), nor that the inequalities between rich and poor had grown (which was also true), but that the operations of the capitalist economy had become uncontrollable. (Hobsbawm 1994: 404-8) Traditional interventions into national economies seemed impotent when faced by the overwhelming power of a global market, and some ideological positions deemed that interference with market forces was in any case undesirable. Commentators began to talk of "post-industrial society", of "post-Fordism," and of "post-modernism".

Which brings us to the first of our contemporary counterparts to the Renaissance world - the internet. Now a key feature of both the global economy and of postmodernism, the internet began as a project funded by the U.S. Department of Defence. Faced with the problem of protecting communication structures in the event of nuclear war, planners at the Rand Corporation came up with the solution of a decentralised network. In the mid 1980s protocols were established that enabled communication between different networks (ie truly an inter-net) and different "domains" were created to help bring order into what was becoming a sprawling anarchic system. Non-military possibilities proliferated ("military" was only one of seven domains) and the net rapidly developed as an instrument of social communication and not just as a medium for research and business messages. The real explosion in growth, however, came with the widespread use of personal computers at the same time as the creation of the World Wide Web in 1990. What began as a military problem involving a handful of scientists had now become a brave

new world of cyberspace open to anyone.with a PC and a telephone link (see Watson 2000).

Of course, not everyone has such access (probably less than 1% of the world's population) but the new technology does herald a cultural revolution in much the same way as the advent of print technology did in the fifteenth century (which also had limited access). As with print, it has accelerated the pace of change. The interconnection of financial markets now means that vast sums of money (often more than the wealth of a small nation) can be shifted anywhere in the world instantaneously at the touch of a button. At the same time, disparate protest groups can organise and co-ordinate themselves with much greater ease and speed than before, and through e-mail what once might have been a single letter of complaint to a large corporation can now be copied and forwarded to millions of activists across the globe. The result is both greater empowerment and greater instability. From the start the internet had built within it the principle of decentralisation, and power would now be devolved to anyone who possessed the technology. As with print, it helps democratise the production and reading of texts and the issue of control becomes paramount as do struggles to resist that control. For some, cyberspace might seem to be a wild, lawless world, a hotbed for anarchy and crime, for perversion and subversion, but this same quality of wildness can be embraced with a frontier spirit. In this way, the net can be seen as a liberatory technology, giving voice to those who would otherwise be silenced under oppressive regimes in a place that is untamed and free.

One freedom that the net is said to give us is the freedom to be whoever we want to be. In cyberspace we can choose how the world sees us. We can cast aside our fleshly selves ("meat" to use the language of cyberpunk) to construct a virtual persona made entirely from the non-physical realm of information. In cyberspace our identities are determined by our desires, not by our biology. However, the plasticity of identities was only one part of a more general assault on the "self" at the end of the twentieth century, the most fundamental attack coming from the development of genetics. There had long been a debate about the relative importance of nature versus nurture, but genetics seemed to open the prospect of finding the root cause of nature's control over our lives. The rise of neo-Darwinism in the last quarter of the century ensured that genetic determinism would increasingly be the orthodox position (at least, in terms of the public face of biology). From the 1970s onwards with books such as E.O. Wilson's Sociobiology (1975) and Richard Dawkins's The Selfish Gene (1976), our bodies and behaviours were explained in terms of our genes. At first our understanding was assembled piece by piece with individual genes being identified as responsible for particular characteristics or conditions, but in June 2000 it was announced that scientists had produced the first draft of the entire human genetic code. This mapping of the human genome is the second of our Renaissance parallels. As Copernicus's new map of the heavens reconfigured our place in

the world, so too does the map of the human genome. In both cases our natural tendency to anthropocentrism is shaken to the core. The heliocentric dislocation of ourselves from the stable centre to one of many spinning orbits has its counterpart in the genocentric dislocation from coherent selves to multitudinous "selfish" genes. Each forces us to reconsider who (and consequently, what) we are. Looking outward to the heavens, Copernicus had rearranged our place in nature. Looking inward to our biology, the map of the human genome transforms our understanding not so much of our place in nature but of nature's place in us.

