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Editorial

There is a growing consensus today that fundamentalist tendencies and fundamentalist movements are to be found in all the major religions of the world. Though the term "fundamentalism" was originally derived from American Protestantism, it is now widely used to designate certain tendencies and movements in different religions. Obviously, these tendencies and movements are not always exactly alike. Hence when we refer to them as "Fundamentalism" we mean "fundamentalist-like."

Here I intend briefly to deal with fundamentalism in the Catholic Church. My contention is that the rise of fundamentalism during the last two centuries points to the failure of the Church to respond creatively to the challenges of the modern world. As Peter Berger observes: "In the wake of the Enlightenment and its multiple revolutions the initial response by the Church was militant and then defiant rejection." This radical rejection of the modern world and all that it stands for is a withdrawal from that world and a refusal to engage it in conservation. According to Avery Dulles, "The Papal encyclicals from Gregory XVI (1831 – 46) to Pius XII (1939 – 58) continually deplore modern errors."

Fundamentalism was originally a tendency, a movement, among conservative Protestants in America around 1900. It sought to prevent the spread of "liberalism" in American religion and secularisation in American culture and society. As Ronald L. Johnstone observes: The ultimate source of the term was the publication, beginning in 1910, of the conservative Christians' (Evangelicals) manifesto in twelve volumes titled *The Fundamentals.* This publication was the capstone to a series of Bible conferences held by Christian conservatives throughout the country between 1876 and 1900, which Gasper views as "embryonic stirrings" of the fundamentalism movement. *The Fundamentals* included the basic (fundamental) Christian doctrines that many said one must accept and believe.

There are thus two aspects to fundamentalism. First, it is a radical rejection of modernity with its emphasis on freedom, individualism, secular rationality, pluralism and tolerance. Modernity sweeps away old worldviews, old beliefs and explanations of reality. For the champions of modernity, "Tradition is no longer binding; the status quo can be changed; the future is an open horizon" (Berger). All this is rejected by the fundamentalists. Secondly, they powerfully affirm basic Christian doctrines. They are convinced that it is necessary to hold on to old beliefs and principles in order to preserve their religion in today's world.

In this editorial when I speak of fundamentalism in the Catholic Church, I refer to two interrelated tendencies: 1) The tendency to reject indiscriminately

all developments in the modern world without properly discerning if these developments are positive or negative. There is also the tendency to reject out of hand the work of modern theologians who seek to articulate the Christian faith in a way relevant and meaningful to people today. 2) The other tendency is to repeat past formulations of Christian doctrine without making any effort to interpret them and rearticulate them in the cultural context of our time. It is an implicit denial of the fact that all formulations of doctrine are time-bound and culturally conditioned. Hence, this too is a fundamentalist tendency.

There have been a wide variety of ways in which fundamentalist tendencies manifested themselves in the Church. It is not possible to deal with them here. I shall merely refer to three documents of the Magisterium in which these tendencies can be clearly seen. They are: 1. *Syllabus of Errors* (1864); 2. The encyclical letter *Pascendi* and a new *Syllabus of Errors* (1907); and 3. *Humani Generis* (1950). Common to these documents are an indiscriminate rejection of developments in the modern world and the condemnation of the work of theologians who seek to create creatively to these developments. They also reiterate doctrinal formulations of the past without taking into account their historicity. They blindly accept the "scholastic concept of supra-historical, unchanging truth" (J.C.Dwyer).

In order to counter these fundamentalist tendencies in the church we need to develop health attitude to the modern world. God is present and active in the world today. We need to make serious efforts to discern his presence and activity among us as Vatican II asserts: Motivated by this faith it labours to decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this people has a part along with other men of our age (*GS* 11).

This is why the Council insisted on the Church's task "of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (*GS* 4).

We also need to learn to stand in awe and wonder before the mystery of God. God is beyond our thoughts and our words. No human statement can encapsulate the mystery of God and God's dealings with us. Besides, all language changes. This is also true of the language of the Church. Key terms used in doctrinal formulations acquire new meanings as time goes on. It is only by creative reinterpretation that we can make the doctrinal formulations of the past living and life-giving for people today.

* * *

We regret to inform our readers that because of developments beyond our control we are unable to publish in this issue of *Jnanadeepa* several articles on fundamentalism originally planned for it. As a result we are publishing a number of articles which are not connected with fundamentalism.

Kurien Kunnumpuram SJ
Editor

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Fundamentalism:
Historical Perspectives

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Abstract: After describing fundamentalism as reclamation of authority over a sacred tradition, the author traces its origin to evangelicalism. Then he deals with fundamentalism in various religious traditions like Sikhism, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. The author suggests that when fundamentalism has joined itself with political, military and police powers or with clerical power, resolute resistance must be offered, both from within and without

Keywords: fundamentalism, oppositionalism, secularisation, valorization of violence, reclamation of authority.

Fundamentalism is one of the most detested terms today. It is often felt to be a hostile and opprobrious term, suggesting narrowness, bigotry, obscurantism and sectarianism (Barr 1977: 2). In most languages the term *per se* is pejorative, evoking epithets such as reactionary, authoritarian, unreasonable, literalist, non-cosmopolitan, anti-modern, and even paranoid (Coleman 1992/3: 37). Because of this it is easy to dismiss fundamentalism as a movement by a group of fanatics without much consequence for the world. The fact is that it is indeed a global phenomenon and a challenge to all religions and confessions which can no longer be overlooked, and which must be taken quite seriously. Individuals, groups and peoples will not be able to live in peace if those who have commandeered the "fundamentals" for themselves believe that they can deny others the right to exist; or if non-fundamentalists do all they can to exclude fundamentalists from dialogue. Only an interaction between the two can bring about a solution to the problem of fundamentalism.

What is Fundamentalism?

What is fundamentalism? It is difficult to define it, as James Barr, who has done one of the first studies on fundamentalism, acknowledges (Barr 1977: 1). But at the same time a working definition is important and I use the following as a good starting-point:

> In simple terms, we define fundamentalism as a proclamation of reclaimed authority over a sacred tradition which is to be reinstated as an antidote for a society that has strayed from its structural moorings. Sociologically speaking, fundamentalism involves: (1) a refutation of the radical differentiation of the sacred and the secular that has evolved with modernization and (2) a plan to dedifferentiate this institutional bi-furcation and thus bring religion back to centre stage as an important factor or interest in public policy decisions (Shupe and Hadden 1989: 111, quoted in Coleman 1992/3: 37).

Fundamentalism involves the reclamation of authority over a sacred tradition (Religion plays an important role in all fundamentalisms. See Caplan 1987). It differs from utopian calls to create a new, imagined social order. Fundamentalists call for a return to a lost tradition and seek to reorient society and culture to a more "desirable" future (Caplan 1987: 38).

As is well known, the word fundamentalism was originally used for a particular trend in American Protestantism which in the face of all modern and liberal adaptations of the church sought to go back to the biblical "fundamentals" of the Christian faith: to fundamentals of the faith which were interpreted in a very arbitrary way. But today fundamentalist symptoms analogous to this movement within Protestantism can also be found in other confessions of Christianity: Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy as well as in other religions, too. Therefore, it is important to trace the history of fundamentalism as far as it can be done.

Origin of Fundamentalism

The word fundamentalism arose in the Christian context (The following two paragraphs are taken from the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, s.v.: 223). Originally it referred to an interdenominational movement that flourished in American Protestantism during

the first third of the 20th century. It was a reaction against secularisation and the infiltration of liberal theology into the seminaries and universities in the northern and eastern cities of America. Drawing its strength principally from the rural areas and small towns of the so called Bible belt (the south and mid-west America), old fashioned evangelical faith once again found expression in various assemblies, notably in annual Bible conferences. The Niagara Bible conference of 1895 drew up five points that became cardinal tenets of fundamentalism: (1) the inerrancy of the Bible, (2) the divinity of Jesus Christ, (3) the virgin birth of Jesus, (4) Christ's vicarious death, (5) and his physical resurrection and future second coming.

But the beginning of the fundamentalist movement proper is often dated from the appearance between 1905 and 1915 of 12 small volumes entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth.* These booklets defended the inspiration and total inerrancy of the Bible; they opposed "higher criticism" of the Bible, "evolutionism," and the "social gospel". They said, for example, that the Pentateuch was written by Moses himself. Three million copies of the *Fundamentals* were distributed free to pastors, missionaries, theology students, etc. In 1919 the "World's Christian Fundamentals Association" which was quite militant in character was founded. The expression "fundamentalist" came to usage about 1920, meaning, as one newspaper expressed it, one who does "battle royal for the fundamentals." It was at that time a badge of honour for its adherents. Most American Protestant denominations, especially those with an evangelical bent, split into fundamentalists and modernists around this time. Due to the pressure from the fundamentalists several state legislatures in America barred the teaching of human evolution in public schools. Sometimes things ended in court cases like the famous trial of John Scopes, a biology teacher from Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925, who was accused of teaching Darwinism in violation of the law. Although Scopes was convicted, the trial attracted unfavourable publicity for the fundamentalists and it was a major setback for them.

> Fundamentalism cannot be understood without understanding the phenomenon of evangelicalism, a Protestant movement that emerged from the religious awakening of the eighteenth century and which had taken clear shape in England and the British empire, in America, and

in many mission fields. It emphasized (1) the Bible as authoritative and reliable; (2) eternal salvation as possible only by regeneration (being born again), involving personal trust in Christ and his atoning work; and (3) a spiritually transformed life marked by moral conduct, personal devotion and zeal for evangelism and the missions (*The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 5, s.v.: 190).

Fundamentalism originated in evangelicalism. What distinguished the fundamentalists from the evangelicals in the first place was that they were quite militant in their outlook. Secondly, they saw it as their absolute Christian duty, on the one hand, to uncompromisingly combat all modernist tendencies in the church and theology and all secularizing cultural trends, and on the other, to propagate the "fundamentals" which according to them are constitutive of the Christian faith. In short, fundamentalism stood for an organized militant defence of traditional evangelical doctrines.