In some respects, however, the idea of self was very much still alive. The 1970s were, to use the title of Tom Wolfe's book, The Me Decade. For Wolfe, the counter-culture concerns for individual personal and spiritual development had become an unwholesome obsession with self. Relationships with others were now simply opportunities for expressing one's self. The appeal of fashionable therapies was simple. Says Wolfe, "It is summed up in the notion: 'Let's talk about Me '." (Watson 2000: 599). The late-twentieth century counterpart to Renaissance individualism, therefore, was a new "culture of narcissism" which, according to Christopher Lasch, had come to dominate the whole development of American (and by implication, Western) society (Watson 2000: 598). In the free-market ideologies of Thatcherism and Reaganomics such rampant (and degenerate) individualism would also find expression in economic policies and attitudes. Cocooned in their own private spaces, self-interested and selfish, the Me generation lived in a world where, if we were to believe Margaret Thatcher, 'there is no such thing as society'.

Thus, we can draw parallels between the radical transformation of the decades around 1500 and a similar transformation in our own times. We can see how print, heliocentricism, and individualism have their latterday counterparts in the internet, genocentricism and a narcissistic culture. Such comparisons may be of interest, and could possibly even be significant, but there is one final parallel that I believe truly is important - the challenges posed by the Reformation and those posed by postmodernity. It has become a commonplace to see science as a new form of religion with its own rites and rituals, its own initiation practices, its own esoteric language, its own priesthood and martyrs. However, its authority now faces the same challenges as those faced by the Catholic church at the time of the Reformation. The fragmentation of belief in the sixteenth century is now being replayed as a fragmentation of knowledge in the twenty-first.

Postmodernity is as unsettling as the struggle for reform must have been 450 years ago. Both undermine the certainties which people rely on. Both dissolve boundaries which had hitherto seemed natural. Both seek solutions that are local, not universal. If there is one major difference it is that postmodernity is intentionally unsettling. It actively searches for and celebrates that which is ambivalent and unstable. Indeed, the very definition of postmodernity is undecided and contested, an example of

the very fluidity which it is trying to describe. Like a mythical beast it may not be easy to depict, but we will recognise it when we see it. For Lyotard, its defining feature is an "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). The postmodern condition means it is no longer possible to legitimate knowledge through an appeal to a grand narrative or metadiscourse such as the dialectics of spirit, the emancipation of the working class, or the Enlightenment belief in Progress. Its anti-universalism is a war on all totalising discourses (eg. Marxism or Imperialism) and its anti-foundationalism a constant challenge to institutional authority. Indeed, there are no authorities. There is no final court of appeal to which we can refer (or defer). Instead, according to Lyotard, we are to play "games" of move and counter move trying to increase the space for our own "little narratives". The sense of semantic weightlessness is even more evident in the work of Derrida. All words, says Derrida, should be placed sous erature, "under erasure", as inadequate but necessary. Signs have different meanings in different contexts and no text or sign is deemed to be final, each and all only ever refer to others. There is no privileged sign, no transcendent signifier, no ultimate logos from which we can take our bearings. No truth is unmediated. Nothing is stable, everything is dispersed and broken up. Even Derrida's writing style seems to demonstrate that there are no fixed positions, no ground beneath our feet (see for example Derrida 1974).

Popular reaction against science predates Lyotard's "Report on Knowledge". Hiroshima and Nagasaki had already marked a loss of innocence, Rachel Carson's Silent Spring had already stirred environmental consciences, and attacks on the one-dimensional thinking of reductionist science were already part of a youth counter-culture. The challenge from postmodernism, however, is more fundamental because it challenges not only what science does, but what science is. The cultural position of science is undermined not just because of any abuse of science, but because it can no longer claim to have privileged access to nature. What it tells us is no longer a single, unmediated, transcendental truth, but a historically contingent collection of stories in an anthology of little narratives. Its epistemological authority is shattered into a thousand pieces, a thousand local knowledges. As the Reformation dissolved boundaries between sacred and secular sites, between clergy and laity, so too the "Postmodern Reformation" dissolves the boundaries between lay and expert thinking. Luther's priesthood of all believers has become a priesthood of all knowers. We are all experts now, all experts in our own experiences of the world.