Fundamentalism thus was also a mood as much as a set of doctrines and institutions, a mood of militancy in opposition to modernist theology and to some of the relativistic cultural changes that modernism embraced. It focused on the anxieties of American Protestant traditionalists after World War I, who lamented that America had lost its biblical moorings. Added to that, the revolution in morals, international events like Bolshevism and the social and moral impact of immigrations to America, etc. alarmed them. The fundamentalists saw all these as the end of the Bible- based civilization of America. After the Scopes trial the public paid less attention to fundamentalism. However, it has survived and is active although for many people today it is difficult to make a distinction between evangelicals, neo-evangelicals and fundamentalists. There are millions of Christians in America and elsewhere who follow the basic tenets of fundamentalism, like absolute inerrancy of the Bible, soul winning, church growth, extreme militancy against theological liberalism, separation from worldliness with a strict moral code, especially in sexuality, dispensationalism, a conservative role for women, crusade against abortion, rejection of the theory of evolution, etc. In America it also espouses the cause of political conservatism, militant capitalism, a powerful military, patriotism, etc. Beyond this original fundamentalism which is Western Protestant in origin, all the

latter "fundamentalist" movements which arose in various religious traditions did not usually refer to themselves as "fundamentalist" but were rather so dubbed by Western scholarly and more general discourse. But we place all these movements under the rubric "fundamentalist" because despite their differences they have some common characteristics. Thus we have today fundamentalism in every religious tradition. I shall trace the history of those movements which arose in the Indian context.

Sikhism

Of the great religious traditions of humanity, Sikhism is one of the youngest, being barely five hundred years old. Its beginnings and development have been recorded in both oral narratives and literary texts, but these do not always speak with one voice. This should not surprise us because faith entails mystery. But we know enough to say that its origin is intimately linked to the political, economic, social and cultural situations in the late fifteenth century Punjab. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was appalled by the brutality of Babar's invasions of north India and lamented the lack of protection that was given to the people by their rulers. While his words were a prayer to God for the protection of the people, it was also a call to assume the responsibility for self protection. It developed into a new religion in 1499 when he claimed that God the supreme preceptor (*Guru*) had passed on the holy word (*shabad*) to him. The message was that there was no true Hindu or true Muslim, a true follower of the Hindu or Islamic faiths, to be found around him. What matters is that one must be a true devotee of God and realize that the practice of truth is the highest morality. Nanak developed a comprehensive and consistent theology (cf. Singh 1963, 1966). which combined piety and practical activity admirably. It is debatable whether he of thought himself as the founder of a new religion. But he wanted his disciples to continue living differently and he also named a successor to him, Angad. Thus inadvertently he founded a new religion of egalitarian social outlook, and a religious faith with no ritual. The successive Gurus were to ensure the survival of the religion. Let us mention some of them.

Arjan Mal (1563-1606) was the fifth in succession. He constructed the temple in the holy tank known as the Harmandar Sahib,

the honoured temple of God and gave the Sikhs their Holy Book, the *Adi Granth* (the original book). It was Hargobind (1595-1644) who introduced the doctrine of the two swords, one representing spiritual authority and the other temporal authority. He erected a new temple, the *Akal Takht*, the throne of the immortal God. He also engaged in constant conflict with the Mughals. During his time temporal power, honour, revenge etc. became more important than work, worship and sharing, which were the principles which Nanak gave to his followers. The unity of religion and politics was now complete and religion was the weaker side. This is clearly seen in the tenth and last Guru Gobind (1666-1708) Singh. He was clearly influenced by the martyrdom of his father Teg Bahadur in 1675. In 1699 Gobind instituted baptism for the Sikhs to constitute a community of the pure, *Khalsa*. The baptised Sikh was to call himself Singh (lion) and one of the symbols of the initiated man was the sword, the *kirpan*. This action was fraught with political implications. Not long afterwards the words "*raj karega Khalsa*" (the pure Sikhs will rule) were added to the daily prayer. Gobind Singh announced the closure of the canon (*gurbani*) and declared that after his death spiritual authority would vest in the Holy book. Temporal powers would be exercised by the *Khalsa*, represented by five baptized Sikhs. The journey from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh was a passage from sacralized secularity to secularized religion (Madan 1997: 57).

The effort to establish a Sikh state succeeded with Ranjit Singh in 1799. It was a secular state, something new in the Sikh tradition. He died in 1839 and his kingdom collapsed in 1846. There were new attempts to redefine the Sikh identity. Religion and politics were separated once again. The Gurudwara Act of 1925 made the *Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee* (SGPC) the controller of the temples and the political activity was looked after by the *Akali Dal*. They were in the forefront of agitations against the British. The Akalis slowly repudiated any notion of separation of religion and politics . This repudiation became the basis of the demand for a separate homeland. It was also born out of the need for an authority to enforce the rules of the Sikh community, the Adi Granth and the Khalsa tradition, which were abandoned by the secualarized and rich younger generation. Committed Sikhs felt that the original ideals of Nanak – work, worship, and sharing – were being replaced by para-

sitism, godlessness and selfishness as a result of modernization. So the call was to be good Sikhs, defending the faith and repudiating the separation of religion and state. These were essential for the preservation of the Sikh tradition. So they wanted independence from the Indian union. The failure to grant this or understand this created the Sikh problem. It is in this context that we can speak of Sikh fundamentalism.

Its rise is intimately linked to the activities of Jarnail Singh Bindranwale who organized a militant group of Sikhs and took refuge in the Golden Temple from where he incited the Sikhs against the government. People began to speak of Bindranwale as a fundamentalist. What they meant was that he was a person who employed religious appeal to mobilize his followers for political action. Thus we have a specific aspect of Indian fundamentalism, religious objectives mingled with politico-economic one. Even the government would be opposed if it stood in their way. Sometimes they are branded as political extremists, terrorists, etc. So here fundamentalism is not only a fight for pristine orthodoxy or pure tradition. But they understood themselves as true Sikhs although Bindranwale's own career was full of violence and sectarian politics which began with the open conflict with the Nirankaris in 1978. But he also issued a call to return to the fundamentals of the Sikh faith. He asked for a moral life and it appealed to many people. He delineated the foes of Sikhism as those who don't follow the tenets of the religion and also denounced the Hindus who were seen as oppressors. The Hindus were depicted as people who were standing in the way of the exclusive Sikh identity. This was another feature of Sikh fundamentalism, namely, the stress on identity. The search ultimately ended in the call for separatism which began with the Anandpur Sahib resolution of 1973. Bindranwale used the language of religion to give utterance to genuine and widespread economic and other grievances of the Sikhs. Lack of political will from the part of the Indian government made matters worse. So Sikh fundamentalism was also connected with economic discontent. This led to Operation Blue Star, the bizarre events of the following years, including the proclamation of the Khalistan and still more fundamentalization of the Sikhs which lasted till 1993. The recent scramble for the control over the SGPC is a clear indication

that religion and politics are still intertwined in Punjab and fundamentalist forces are active in Sikhism.

If we search for the specific characteristics of Sikh fundamentalism (Madan 1997: 98-105) they are religious faith and cultural identity combined with a militant pursuit of secular interests. This is nothing new in Sikhism. Modern Sikh fundamentalism has been a reactive phenomenon and defence mechanism. It was born out of fear, fear of the other - the nonconformists, the secularists, the Hindus - cultural disintegration, modernization and political domination. The fundamentalists, of course, claim to possess the truth and motivate and mobilize followers to follow them. They don't allow dissent and are convinced that political power is necessary to enforce conformity. There are no deep theological concerns or intellectual vigour behind Sikh fundamentalism. It does not emphasize the scriptures like the early Protestant fundamentalists, but the tradition of the Gurus. It emphasizes Sikh honour. Charismatic leaders play a role as in all such movements. Selective appeal to tradition by the leaders is accepted. They showed no opposition to science and technology. The valorization of violence has led to its being linked with terrorism. It feeds and is fed by Hindu communalism. And today it is also marked by the memory of the deep sense of injury felt by most Sikhs after Operation Blue star and the massacre of thousands of Sikhs in the wake of the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

Islam

Islam in south Asia has an eventful and richly documented history of about 1300 years. It is not possible to trace this history in full here but some turning points must be mentioned which affected the relationship between the Muslims and the Hindus, the majority community, which gave rise to Islamic fundamentalism. Islam arrived in India in 712 when Sind was conquered by Muhammad bin Quasim on behalf of Hajjaj bin Yusuf, governor of the eastern provinces of the Umayyad caliphate. It is recorded that he allowed the Hindus of Sind the status of the *zimmi*, the protected class. The non-Muslims had to pay the poll tax or *jizya* but there were various concessions and compromises worked out on the basis of expediency in order not to alienate the Hindu majority. These early Muslims were

not enthusiastic proselytizers. But as Aziz Ahmad writes, "the history of medieval and modern India is to a very considerable extent a history of Hindu-Muslim religio-cultural tensions, interspersed with movements of individual efforts at understanding, harmony and even composite development. The divisive forces have proved much more dynamic than the cohesive ones" (Azis 1964: 73). Islam always felt threatened because of the assimilative character of Hinduism and there was constant vigilance and effort to protect the Muslim way of life. Indian Muslims were a people living in two worlds, one, their immediate surroundings, and the other, the world of the sources of inspiration which sustained their spiritual experiences. Muslim fundamentalism has its roots in this twin predicament of the Indo-Muslim community, namely, the perceived threat of the Hindu cultural environment and the question of Muslim secular power or political expediency (Madan 1997: 113). (For a concise treatment of the topic, see Durrai 1993).

The next significant happening was the appearance of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1000 at Lamghan in the northwest, and during the next quarter of the century he invaded India 17 times. He was ruthless towards both the Muslims who were not of his brand and the Hindus. He vowed to cleanse pagan India of its ignorance and false religions and was the champion of Sunni orthodoxy. Here the relationship between religion and state begins to appear. This tension between state power and religious power became sharper during the Delhi Sultanate (thirteenth to the sixteenth century). Ala ud-din Khalji (ruling from 1296-1316)did not give much heed to the *ulama* and was condemned for his disregard for the *sharia*. It would not have been possible for so many foreign Muslim rulers to rule over India for centuries if they were trying to impose Muslim rule over the people. But there were people who wanted to reassert religious authority like Zia ud-din Barani who wanted to bring the royal power and function under the hierarchical control of religious authority coupled with a deep hatred of the Hindus.