Not surprisingly, the reaction from some scientists has been fierce (one might even say Jesuitical), finally breaking out into the 'science wars' of the late 1990s (Sardar 2000). However, not all scientists have been so hostile and 'postmodern science' has developed alongside postmodern critiques of science. We can see postmodernism in science as "a break from the mechanistic, objectivistic and deterministic worldview of modern science ... giving way in the twentieth century to a new

paradigm based on the principles of indeterminacy, chaos and evolution" (Best, *Science as Culture*, 189). In its rejection of foundationalism we can see it take a more holistic approach, an approach concerned with networks, webs and interconnections. It marks a shift in thinking - from parts to wholes, from objects to relationships (Capra 1997). It accepts that all we can have is "approximate knowledge", and in Lyotard's formulation ("paralogy") it searches for instabilities and paradoxes, for dissent not consensus.

Dissent, instability, no foundations beneath us, no transcendental truth above - are there any reasons for hope in anything of what I have presented here so far? The historical record does not look good. The earlier of our two periods was followed by a hundred years of religious wars. In drawing out the similarities between then and now, are we to expect our current unsettling period to be followed by similar conflicts, an epistemological divide as savage and cruel as the earlier confessional divide? Moreover, what kind of hope can we expect to have? A fatalistic hope that surrenders itself to the power of Progress (Wells 1933 & 1967: 43). Optimistic hope that is little more than wishful thinking? Or simply the hope that is born of despair since it is all we have? "The miserable have no other medicine," Shakespeare said, "but only hope" (Shakespeare *Measure for Measure* act 3, scene 1). Our earlier period is marked by a dualism of hope and despair, of weakness and courage. Catholcs might be optimistic about our capabilities and our exercise of free will, but Protestants would be more likely to see ouselves as innately depraved and helpless. Erasmus might write Concerning the Freedom of the Will, but Luther could counter with The Bondage of the Will. A personal relationship with God and justification through good works might raise one's hopes, but the doctrine of predestination would as surely knock them down.

We should, perhaps, expect no more from our own troubled times, but I believe that the Postmodern Reformation gives us real reasons for hope (in a positive sense). If we can see in the Renaissance the origins of modernity, perhaps we should look to our own "New Renaissance" to see a world of postmodernity. In this way postmodernity should be understood not by a referencing back to what it opposes or replaces, but a referencing forward to what it brings forth. It may be that our own Reformation is best seen not as a reaction to what has been, but rather as early symptoms of what is to come, not post- but pre- , not post-modern but pre-future. At first sight that future might seem unsettling, but if we accept its challenge it could equally be liberating and empowering. The focus on local knowledges, for example, would emphasise the importance of local farming knowledges as against the technological fixes proposed by corporate agribusinesses, finding sustainability in biodiversity not in genetically engineered monocultures (Shiva 2000). Likewise, a postfoundational model of rationality offers the possibility of moving beyond stereotyped ways of relating theology and science, a postfoundationalist Christian theology allowing us "to explore freely and criti-

cally the experiential and interpretative roots of all our beliefs"(van Huyssteen and Wentzel 1998: 46).

Accepting the postmodern challenge means accepting diversity, pluralism, uncertainty, the absence of foundations, the loss of absolutes and the undermining of authority. The postmodern world is a world of fluidity and motion, and our best hope lies in our ability to swim. The spontaneous experiential qualities required for postmodern swimming are, to my mind, not unlike those to be found in Taoism. Indeed, as Sinologist Angus Graham has noted, there are striking similarities between Derrida's attempts to undermine binary oppositions and the attempts of Lao-tzu to break the habits of thinking in dichotomies. There is a holistic interconnectedness in the semantic world of postmodernity - "none of the elements is absolutely definable, everything is caught up and traced through by everything else"(Sarup 1988: 36) - so perhaps it is not surprising that "We see from Derrida as from Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu that language which deconstructs oppositions has to take the direction of poetry"(Graham 1992: 113). For Derrida, thinking and writing are bound up with traditional concepts of linear time, and linerality suppresses "pluri-dimensional symbolic thought". The history of Western philosophy, he says, is a history of linear thought, and in calling for non-linear ways of thinking and writing, not only does he present a challenge to Western philosophy but in doing so what he produces (perhaps unwittingly) has resonances with certain aspects of Eastern philosophy. It may be no coincidence that Heidegger's similar attempt to deconstruct (even destroy) Western metaphysics is likely to have benefitted from unacknowledged appropriations of the Taoist and Buddhist classics (May 1996).