Although Islam was spreading fast, India never became *dar-al-Islam* (the Muslim sphere) de facto. Added to that there were people like Akbar whose catholicity and tolerance are well known. But Aurangzeb (ruled from 1658-1707) was again an orthodox Sunni

Muslim and wanted to rule with the help of the Sharia. But with his death began the loss of power for the Muslims. It is in this context that Shah Wali-Ullah assumed the moral leadership of the Muslims (1703-1762). What pained him most was the loss of the state. His son Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1823) carried forward his policies of Islamic revival and proclaimed that the areas under non-Muslim rule had been now dar al-harb (the land of war). The British were the targets in a special way now. The responses to the increasing loss of power could be many, like migration or call for jihad. In this context Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786-1831) began the radicalization of the Muslims with the two goals of orthodox Islam and an ideal Islamic state. This necessitated even a jihad or religious war. He together with his followers of about 1500 launched many movements of violence and was killed in 1831. The movement known as the mujahidin movement was finally crushed by the British in 1858 after they had joined the sepoys who revolted in 1857.

Next the Muslims tried the method of redemption through education and accommodation to modernity. Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-98) led this movement. He attached the greatest importance to education and western thought. The Anglo- Muhammadan Oriental College at Aligarh was founded by him. But the synthesis between tradition and modernity was more problematic than he had thought. In response to this some began to take recourse to a more traditionalist education. This movement was led by Muhammad Quasim Nanotawi in Deoband in 1867. It also propagated radical views like taking recourse to lesser *jihad* and represented the nationalists among the Muslims. It founded an organization called the Jamiyyat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind (the party of the Ulama of India). It was founded because the Indian Muslim League was thought to be too modernist. The Deobandis wanted a scriptural religion and the rule of the Ulama. The quest for Pakistan is to be seen in this context.

In the twentieth century the distrust of modernism continued in Islam. Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938) and Abdul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) shared this. They were revivalists and advocates of a pan-Islamism. But they disagreed with the tendency of the ulama to place their interpretations above the text. Abul ala Maududi (1903-1979) was another critic who joined the criticism of the ulama . But

he had more radical solutions. He also challenged the joining of the independence movement because he felt that nationalism was not a Muslim concept. And a separate homeland for Muslims was also a false ideal because it was merely a materialistic state without any role for the spiritual. He founded the jamaat-i-Islami (Islamic association) in 1941. He said that there could be no Islamic state without the fundamentals of Islam. When Pakistan was created he migrated there and campaigned for an Islamic state. He pronounced that western secular democracy was the very antithesis of Islam. Maududi was one who was interested in the fundamentals of Islam which according to him were the Koran and the exemplary life of the prophet. The Sharia was a complete scheme of life and an all-embracing social order, lacking nothing. There should be power vested in the hands of a reasonable group of people and that brings in the idea of the state which can be totalitarian but based on divine law. Power lies at the core of Maududi's concept of the true Islamic society. He also advocated jihad for the spread of Islam because the world had reverted back to the state before the arrival of Islam and there is need for spreading the faith. With this call to jihad which would embrace the whole of humankind he was a champion of Islamic fundamentalism. The jamaat-i-Islami is a fundamentalist force even today.

From this brief overview, we have the basic tenets of Islamic fundamentalism in south Asia. Like every religion it is concerned with safeguarding correct beliefs and correct practices. Groups of people don the mantle of the guardians of orthodoxy, here the ulama. Islam has a set of well defined fundamentals of its faith in spite of the sectarianism, the conflict between the *ulama* and the sufis and the mutual exclusiveness of schools of Islamic law. The danger of diluting these fundamentals is very real. So preserving orthodoxy is a major concern in Islam. When it came to south Asia and confronted other civilizations this urge to safeguard its identity and purity was paramount. For this it also wanted power. So fundamentalism had both objectives: purity of the faith and political power. The concentration on power in the hands of a strongly believing people would result in the totalitarian ambition of world domination supported by exclusive claims to the possession of truth. Such a project is quite attractive to Muslim fundamentalists because Islam does not, in principle, stress race, language or nationality. The history of Islam in

south Asia gives the background of Muslim fundamentalism today: cultural critique, political power, exclusive claims to possess the truth, ambitions of domination, innovation and redefinition of the received tradition to suit their need, charismatic and determined leadership and a formally organized movement. "A dialectic of tensions internal to the Muslim community and certain external pressures, gradually led many *ulama* and their followers from an early concern with orthodoxy and orthopraxis to a revivalist *angst* and, finally, to fundamentalism" (Madan 1997: 150).

Hinduism

Debates are still going on about the word Hindu and the appropriateness of the ascription of the idea of religion to Hinduism (Madan 1997:176-232). Whether it was the need of westerners to define Hinduism as a religion or it was political compulsions that led to it, as Romila Thapar maintains (Thapar 1989/2: 210), need not concern us now. We take it for granted that the Hindu religion is one of the most ancient religions of humankind.

Ananda Coomarswamy develops a distinction between spiritual authority and temporal authority in Hindusm basing himself on the Brahmanas and also on the Rig Veda (Coomarswamy 1978). Initially the two functions were different but later a union was effected and sacerdotium gained precedence over regnum because ultimatley every ruler is subject to another king, Dharma. Thus there is a union of the two, the sacred and the secular. There is a single principle of social integration and no separate principle governing politics. The king's power is checked by the brahmins who are Brahman incarnate (Gonda 1969: 67). After examining all the evidence, Madan says that there are no grounds for constructing a theory of the secular state for our times that might legitimize the autonomy of the secular power by invoking traditional non-religious values (Madan 1997: 184). But the arthashastra of Kautilya does speak of material well-being as supreme but ultimately even he conforms to the Vedic tradition. The Manusmriti also does not alter the above position. The Mahabharata says that he who seeks to achieve kama and artha must first concentrate on dharma, for kama and artha are never separate from dharma. Gandhi following this traditional point

of view rejected secularism if it stood for the divorce of politics from religion. But he endorsed the idea of a secular state which did not interfere in the religious lives of the people and was in that manner impartial. According to him Indian secularism is infusing the world with spiritual values. Another way of understanding secularism in India is as religious pluralism: granting all religions equality and treating all with respect. Vivekananda was the champion of this line of thought, understanding of Hinduism as a religion of tolerance and equality. Thus secularism in India is a rather imprecise notion of religious tolerance in society and a similarly unclear idea of non-preferentialism or equal respect for all religions as state policy. The Indian scriptures do not recognize a mutually exclusive role for the religious and the secular nor the idea of religion as a private activity. There is no mainstream Hindu tradition that supports such a view.

Contemporary fundamentalistic Hinduism has its roots in the 19th century revival movements in Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab (Jones 1989). These in turn had their origin in some important developments in British India. One of them was the missionary movement officially allowed by the charter of 1813 and the other was the introduction of English education. The missionaries who had been influenced by evangelicalism had a negative attitude towards Hinduism. The reform movements in India were a creative response to this. They were helped by the Orientalists and their studies of Indian religious and philosophical literature. The movement started in Bengal under the leadership of Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) and his *Brahmo Sabha* (1828) and continued under Debendranath Tagore, (1817-1905) Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884), etc. who were in the forefront of the movement. Many social reforms were undertaken inspired by the missionaries. Hindu revivalism was part of it although with a rationalist critique of it. They wanted a purified Hinduism and national and cultural regeneration. In this connection the *Arya Samaj* founded by Dayanda Sarasvati (1824-83) in 1875 was very important. Its goals were regenerating Hinduism and opposing the evangelical activities of the missionaries. It was a religious, cultural and social movement. Religious reconstruction and social reforms were its essential aspects. Religious reconstruction aimed at a return to a pristine state of purity of the Vedas. He claimed for the Vedas the monopoly over truth and denied other religions any legiti-

macy to exist. He even claimed compatibility between Vedic knowledge and modern science. The ideology was fundamentalist as we understand the word today. So the development of fundamentalism in Hinduism is a later development which began only in the 19th century. The Arya Samaj was a watershed in the emergence of fundamentalism in Hinduism.

The programme was taken forward by the developments in the following decades. The first was the founding of the *Hindu Mahasabha* (1915) with the agenda of safeguarding of the specifically Hindu interests, like cow protection. After the *Khilafat* movement (1920-21) it was revived and had famous supporters, like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lajpat Rai, etc. Then came the publication of the book *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu*? by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923. According to him, true followers of the original Vedic religion were the Aryans and he rejected all non-Vedic religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc. He favoured the term Hindu and redefined it geographically. Hindus were those whose fatherland and holy land were India. They constituted the Hindu nation which belonged to one race and one civilization. This was the crux of the *Hindutva* ideology.

Hindutva was a complex whole of which religion was only a fraction. But he maintained that Hinduism should be the religion of all Hindus which included the Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, the tribals, etc. But it cannot be the religion of the Christians and the Muslims because they don't consider India their holy land. They are, therefore, excluded from the nation. This has become the manifesto of the Hindu fundamentalism of today which is a totalitarian and exclusivistic system. What is special about Hindu fundamentalism is that instead of the concern with the Scriptures which is seen in Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, there is an overwhelming stress on culture. The idea of the chosen people, one of the hallmarks of fundamentalism, is broadened and sharpened to include the whole sphere of race, language and culture. This emphasis on culture was the basis of the founding of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925. Originally politics was free for the members of the RSS and it was avowedly anti-Muslim. Under Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, the organization made

an unambiguous statement about political power couched in cultural terms. He claimed that the Hindu monopoly over power follows form the preeminence of the Hindu culture. Religion played very little role in the RSS scheme. The ultimate objective of the RSS is political domination through cultural homogenization. Alien materialistic ideologies of the West are rejected as the enemy of Hindu national culture which is pure and sublime. Today the RSS is assisted by several other fundamentalistic organizations like the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad*, the *Bajrang Dal* etc. and are squarely behind the Baratiya Janata Party which rules India with its own fundamentalist agenda.

In present-day India, fundamentalism and nationalism are indeed one. Going beyond the *Arya Samaj*, it valorizes the national culture of India. As in other fundamentalist movements, power, discipline, surveillance, supreme leader, etc. play their roles, except purity of religion. Religion is only a mask for gaining political clout. However, there are plenty of Hindus for whom this insular religiosity seems to be very appealing.

Conclusion

There are various other manifestations of fundamentalism in many world religions or religious confessions like Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism, etc. Unfortunately these cannot be dealt with in this short essay. What remains to be done is to find some common manifestations of fundamentalism. T. N. Madan has identified some common characteristics of fundamentalism world wide by choosing elements from two main fundamentalist movements, the Protestant Christian which we have discussed above and Islamic fundamentalism as symbolized by the Iranian Revolution which has become paradigmatic as being fundamentalist in contemporary discussions. The key ideas he has borrowed from Christian fundamentalism are: (1) affirmation of the inspiration, final authority, inerrancy, and transparency of scripture as the source of belief, knowledge, morals and manners; (2) recognition of the reactive character of fundamentalism: it is not a original impulse as, for example, orthodoxy is, but a reaction to a perceived threat or crisis; and (3) intolerance of dissent, implying monopoly over truth. From the Iranian Revolution he has identified: (1) cultural critique, that is, the

idea that all is not well with social or community life as lived at a particular time; (2) appeal to tradition, but in a selective manner that establishes a meaningful relationship between the past and the present, redefining or even inventing tradition in the process; (3) capture of political power and remodelling of the state for the achievement of the stated objectives; and (4) charismatic leadership (Madan 1997: 27-28). In this way he has been able to give a reasonable content and meaning to the difficult term fundamentalism. S.N. Eisenstadt in his perceptive study names another distinctive characteristic of modern Fundamentalism, namely, its "very Jacobin" nature" (1999: 2). Martin E. Marty says that another characteristic of fundamentalism is its "oppositionalism." According to him, fundamentalism takes form when members of already conservative or traditional movements experience threat from something or someone, be it modernity, secularization or the West, the infidel or the Great Satan. This oppositionalism is expressed by rejecting hermeneutics, pluralism and relativism (Marty 1992/3: 3-13). From a psychological point of view fundamentalism can arise through alienation: personal isolation, social marginalization, and losing ethical and cultural roots or more generally the loss of history. Such experiences are matched by a desire for certainty, for eternal truths, for a stable picture of the world. Fundamentalism here is the result of the experience of a lack of foundations in a very confusing world. A typical example that is given is the Islamic experience: the memory of the Arab-Islamic world empire which in its heyday was superior to all others, especially European and Christian peoples, is a strong one. The collapse of this world is a trauma for many Muslims. Moreover, European powers were able to become colonial lords over the Arab and Islamic world and it was the beginning of a series of humiliations for them. Furthermore, Islam understands itself as the divinely appointed religious and political order of the world and so as a religion of victors but now it is robbed of this destiny by unbelievers. It is also not able to cope with the phenomenon of modernity which is seen only as a threat because it comes again from the West (Mueller-Fahrenholz 1992/3: 15-16).

From this it is clear that fundamentalism is a very complex phenomenon. For example, the whole issue of fundamentalism and gender has not even been mentioned here (see Hawley 1994). It has

theological, psychological, sociological and political causes and ramifications. The question is, how is fundamentalism to be dealt with? There are no easy answers. Surely, fundamentalists should be made aware of the roots of freedom, pluralism and openness in their religious traditions. But the so-called progressives or liberals must also be made aware of the need for self-criticism in the face of any lazy adaptation to the spirit of the time and lack of religious substance, theological depth and binding ethics. Dialogue must be sought with fundamentalists and collaboration be striven for in both politics and social issues, in religion and theology. But what is the response when fundamentalism has joined itself with political, military and police powers or with clerical power? Here resolute resistance must be offered, both from within and without (Kueng 1992/3: 124). We shall have to live with fundamentalism against us, alongside us and even in us. The liberation of fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists for openness to reality is a world wide challenge.

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Fundamentalism: Biblical Perspectives

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Abstract: Tracing the roots and trends of fundamentalim and its tinges in the Bible, the author asks if the Catholic Church is an agent and perpetrator of fundamentlism. The author notes that in course of the New Testament era biases and prejudices become part of the New Testament. This is particularly prominent in Matthew and John. In the final part of the essay some pertinent, practical insights are offered.

Keywords: fundamentalism in the Bible, fundamentalism in the Church, biblical interpretation, foundational experience, Abba experience.

This essay on Fundamentalism from Biblical Perspectives is developed in three parts. First we try to understand the meaning and different nuances of fundamentalism in so far as the Bible is concerned. Secondly, we ask: Is there fundamentalism of a theological and/or religious nature in the Bible? Finally, what are the implications and imperatives of biblical fundamentalism?

I Tracing the Roots and Trends

In the first part of the article an earnest attempt is made to answer the following questions. (A) What is meant by the term, fundamentalism? What are its synonyms and antonyms? (B) Do we have tinges and traces of fundamentalism in the Bible? (C) Was the Catholic Church, especially its hierarchy, an agent and perpetrator of fundamentalism in its understanding of the Bible and in its application of punitive measures against scientists and biblical scholars? (D) What is meant by fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible in the official teaching of the Catholic Church (1993)?

A) Terminological Clarification

The abstract noun, fundamentalism, ultimately derived from the root *fundo -are* (Latin) meaning (1) to lay the foundation of, to found; (2) to make firm, to strengthen.[1] The second meaning is obviously more applicable in the context of our discussion than the first.

'Fundamentalism' is in fact used in religious parlance in a technical and more nuanced sense. It may be defined as "the strict maintenance of traditional orthodox religious beliefs or doctrines; especially belief in the inerrancy of Scripture and literal acceptance of the creeds as fundamentals of Protestant Christianity."[2] More elaborately, it is a "conservative movement in American Protestantism arising out of the millenarian movement of the 19th century and emphasizing as fundamental to Christianity the literal interpretation and absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures, the imminent and physical second coming of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Birth, Resurrection, and Atonement."[3] Thus, as a matter of fact, the roots of fundamentalism are found in the history of the American millenarian movement.

In the 20th century a new dimension is added: it underscores the conservative and orthodox religious convictions and views which vehemently oppose modernist tendencies in American religious and secular life.[4] Conservative views on the role of women, on the family and on questions related to sexuality are typical of them. They also claim that "the signs of the times indicate that within a few years the dramatic events surrounding the return of Christ will bring the present era to a violent end."[5] Since 1979 fundamentalists have emerged as a strong force to be reckoned with in American politics.[6] They are on the whole very sympathetic to the State of Israel, "whose existence is viewed as the fulfillment of prophecy."[7] Some of the Presidential candidates of USA in the recent past have played the fundamentalist card to win votes.

'Fundamentalism' is, in fact, a sub-species of evangelism,[8] and its adherents "consider it a chief Christian duty to combat uncompromisingly 'modernist' theology and certain secularizing cultural trends. Organized militancy is the feature that most clearly distinguishes fundamentlists from other evangelicals."[9] "Soul winning and

church growth" [10] is their first and foremost concern. They have also clearly drawn "strict lines of personal separation from worldliness. Not only do they forbid drinking, smoking, card playing, theater attendance, and dancing, as do many evangelicals, but they often also have made strict rules against fashion trends: slacks for women, long hair, beards or mustaches for men, flared pants, and wire-rimmed glasses."[11]

Fundamentalism is closely linked with Pentecostal[12] and charismatic Christianity which "centers on the emotional, non-rational, mystical, and supernatural: miracles, signs, wonders, and 'the gifts of the Spirit' (*charismata*), especially 'speaking in tongues' (*glossalia*), faith healing, and casting out of 'demons' (exorcism). Supreme importance is attached to the subjective religious experience of being filled with or possessed by the Holy Spirit."[13]

Fundamentalists just as avowed charismatics are firmly convinced of and strongly advocate the apocalyptic beliefs, thought-patterns and worldviews with a clear emphasis on dualism.[14] Both champion literal interpretation of the Bible and exhibit strong aggressive tendencies against people of other faiths.

Two main antonyms of fundamentalism are 'liberalism' and 'modernism'. The term liberalism was employed in the nineteenth century to designate "the holding of liberal opinions in politics or theology."[15] Gradually "this viewpoint changed with the broader adoption by theologians of opinions more or less critical of received dogma or traditional interpretation of Scripture."[16] The second antonym, 'modernism' in general stands for a movement towards modifying traditional beliefs and doctrines in accordance with modern ideas, especially in the Roman Catholic Church in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[17] In the stricter sense, however, it indicates a type of 'progressive' theological opinion to be found in the Roman Catholic Church during the pontificates of Leo XIII and Pius X, and many would now consider the usage of the word best limited to this.[18]

Summing up: This brief terminological study indicates that fundamentalism and its antonyms liberalism and modernism are, in the strict sense, limited primarily to Christianity during the last two centuries. However, is it found, though in a broader, wider sense, also in

other religions? Or, in other words, is fundamentalism (of course, in the wider sense) a common phenomenon in religions as a whole? Secondly, can one trace both liberalism and fundamentalism in the Bible itself, though not in the strict but in the broader sense?