In his History of Civilisations Fernand Braudel writes that, "America lives in advance of modernity. It is still the country of the future - and that, at least, is a sign of hope and a proof of vitality" (1993: 505). What then is the future and does it have to be American? The threat of globalisation is often perceived as a cultural threat, the threat of creeping Americanisation at the expense of local and indigenous cultures, the Disneyfication of experience, and the tyranny of the logo whether it is MacDonald's, Coca-cola, or Nike. The promise of postmodernity, however, is to fragment the global stasis of corporate capitalism into the dynamic diversity of local possibilities. Potentially the greatest cultural export from America is its confidence, and in a postmodern world that should mean the confidence not to be American (at least for most people on the planet). The irony is that the success of science, capitalism and Western culture is an indication of our own failure - our own failure of nerve (even of those living in the west). In its rejection of grand narratives and ultimate authorities, postmodernity reaffirms that science, capitalism and culture are all things that we do, and not things that should be appealed to. We are the world that we make, and having the confidence to accept the postmodern challenge we might indeed hope to enjoy the fruits of a "new renaissance" in a global celebration of our differences.

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Review Article

The Markan Jesus

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The Identity of Jesus in Mark: An Essay on Narrative Christology (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 49) by Jacob Chacko Naluparayil, Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2000 (pp. xviii + 636).

This is a revised version of the doctoral dissertation defended by Dr. Jacob Chacko Naluparayil in 1999 at Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Jerusalem. The book, written in clear, articulate and almost flawless English, engages the reader to follow the progression of thought with ease, to understand the logic of the argumentation with clarity and to evaluate various views on different points and subtle nuances mentioned therein with proper discretion and critical acumen. The concluding summaries provided at the end of each section and of every chapter will enable the reader to recapitulate the often intricate and at times extensive argumentation in proper perspective.

A perusal of the brief introduction (pp. xvii-xviii), conclusion of part one (pp. 285-87) as well as of part two (pp. 550-52) and the general conclusion (pp. 553-5 will 6) undoubtedly ably equip one to comprehend the main content of the work and its primary thrust.

This scholarly study, neatly divided into two almost equal parts (pp. 1-287 and 289-552) and each part containing three chapters, is the end-product of a systematically planned and meticulously executed research containing overabundant (sometimes too lengthy) footnotes and an extensive bibliography (pp. 557-623) with a well-documented index of authors (pp. 625-36).

The study is an earnenst attempt to answer a very pertinent and extremely significant question in Mk: Who is Jesus according to the Marcan Gospel? Naluparayil (= N.) commences his response in the first chapter by offering a historical survey of the key opinions on this question spanning over a period of one century: (1) the Messianic Secret as the clue to understand the Christological orientation of Mk proposed by W. Wrede in 1901 and its sequel in the following decades; (2) the Divine Man Christology of divergent strands in the middle of the 20th century; (3) The Son of God Christology and the Son of Man Christology beginning from the 70s; and (4) 'the Polar Christology' and 'the Integrative Christology' attempting to negotiate a balance between the Son of God Christology and the Son of Man Christology in the subsequent years. Of these four modes and shades of views, N. opines, the Son of God Christology and the Son of Man Christology are most prominent among the Marcan scholars at present.

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But why do committed, sincere scholars employing scientific methods propose such divergent, conflicting and even contrary hypotheses on the Marcan understanding of Jesus? It is, N. affirms, "due to two fundamental factors: (1) dissimilar use of the text by its separation between the traditional sources and the redactional elements, (2) defect of the tools, viz., of methodologies being applied for the purpose" (p. 3).