B) Tinges of Fundamentalism in the Bible

We begin with the first question: Are liberalism and fundamentalism a common phenomenon in religions as such? It is commonly held by experts in sociology of religion that in the emergence of religions there are two phases: the unusual religious experience (spontaneous, creative) of extraordinary people (= the founders of religions) and the translation and transformation of their experiences and insights into institutional structures. This transition from stage one to stage two Max Weber calls the routinization of charisma.[19] In this process ambiguities and conflicts are inevitable. Thomas F. O'Dea has classified these ambiguities and conflicts in terms of five dilemmas, namely, the dilemma of mixed motivation; the symbolic dilemma: objectification versus alienation; the dilemma of administrative order: elaboration versus effectiveness; the dilemma of delimitation: concrete definition versus substitution of letter for spirit; and the dilemma of power: conversion versus coercion.[20] It is evident from these five-fold dilemmas that in the process of the routinization of charisma, forces and structures of institutionalization tend to constrain, delimit, destroy and eliminate the originary charismatic experience and its transforming impulses.[21]

Now we focus on the second question: Are there ambiguities and conflicts between charisma and institutionalization in the Bible? The Bible basically contains two originary, peak experiences of God and of humans. (1) Yahweh initiated the process of liberating Israel from a fundamentalism of complex nature, namely, economic-political-military. In this process the Israelites experienced Yahweh as their Lord and Liberator in the event of the Exodus, and they in turn were summoned to form a community of sisters and brothers in intimacy and mutual sharing in contrast with the neighbouring exploitative, oppressive States. The rest of the OT is in fact the elaboration, innovation and maintenance of these liberative impulses initiated by Yahweh on the one hand and its delimitation,

coercion and suppression on the other. In the course of the development of the Jewish religion one notices the gradual growth of an anti-Gentile bias, particularly in deutero-Isaiah. (2) Faced with a fundamentalism of religious, socio-economic and political nature Jesus undergoes a profound personal experience of God as unconditional love (= *Abba*) and humans as his sisters and brothers. Confronted with opposition from and rejection by the establishment of his time in accepting and respecting the impulses of this deep experience of God, Jesus gives birth to a contrast community whose ultimate goal is accepting God as *Abba* and humans as sisters and brothers. The NT primarily narrates this story and its implications, ramifications, delimitations and attempts at alienation. In the formative stage of the NT one encounters anti-Jewish bias as well, notably in Matthew and John.

As is clear from the preceding paragraph both these experiences (of the OT as well as the NT) and their routinization have very similar features: (a) the context and the antecedent conditions of these profound experiences are rooted in a multi-faceted fundamentalism; (b) these deep experiences have two dimensions, namely, relation with God (= vertical dimension) and relation with humans (= horizontal dimension); (c) the tendency to delimit, subdue the liberative impulses is indeed fundamentalism in the broader sense; and (d) both in the OT as well as in the NT bias and prejudices develop against other religious traditions and their peoples which certainly manifest an aggressive character and denote fundamentalist features.[Both these peak, liberating experiences and their significance, implications and imperatives will be treated rather extensively in the second and third part of this essay].

C) The Catholic Church: An Agent and Perpetrator of Fundamentlism?

Has the Catholic Church stood for and/or manifested fundamentalist features and tendencies in the course of history? Here no attempt is made to offer an in-depth and systematic survey but only a few salient and biblically significant aspects are mentioned.

1) General Observations

a) A perusal of the NT as a whole indicates that although there is a tendency to routinize the originary, creative, charismatic experience of Jesus (for instance by establishing the three-tier ministries of bishop-priest-deacon in the Pastorals) the originary experience of Jesus is not unduly restricted or subdued by the whole of the NT, but allowed to grow, take root and flower.

b) The same perspectives and tendencies, notably committed faith and self-giving brotherly/sisterly love and human concern, were characteristic of the early Church until the Constantinian era. However, a reversal occurs with Constantine who promulgated Christianity as the official religion of the Roman empire; he also granted bishops honours, privileges and powers equal to the status of Roman Senators;[22] and, in addition, "they were permitted to set up courts of arbitration, even in civil matters, and their judgment was definitive (i.e., against which no appeal)."[23] It is interesting to note that most of the episcopal vestments were regalia worn by the Roman princes.[24] Finally, most dangerous "was the acceptance of an ecclesiastical structure, akin to that of the State, by which more a discontinuity than continuity with Jesus' prophetic, charismatic movement was being actualized."[25]

c) This reversal affected the innermost being of the Church adversely: (i) As the Church became an agent, collaborator and instrument of the Roman empire, the institutional dimension was unduly highlighted in such a way that the experiential, mystical dimension steadily eroded. This process of institutionalization of the Church attains its zenith in Vatican I (1870) with the solemn definition of the primacy and the infallibility of the Pope. (ii) Jesus' ministry, in contrast, had an unequivocal thrust: compassionate and wholehearted identification with the oppressed on the one hand and decisive and never-compromising confrontation of the oppressive establishment on the other.[26] The high-powered institutionalization of the Church obviously paid lip-service to this basic thrust of Jesus' mission.

d) As a result administrative efficiency, substituting the letter for the spirit, recourse to coercion rather than conversion — all char-

acteristic features of secular administration — frequently became the modus operandi of the Catholic Church as well. This modus operandi seems to have been the underlying principle in the Church's administrative measures in dealing with some of the scientists and biblical scholars. We shall consider two typical examples:

2) Punitive Measures against Some Scientitists and Biblical Scholars

a) Galileo Galilei (15.02.1564-08.01.1642), mathematician, astronomer and physicist, espoused the Copernican theory that the planets revolve around the Sun. This conflicted with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church because in the eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities *the Copernican theory contradicted the Scriptures.* Aristotelian professors with vested interests with the wholehearted cooperation of the Dominican preachers managed to fulminate against the "impiety" of Galileo and diabolically, secretly, engineered to denounce him to the Inquisition for his "blasphemous utterances," which they said, he had freely invented.

Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, the chief theologian of the Church, was in no mood to appreciate the importance of Galileo's scientific views, but "clung to the time-honoured belief that mathematical hypotheses have nothing to do with physical reality. He only saw the danger of a scandal, which might undermine Catholicity in its fight with Protestantism."[27] So he took the firm step of having Copernicanism declared "false and erroneous and the book of Copernicus suspended by the congregation of the Index."[28]

Galileo thirsting for knowledge and hungering for truth sought permission from the Pope to elaborate on both Ptolemaic and Copernican systems and the Pope granted the permission in 1624 "as long as he discussed them noncommittally and came to the conclusion dictated to him in advance by the pontiff — that is, that man cannot presume to know how the world is really made because God could have brought about the same effects in ways unimagined by him, and he must not restrict God's omnipotence."[29]

Galileo's publication of the Copernican views, indeed a classic in Italian literature as well, was evaluated most dangerous by the Jesuits who held that it could have "worse consequences on the es-

tablished teaching of the Church than Luther and Calvin put together."[30] The Pope ordered a prosecution and on June 21, 1633, the ecclesiastical authorities held him guilty of having "held and taught" the Copernican doctrine and was ordered to recant it. Galileo recited a formula in which he "abjured, cursed and detested" his past errors.[31] He was mercilessly condemned to the dungeon of the Inquisition.

Alas, it was only in 1992 that the official Church formally acknowledged its error in condemning Galileo. Although 359 years later, Pope John Paul II had the ethical integrity and spiritual strength to acknowledge the error.

b) Richard Simon (13.05.1638-11.04.1712), a French biblical critic, whose clear vision and accurate formulation of biblical problems and especially his insistence on the historico-critical method pioneered modern biblical study. He also faced a situation very similar to that of Galileo.

> Richard Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament* (1678) burst like a bomb into a world which had come to accept the Bible as God's sacred, inerrant, practically dictated word. This together with his equally 'critical' histories of the New Testament text (1689), of its versions (1690), and of the commentaries of it (1693), all leading up to his annotated 'literal' translation of the New Testament itself (1702), makes him the 'direct founder of the historical-critical study of the Bible', and the 'founder of the science of New Testament introduction'.
>
> But he paid dearly for this honour. Immense learning (he was the leading Hebraist of his day), incredible industry, and even a partisan loyalty to Roman Catholic theology (for his critical study of the Bible was undertaken to undermine Protestant faith in *sola scriptura*) could not save him from expulsion from the Oratorians, nor his books from being placed on the Index. The rotund and pious obscurantism of Boussuet (the architect of his condemnation) triumphed, as such obscurantism usually does in the short run; and the Roman Catholic Church retired from the field of serious biblical scholarship for the next three hundred years.[32]

3) Catholic Church: Champion of Orthodoxy and Tradition

Because of the traumatic shock produced by the Reformation and the heady excitement caused by the Renaissance the Catholic

Church was undergoing multifaceted crises and was obsessed with intensive preoccupation from the 16th to mid-20th century. In her earnest attempt to protect and safeguard her faithful she heavily relied on rigid authoritarian ecclesiastical tradition and employed strict juridical, legal measures; in contrast, in her attitude to enemies, especially Protestants, she was not only defensive but also obsessively aggressive.[33] In such an ethos and mental frame she miserably failed on many counts: instead of being sensitive to the signs of the times she became an inward looking, conservative, legalistic body; instead of listening to and understanding what biblical scholars, scientists and philosophers had to say she frequently began to dictate to them; instead of being an agent and catalyst of innovation and transformation she became an agent and source of oppression; and, above all, instead of being a forward-looking community ushering in the mission and vision of Jesus[34] she became a backward-looking, tradition-bound institution.[35]

It is in such a context that the Catholic Church closed its doors to the critical approach to and methods of understanding and interpreting the Bible while the Protestant churches freed from an unenlightened ecclesiastical control, rooted in their *sola scriptura* doctrinal tenet and fired with evangelical zeal judiciously employed various critical methods and produced a scholarly biblical literature. It was only in 1943 that Pope Pius XII in the Encyclical Letter *Divino Afflante Spiritu* allowed a cautious use of critical methods in the study of the OT. It is instructive to note that it was neither on the initiative of the hierarchy nor on the recommendation of a biblical body or institute that the Pope issued this encyclical but in response to a crying request from a committed Italian priest with genuine pastoral concern.[36] Again, it is on the initiative of the Biblical Commission that *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* (1964) endorsed the judicious use of critical methods for the NT.[37] The latest document, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), is also the result of the collective effort of the members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

Summing up this section: we began by posing the question whether the Catholic Church is an agent and perpetrator of fundamentalism (of course understood in the broader sense)? It is left to the discerning ability and ingenuity of each reader to elicit an appropriate, objective answer.

D) The Fundamentalist Interpretation of the Bible

The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), briefly discusses and critically evaluates 'Fundamentalist Interpretation' of the Bible. We have briefly touched upon it in section A under the title, 'Terminological Clarification'. Therefore we shall not repeat those aspects that were already treated in A.

1) The Basic Principle: "Bible, being the Word of God, inspired and free from error, should be read and interpreted literally in all its details. But by 'literal interpretation' it understands a naively literalist interpretation."[38] Therefore, no scientific method currently used in interpreting the Bible whether historico-critical, literary, socio-scientific, or hermeneutical, would be acceptable to them. Moreover, they uphold such an understanding of the Word of God and of inspiration and inerrancy that the Bible is so to say dictated by God. As a consequence, there is no room for human contribution at any stage in the formation of the Bible.

2) Its Origin and Main Doctrinal Tenets: Fundamentalism arose as a reaction to liberal Protestantism. "The actual term 'fundamentalist' is connected directly with the American Biblical Congress held at Niagara, New York, in 1895. At this meeting, conservative Protestant exegetes defined 'five points of fundamentalism'," [39] as mentioned above in A. It demands of its adherents blind and unshakeable acceptance of these doctrines "as the only source of teaching for Christian life and salvation",[40] with no room whatever for critical questions, doubts or ambivalence. In other words, it "actually invites people to a kind of intellectual suicide."[41]

3) Its View on Revelation and Church: "Refusing to take into account the historical character of biblical revelation, it makes itself incapable of accepting the full truth of the Incarnation itself. As regards relationships with God, fundamentalism seeks to escape any closeness of the divine and the human."[42] Because of its attachment to the principle, *sola scriptura*, it does not recognize any relation of the Scripture with the Church whether with regard to the origin, formation or interpretative role. It advocates some sort of a private interpretation and manifests an anti-Church bias. It does not accord

due importance to the creeds, the doctrines and liturgical practices which have become part of the Church's tradition.[43]

4) Pastoral Consequences: (a) By accepting as really true the outdated cosmology found in the Bible it blocks dialogue with the present enlightened, post-Einsteinian world; and by non-critical reading of certain texts it breeds and promotes biases and prejudices — for instance, racism. (b) It fosters a literal reading of the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life and induces an attitude among the adherents that the Bible provides answers to every question and solution to every problem.[44]

II Theological Considerations

Is there an interplay of liberative impulses and fundamentalist traits in the Bible? The formative stages of the Hebrew Bible are spread over many centuries (from c. 1200 B.C.E. to 90 C.E.).[45] "The printed copies of the Hebrew Bible used by readers today, either in the original language or in a modern translation, are the end product of a complex literary process reaching over more than three thousand years."[46] Given these complex and intricate stages in the formation of the OT, one may rightly pose the question: When one group of OT books is compared with another group, does one come across 'theological fundamentalism', namely, supplementing the original liberative theological perspectives with those that emphasize fundamentalist features? Further, does the Hebrew Bible clearly exhibit bias and prejudices against other religious traditions and their peoples? Secondly, is there an interplay of liberative impulses and 'theological fundamentalism' in the NT? Does the NT manifest religious fundamentalism against other religious traditions and their peoples?

A) A Glance at the Old Testament

The centre of the Jewish religion and the core of the Jewish faith are one and the same, namely, Israel's experience of Yahweh as the Lord and Liberator and themselves as sisters-brothers to one another. This basic experience is cemented and ratified in and through the covenant. It is from this experience-based and formally ratified covenantal relation that Israel looks back to the history of their fa-

thers and mothers (Gen 12-50) and to the origin of the human race and of the cosmos (Gen 1-11). Again, it is from this very experience and relation that Israel looks forward to the events that follow and the history that is shaped. Any serious deviation from this basic, constitutive experience and ratified covenantal relation one would rightly consider 'theological fundamentalism' and/or 'religious fundamentalism', depending on the context and content. In this essay we focus on the core of Jewish faith (exodus and covenant) and its relation to the events that follow in course of the subsequent centuries.

1) The Exodus and the Covenant

"Israel did not begin as a book-oriented people, nor was its religion a book-based religion until toward the end of the biblical period."[47] Its origin and religious convictions are in fact rooted in a multi-dimensional religious experience and it is precisely this experience that has shaped and continues to shape and sustain their faith. The written text is only a coded, literary expression of the experience. The experience is indeed real and communitarian too; and it is based on a historical event although some of the details of this event are subject to different historical assessment,[48] theological interpretation and political application too.[49]

In situating Exodus within the context of the Pentateuch one notices two striking, significant literary differences. First, in the ancestor traditions the predominant sources were J and E whereas in Exodus through Numbers it is P: in fact a fifteen fold increase of P; and, second, with regard to the literary type: the great majority of the ancestor traditions were sagas whereas in Exodus through Numbers we find mostly laws, regulations and poems.[50] Moreover, one notices a radical shift in the theological axis too: for the first time, God enters into the lives of his people in a very tangible and passionately committed way — he painfully hears the existential groaning and heart-piercing cry of his people and he makes a firm decision to put an end to their unjust suffering (Ex 2:23-25; 3:7-9). In carrying out this design he has a deeper purpose: for the first time he reveals himself as their Lord, and they are his people. This is most beautifully (and artistically too) brought out by the Priestly author in

Ex 6:2-8 offering a theological synthesis of Yahweh's intervention for Israel.[51] In this text the Lordship of Yahweh and the brotherhood/sisterhood of Israelites stand out most prominently.

In executing the liberation of Israel Yahweh identifies himself with Israel in such a way that their cause becomes his cause, their suffering his suffering and their victorious liberation his victorious liberation. In no other section of the OT do we find such a deep sense of oneness between God and his people as in the saving event of the exodus.

In sum, the Exodus has a religious thesis: "There is *one* God, he has trained *one* people and given this people *one* country; this God is Yahweh, this people is Israel and this country is the Holy Land."[52]

The theology of the covenant, in fact, spells out the implications and imperatives of the theology of one God, one people and one country. As to the exact pattern on which the covenant of Ex 19-31 is modelled remains an unresolved issue.[53] From the socio-historical perspective covenant is a way of symbolizing the ground and origin of the proper ordering of Israel's communal life. It was also a religio-political reality in the sense of a political affirmation of Israel's self-determination and a religious identification of a harmonious co-existence of various tribes under one religious banner.

Finally, and most importantly too, it is this twin, interrelated event of exodus-covenant that forms the cornerstone of Israel's socio-religious identity; it is celebrated most solemnly in the feast of the Passover; it blossoms in her faith and life, and its infringement is censured in the rest of the OT, especially in the prophetical literature and the Psalms.

2) Obstacles to the Theology of Exodus and Covenant

In course of time the liberative impulses ushered in by the theology of the exodus and the covenant undergoes delimitation. The code of the covenant authorizes the existence of a large number of sanctuaries (Ex 20:24) whereas Deuteronomy imposes the law that there shall be only one place of worship (Deut 12:2-12). This cen-

tralization in its turn imposes modification on the ancient rules governing sacrifices, tithes and festivals.

Furthermore, once Israel had settled down in Palestine Philistine expansion threatened its very existence; as a result a monarchy became a necessity. "Saul (c. 1030) first appears as one of the judges, but his recognition by all the tribes invests him with a wider and lasting authority: monarchy has begun."[54] With David, Saul's successor, the external forces are brought to their boundaries; but with his son Solomon began "an age of conservatism, organization and (most significantly) of exploitation. This last aggravated the existing hostility between north and south, and when Solomon died, in 931, the kingdom split into two: to the political secession of the northern tribes was added religious schism."[55] Thus the theology of one people, one country is thrown into the limbo.

3) Prophetic Attempt to Reinstate the Exodus-Covenant Theology

With the divided kingdom the internal frictions and confrontations of socio-political and religious nature were on the increase and foreign aggressions and occupations (Assyria, Babylon) depleted and washed away the main theological thrust of exodus-covenant.[56] In this context to reinvigorate Yahweh's original design and to challenge the institutional authority (= kings and priests) Yahweh calls Prophets, charismatic leaders, for a threefold dharma: a political dharma, a dharma of justice and a dharma of conflict.[57]

4) The Subversion in Chronicles

With the edict of Cyrus in 538 B.C.E. under the influence of the scribe Ezra, the representative for Jewish affairs at the Persian court and Nehemiah, the cupbearer to Artaxerxes, the reorganization of the restored Israel began. According to the reforms introduced by Ezra and Nehemiah there were two walls of separation: the wall built around the city of Jerusalem and the 'theological wall' of religious legislation by which hatred and bitterness between the Samaritans and the returned Jews were instilled and fostered. The Temple was rebuilt and the solemn worship in it began with pomp and zeal.

The Chronicles were composed around 300 B.C.E. with a carefully planned selective process. Although the Chronicles narrate more or less the same events as in 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings, by addition, substraction and selection it created a 'blind and limping' theology. In fact, there is hardly any trace of the exodus-covenant theology in these two books. In contrast the ideal community is the restored community gathered around the Temple and obedient to the Law — a realization of the ideal God-governed society. Indeed a subversion of the exodus-covenant theology!

5) Religious Fundamentalism on the March

The early Jewish faith in one God and the injunction not to worship other gods presuppose their existence. It is during the Babylonian exile that the monotheistic faith emerges as the faith of the whole Jewish community. It is most accentuated in deutero-Isaiah; and among various texts Is 44:9-20 is the most poignant and stinging. It contains a threefold attack: makers of idols are engaged in useless activities, idols themselves are fashioned from wood or metal and the worshippers gain nothing by such worship.