To overcome these two defects and to ease a way out of the impasse in which biblical scholars on Marcan Christology find themselves N. undertakes the present research. He holds that Mk did make use of sources, namely, Q and Pre-Marcan Collections (the subject of inquiry in chs. two and three) and he is convinced that the proper methodology for such a research would not be redaction criticism, the last phase of historical criticism (a diachronic method) but narrative criticism, the most popular synchronic method. Of various theorists of narrative criticism he opts basically for the views of S. Chatman (his *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, London: Cornell University, 1978) and he also integrates some of the insights of B. Uspensky's *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973. He applies this method to Mk in the second part of his work (chs. four, five and six).

In the second chapter N. investigates the identity of Jesus in 12 'overlap' passages of Mk and Q. This investigation leads him to the following conclusions. (1) Mk shares with Q "the two characteristics of the Christological designation: the Son of Man as standing for the divine person present in Jesus and other Christological titles playing a qualifying role to the divine person" (p. 162). (2) Mk "makes a unique contribution by bringing into the central stage 'the Son of Man's destiny of suffering, death, and resurrection' and using it to interpret and to give content to all other important Christological titles;" (p. 163) and, secondly, Mk also afirms "that the Son of Man is the Messiah" (ibid.).

In the third chapter the attention is focused on the identity of Jesus in Mk and in the Pre-Marcan Collections. N. locates eight pre-Marcan units in Mk, spread out from the beginning to the end of the Gospel. This inquiry enables him to affirm the following. (1) 'The Son of Man' functions in the pre-Marcan collections as "a unique and exclusive self-designatin for Jesus and it refers to the three dimensions of his personality: his divine prerogative on earth (2:28), his suffering and death (14:21, 41, 62), and his eschatological role as the Judge and Saviour (13:26; 14:62)" (p. 278). (2) "The prominent Christological titles that are categorically accepted by Jesus and used by others include 'the Christ' and 'the Son of God' and they function as qualifying titles to the divine person designated by the name 'the Son of Man'" (p. 281). (3) And as far as Mk is concerned, he not only preserves faithfully but also reinfornces deliberately the traditional pattern of the pre-Marcan collections "with regard to the use of both the self-designation 'the Son of Man' and the Christological titles 'the Christ' and 'the Son of God'. This results in the virtual subordination of all other Christologies to the Son of Man Christology" (p. 282).

Having established the significance and function of 'the Son of Man' in Q as well as in the pre-Marcan collections and having pointed out its specific characteristics in Mk, N. in the second part of his study applies the three typical features of narrative criticism, namely, plot (ch. four), point of view (ch. five), and characterization (ch. six) to Mk.

The Marcan plot is the 'good news' (*euangelion*) and it is explicitly articulated by the narrator at the very outset of his work: "the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk 1:1). Following the paradigm of narrative criticism, this plot is developed in four successive steps: 'introduction' (1:14-8:26), 'movement' (8:27-10:52), 'climax' (11:1-15:41) and 'denouement' (15:42-16:8). Mk 1:2-13, according to N., "introduces and designates the content of 1:14-16:8" (p. 303).

The Marcan plot is developed in the following manner. The 'introduction' (1:14-8:26) deals with the reign of God ushered in through the person and ministry of Jesus the Son of Man. The second step, the 'movement' (8:27-10:52), focuses on the divine destiny of suffering and death — 'the way' of the Son of Man and discipleship. In the third step, the 'climax' (11:1-15:41), the Son claiming his heritage and identity is brought to death. And, finally, in the 'denouement' (15:42-16:8) the ultimate failure of discipleship and the hope of the resurrected Jesus. Thus, according to N., each part focuses on the Son of Man. Studying each stage of the plot from three perspectives, namely, setting, principal event, and the narrative scope, N. points out how the plot is systematically developed and how it is "structured with the prospect of transforming the reader [= the implied reader] into an ideal disciple and the mesenger of the good news" (p. 429).