G.M. Soares-Prabhu rightly points out that the Isaian text presupposes a mistaken understanding of idolatry for it is not the idol that is worshipped but the deity whose presence is mediated in and through the idol. Secondly, the text of Isaiah presupposes a nationalist monotheism for if there is only one God he/she should not be the God of the Jews alone but of all humans. Finally, it projects the biblical worldviews and anthropology on to a religion that has different worldviews and anthropology.[58] In fact, monotheism "is the projection of the human individuality into the cosmic sphere, the shaping of 'god' to the image of man."[59]

Summing up our findings we can say that the exodus-covenant theology and that of the Prophets enhance liberative impulses whereas the books of Chronicles manifest features of 'theological fundamentalism' and deutero-Isaiah in certain texts champion the cause of 'religious fundamentalism'.

B) A Glimpse at the New Testament

In this section we very briefly deal with the liberative impulses in the NT and certain signs of 'theological' and 'religious' fundamentalism.

1) Jesus' Foundational Experience and Its Expression

Just as in the situation of Exodus Jesus too experienced a multi-faceted fundamentalism: the rigorous legalism of the religious establishment, socio-economic oppression by the rich and powerful, and political exploitation by the Romans.[60] It is in such a context that Jesus made a fundamental option to follow the summons of John the Baptist and underwent his baptism. But this event occasions a theophany in which he experienced God as *Abba* (= unconditional love). The experience of love causes a transformation in such a way that he feels absolute internal freedom and the ability to resist any external pressures.[61]

It was this foundational experience of God that enabled Jesus to identify himself with the oppressed ones on the one hand and challenge the oppressive forces (whatever be the nature of the oppression) on the other. This gives birth to a contrast community or the Jesus' movement. Thus he is able to free himself from family bonds and ties, from the mammon of riches, and from the craze for position and power. He lives a life of an itinerant charismatic preacher with nowhere to lay his head but enjoying maximum freedom. He also challenges the religious authorities for their inhuman purity laws and rigorism, the rich for their strong attachment to wealth and exploitative tendencies, and the political power in an indirect manner.

It is this twofold liberative experiences that Jesus bequathed to the apostles who after being encountered by the risen Jesus and commissioned by him were able to embark on the same track just as Jesus did. This is what the Church was mandated to carry on as well.

2) Obstacles on the Way

As the Church spreads liberating impulses are replaced by suffocating tendencies. For instance, sexist and class biases appear in the household codes of the deutero-Pauline Letters (Col 3:18-4:1;

Eph 5:21-6:9) and of the First Letter of Peter (1 Peter 2:13-3:12), which urge the submission of wives to their husbands, of children to their parents and of slaves to their masters — thereby endorsing the class- and male-biased household regulations of contemporary upper class Hellenistic society and legitimizing them.

3) Emergence of Religious Fundamentalism

In the Gospels of Matthew and John one does find anti-Jewish biases which do not go back to Jesus but stem from the redactional activity of the evangelists. John was written around 90 C.E. when after the Assembly at Jamnia Jews had definitively declared that anyone who confesses faith in Jesus would be expelled from the synagogue. It is such a polemical context that occasioned the bitter confrontation between the Jews and Jesus as narrated in Jn 8:39-59. Likewise, the depiction of the Pharisees as theologically blind whereas the blind man healed by Jesus as one who has theological insights (9:1-41) is another biased scene. Finally, the trial of Jesus before Pilate (18:28-19:16a) in which Pilate wholeheartedly wants to free Jesus while the Jews adamantly clamours for his condemnation is more an expression of anti-Jewish bias than historical fact.

The Gospel according to Matthew (written around 80-85) tries to defend that Jesus is the new Moses and the Church is the new Israel — a theologically polemical view. The antitheses in Mt 5:21-48 and the subtle attack on Jewish piety in 6:1-18 are the biased views of the evangelist. The anti-Jewish bias climaxes in Mt 23 where the refrain ("Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites...) occurs seven times (symbolic number!) seals and cements Matthew's anti-Jewish bias — it is indeed religious fundamentalism.

In sum, one does notice that in course of the NT era biases and prejudices become part of the NT. This is particularly prominent in Matthew and John.

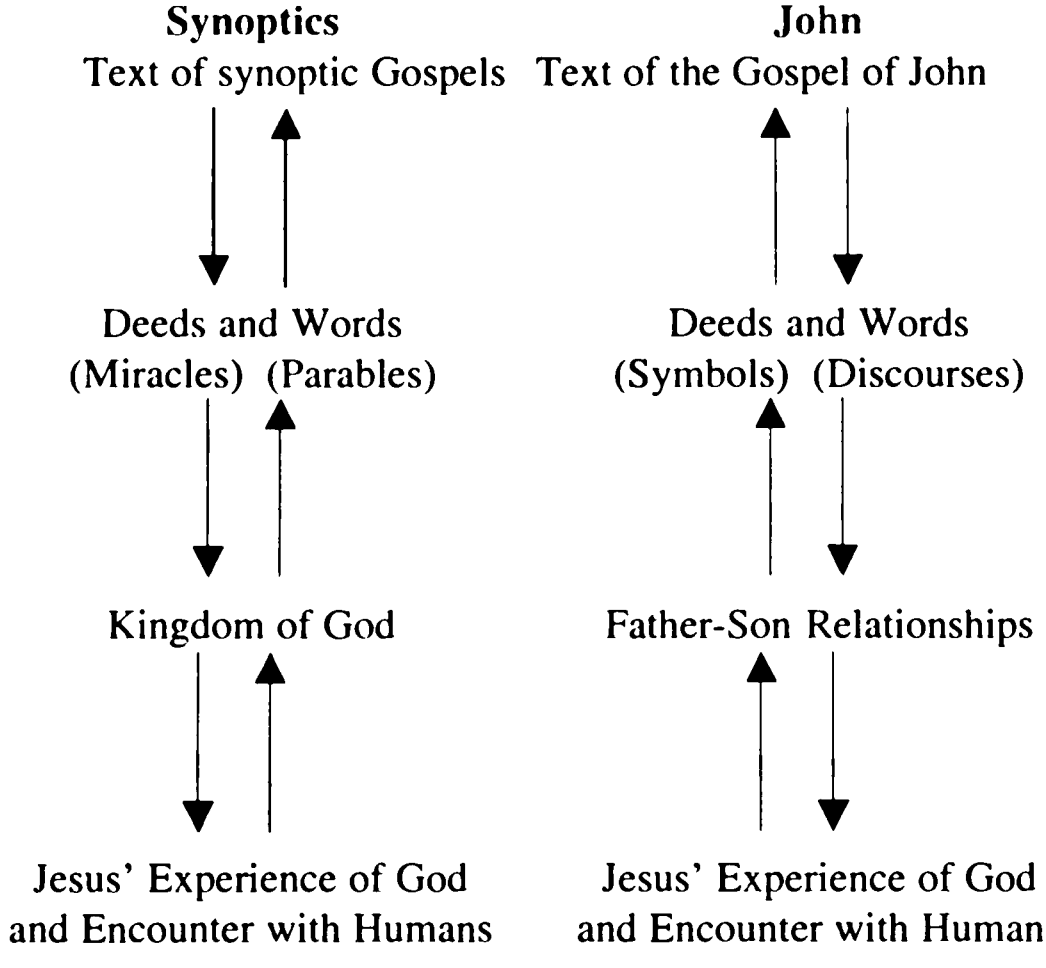
III Implications and Impulses

In the final and concluding part of the essay some pertinent, practical insights are suggested. They are from different perspectives and can help us to become aware of and then eliminate theological and religious fundamentalism.

1) The Bible uses primarily metaphorical language with rich symbols and images. One should become sensitive to this feature of the Bible and try to understand what is communicated rather than read into it what one has in mind, whether consciously or subconsciously. Secondly, Bible uses words (not terms) which are evocative rather than offer precise definitions.

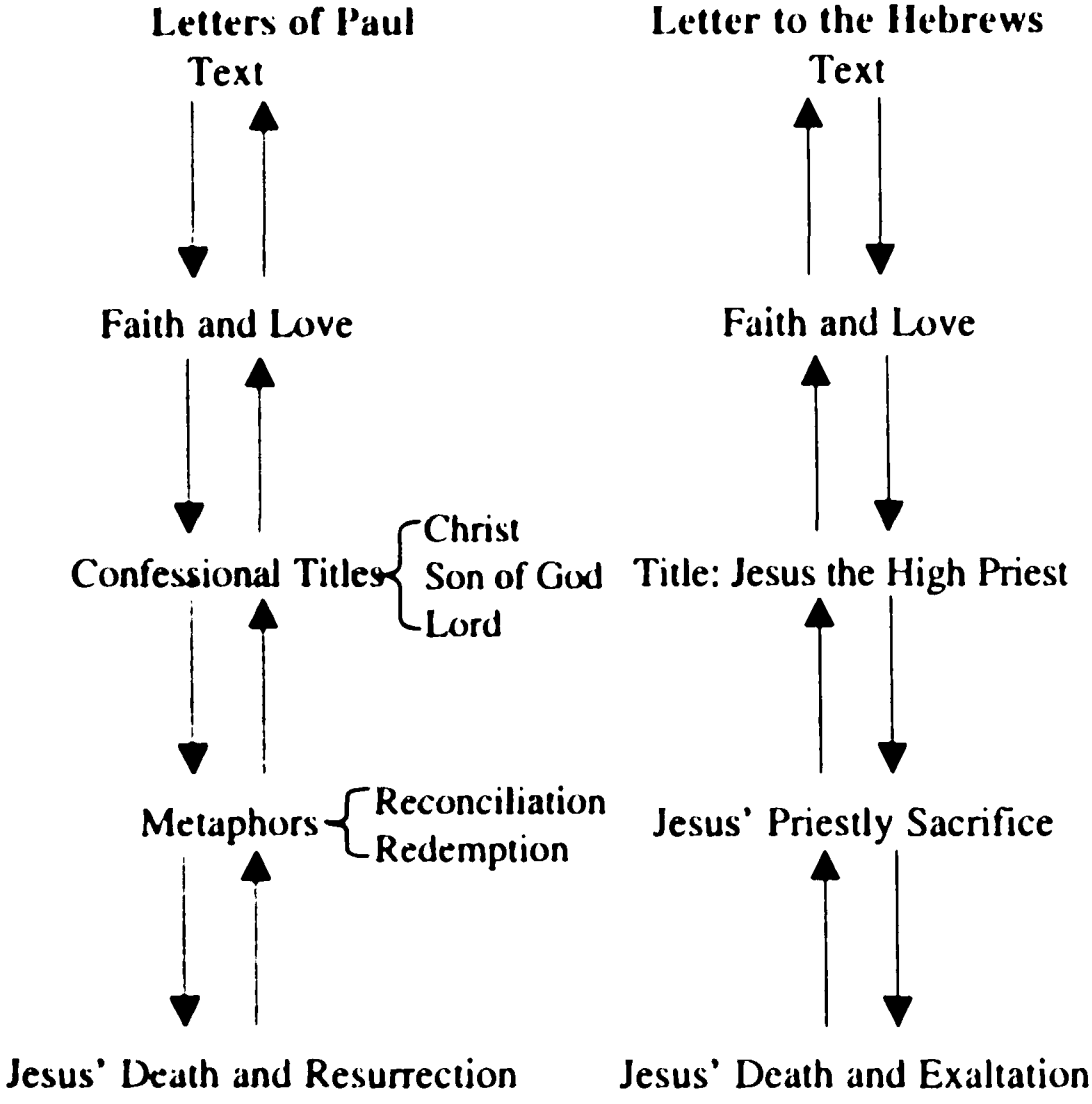
2) The literary types that are used in the Bible should be respected. One has to understand (not merely know) various literary genres employed and enter into the thought-patterns of those centuries.