In the fifth chapter N. studies Mk from the angle of point of view. In his study he uses it in the ideological sense to mean the evaluative viewpoint. Evaluative viewpoint is communicated through three media, namely, speech acts, internal analysis and speech characteristics. These three media are applied to the five characters of Mk: (1) the narrator, (2) God, (3) Jesus, (4) the disciples of Jesus, and (5) the Jewish leaders. By analyzing these five characters from two planes, that is, the identity plane (= Who is Jesus?) and the ideological plane (= the evaluative viewpoint), N. affirms that "the correct viewpoint of the narrative is designated as 'thinking the things of God' which is epitomized in the person of Jesus the Son of Man" (p. 515). God, Jesus, and the narrator are the proponents of this viewpoint. In contrast, the viewpoint of the disciples and of the Jewish leaders is 'thinking the things of humans'. The viewpoint of the implied reader converges with that of Jesus. He is solicited to practise Jesus' viewpoint "whose personified form is the Son of Man, that has been implanted in him in the course of reading the narrative, viz., to follow 'the way of the Son of Man'" (p. 517).

In the sixth and final chapter N. affirms that Jesus is the protagonist in Mk. This is established from three perspectives: (1) examining the traits of Jesus from the views of other characters; (2) traits emerging from what Jesus does and says; and (3) focusing on his dominant traits and designations. Based on these threefold converging narrative features N. upholds that "'the Son of Man' operates as the name of the divine person present in Jesus of Nazareth" (p. 554)

The work of N. offers many valuable and significant contributions. In addition to what is already stated in paragraphs 1-3, the following are most noteworthy. (1) The question of the literary and theological structure of Mk has elicited extremely variant and even contrary responses from scholars, ranging from utter silence, systematic and cynical scepticism to constructive proposals for the structure (using mainly redaction criticism). Employing narrative criticism N. has proposed basically the same structure for Mk whereby the value of the Gospel is enhanced. Moreover, this also discloses how narrative criticism at the synchronic level

can supplement redaction criticism at the diachronic level. (2) An enthused and committed reader of Mk experiences 'an inner dialogue and urge' within him/herself to understand Jesus better and to follow him faithfully. This 'inner dialogue and urge' finds theretical support in N.'s work. (3) Many comment that Mk has protrayed a pessimistic, even scandalous portrait of the disciples. The study of N. sheds light on this issue: it is primarily a literary foil so that the implied reader affectively and effectively responds to the viewpoint and value-system of Jesus, the protagonist. (4) 'The Gospel of Mark ends abruptly' is an oft-repeated refrain. The work of N. clarifies that although in 'the narrtive time' the predctions of Jesus in 14:28 and 16:7 do not find fulfilment, they are indeed fulfilled in 'the story time' (cf. 13:9-13).

The main weakness of the work is rooted in its methodology, viz., narrative criticism presupposes totally free literary composition of the literary work as in the case of story, drama, fiction, etc. whereas the Gospels, though literary compositions, are not fully free compositions because they are founded on the Jesus' event and controlled by oral tradition and living faith. Therefore, using the parameters of story or drama in the interpretation of Mk is not fully correct.. This is precisely the reason why the apocryphal gospels wherein there is free rein to one's fertile imagination do not figure among the canonical Gospels. Moreover, by imposing the macro-structure of story or drama on Mk N. seems to have obviated (intentional!) some of the specific features of the Marcan text. For instance, Mk 7:24-8:9 obviously has a Gentile orientation — a perspective not considered in the work. Likewise, the texts on John the Bapstist (1:2-8, 14a; 6:14-29; 9:11-13; 11:27-33) function as a key to unlock the mystery of Jesus' person and the nature of his ministry but this viewpoint does not figure in the book at all. The plot of the narrator is indeed "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk 1:1) which is developed in 1:14-16:8 but its *beginning occurs* in the ministry of John the Baptist (note the syntax of the Greek text in Mk 1:1-4) and so Mk 1:1-13 has a specific meaning and significant function in introducing Jesus, the Messiah, whose person and ministry are narrated in 1:14-16:8.

Another methodological flaw is the claim of Mk's dependency on Q — an extremely conjectural view; and the author's postulate on the nature and function of the pre-Marcan collections is equally tenuous.

N.'s oft-repeated affirmation, "the Son of Man is (stands for) the divine person present in Jesus," is very puzzling. To begin with, there is no common consensus among the NT scholars with regard to the origin, nature and function of 'the son of man'. What is indeed clear is that 'the son of man' occurs invariably in the Gospels and it is found exclusively on the lips of Jesus except four instances in the rest of the NT (Acts 7:56; Heb 2:5; Rev 1:13; 14:14). Even if it is used by Jesus as a self-designation it does not necessarily imply his divinity.

In his work N. tries to answer the question: Who is Jesus according to Mk? This question calls for an answer from the perspective of faith, that is, a theological answer. Such an answer is found in the very title of the Gospel (1:1) — confessed in the two narrative peaks of the Gospel: Jesus is the Christ (8:29) and Jesus is the Son of God (15:39). There is a steady progression in understanding the content and significance of these titles: Christ and Son of God. However, the full disclosure of Jesus' person and mission can occur only in the light of the Resurrection of Jesus (9:9). The narrator invites the reader (the actual reader as well as the implied reader) to understand the person and mission of Jesus, to believe in him (1:15) and to follow him with

authentic commitment and genuine dedication (8:34-38; 10:35-45). The method for such a response from the faith perspective would be a healthy fusion of redaction criticism and narrative criticism.

The work of N. is, on the whole, a good contribution to the understanding of Mk. Persons and institutions engaged in the theological formation of Christian leaders would enhance their knowledge of Mk by reading N.'s book.

Book Review

Dialogue & Liberation: Indian Theology between the Local and the Global By Thomas Kochuthara, New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 2000. Pp.384. Rs.550. ISBN 81-85574-45-6

Thomas Kochuthara, Professor of Systematic Theology at Oriens Theological College, Shillong, offers us a masterly synthesis of Christian theologies that we come across today. A major argument of the book is that the whole spectrum of theologies in the world can be grouped in to three categories, based on the aspect most emphasized in them: theologies of knowledge, justice and worship.

In the first part of the book we have the theologies of knowledge as represented by the transcendental theologies of Lonergan and Rahner, the process theology, the evolutionary perspective of Teilhard de Chardin and the political theologies of Metz and Moltmann. The second part presents theology of justice that has its goal the promotion and establishment of justice. The various shades of liberation theology are described in this section. Notable lapses are the Feminist theologies and the Minjung theology. The third part of the book describes the Eastern Theologies under the umbrella of worship. It contains also a description of the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala, focusing on the Syro-Malabar Church. The last chapter, titled 'Dialogue & Worship' recaptures many of the earlier ideas along with a description of the impact of Globalization on theology.

Through the three categories the author marshals most of the world's leading theologians and schools of theology. The presentation is descriptive and tends to be shallow. Yet students of theology will find the book a very useful tool to be acquainted with these theologies.

The author's major contention is that the past initiatives in Interreligious Dialogue in India are preoccupied with knowledge and justice, which led to their failure. Hence the situation must be rectified by the emphasis on worship, the rallying point of communion for the followers of other religions as well as the core of the Eastern Tradition. However the book does not elaborate the theological developments in Interreligious Dialogue. A critical reader may miss the rich texture of current theological discussions in India, centred on Interreligious Dialogue and the understanding of the mystery of Jesus Christ in the context of religious pluralism. All readers may not share the view that Western theologies are only knowledge oriented or that Interreligious dialogue did not pay attention to worship. Mystics like Thomas Merton and Bede Griffiths have emphasized how contemplation is the highest and best form of Interreligious Dialogue.

Except for the sexist language the book is well written and reader-friendly. Some of the assertions like the one on page 213 that the ecumenism with the Protestant churches has led to the secularization of the Catholic Church are questionable. This does not diminish the significance of the book which is a timely contribution.

Jacob Kavunkal SVD

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Jnanadeepa

Pune Journal of Religious Studies
Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune 411014
Form IV (See Rule 8)

Place of Publication	- Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Ramwadi, Pune 411014 M.S.
Periodicity of Publication	- Biannual
Printer's Name	- Jose Augustine
Nationality	- Indian
Address	- JTJ Associates, Pune 411 040 M.S.
Publisher's Name	- Kurien Kunnumpuram
Nationality	- Indian
Address	- Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Ramwadi, Pune 411014 M. S.
Editor's Name	- Kurien Kunnumpuram
Nationality	- Indian
Address	- Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth - Ramwadi, Pune 411014 M. S.
Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the capital	- Jnana-Deepa Publications, - Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth - Ramwadi, Pune 411014 M. S.

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