Figure 1

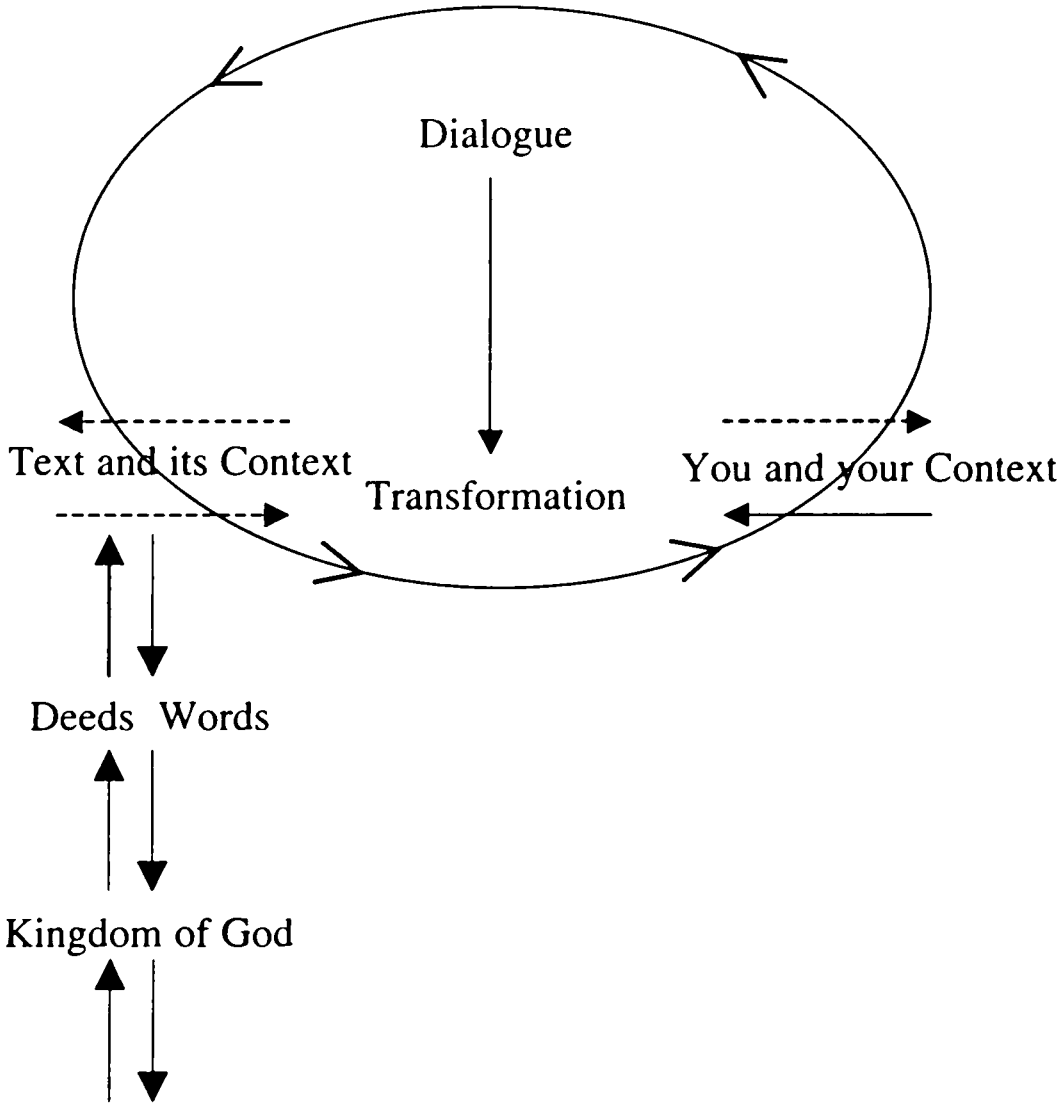


3) Above all, one should try to move from the text to the experience that is the underlying reality. The two Figures show how from experience in the final stage the coded text emerges; and we in turn should try to reach the originary experience from the coded text.

Figure 2



4) Finally, one should understand not only the meaning of the text but also its significance by means of an open hermeneutical encounter with the text and its context and you and your context. This is shown in the diagramme below.



Notes

1. Cf. D.P. Simpson, *Cassel's Latin Dictionary*, London/New York: Macmillan, 1977, 259.
2. L. Brown(ed.), *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* , vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, 1042.
3. *The New Encyclopaedia Britanica*, vol. 5, 1997, 51.
4. Cf. Ibid.
5. G.M. Marsden, "Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity", *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. M. Eliade), vol. 5, London/New York: Macmillan, 1987, 196. Some fundamentalist Jews in Israel (I recall but unable to trace the source now) strongly resisted the construction of new, modern buildings on the land where a Jewish cemetery had existed long ago, arguing that such constructions would impede the resurrection of the dead on the last day!
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 190: "Evangelism usually refers to a largely Protestant movement that emphasizes (1) the Bible as authoritative and reliable; (2) eternal salvation as possible only by regeneration (being "born again"), involving personal trust in Christ and in his atoning work; and (3) a spiritually transformed life marked by moral conduct, personal devotion such as Bible reading and prayer, and zeal for evangelism and mission."
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 194.
11. Ibid., 196.
12. Name is derived from the account of the day of Pentecost as described in Acts 1-2.
13. R.M. Anderson, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity", *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. M. Eliade), vol. 11, London/New York: Macmillan, 1987, 229. See also J.D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, London: SCM, 1993, 309-340.
14. Cf. E. Lohse, *The New Testament Environment* (trans. J.E. Steely), London: SCM, 1976, 55-73.
15. B.M.G. Reardpm, "Christian Modernism", *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. M. Eliade), vol. 10, London/New York: Macmillan, 1987, 7.
16. Ibid. Brown, *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1576: 'Liberal' is presently used "only of education, culture, etc., usually with an admixture of unprejudiced, open-minded; especially free from bigotry or unreasonable prejudice in favour of traditional opinions or established

institutions, open to the reception of new ideas."

17. Cf. Brown, *The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary,* 1804.
18. Cf. Reardon, "Christian Modernism", 8.
19. Cf. M. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, New York: Free Press, 1964, 365-373.
20. Cf. T.F. O'Dea, *Sociology and the Study of Religion: Theory, Research, Interpretation*, New York: Basic Books, 1970, 240-255.
21. As the topic of our study is not fundamentalism in the context of religions as such but more specific, that is, fundamentalism from the biblical perspective, we shall limit ourselves to these bare essentials.
22. For a succinct critical assessment of these two historical perspectives, see my, "The Radicality of Jesus' Priesthood", *Bible Bhashyam* 25 (1999), 229-240 and for an elaborate exposition see H. JEDIN, *History of the Church* (Abridged Edition), vol. 1, New York: Cross Road, 1993, 79-83, 99-106, 113-123, 146-188, 197-204.
23. "The Radicality of Jesus' Priesthood", 239.
24. As for the rest of the episcopal vestments and the Jewish background see J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (trans. (F.H. and C.H. Cave), London: SCM, 1969, 148-149; E. Schuerer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (trans. G. Vermes *et al.*), vol. II, Ediburgh: T & T Clark, 1979, 238-308.
25. Ibid.
26. Cf. G.M. Soares-Prabhu, *Biblical Spirituality of Liberative Action* (Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Theology Series 4), Pune: JDV, 2003, 85-104.
27. *The New Encyclopedia Britanica,* vol. 19, London: Encyclopedia Britanica, 1997, 639.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. *The New Encyclopedia Britanica,* vol. 5, London: Encyclopedia Britanica, 1997, 86. The Latin text reads: "Corde sincero et fide non ficta, abjuro maledico et detestor supradictos errores et hereses" vol. 9, 1957 ediction, 238. While reciting the Latin formula Galileo seems to have whispered: "But nevertheless it [the earth] does move"!
32. G.M. Soares-Prabhu, *A Biblical Theology for India* (Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Theology Series 3), Pune: JDV, 1999, 3-4.
33. For instance, compare the language, tone and content of the Council of Trent with those of Vatican II.

34. For a creative, succinct exposition on Jesus' mission and vision see Soares-Prabhu, *Biblical Spirituality of Liberative Action*, 3-12 and his *Theology of Liberation: An Indian Biblical Perspective* (Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Theology Series 5), Pune: JDV, 2001, 223-251.
35. I do not intend to present a pessimistic profile of the institutional, hierarchical Church but calling a spade a spade. There are of course shining rainbows even amidst dark clouds and frightening thunders. The convocation of the second Vatican Council by John XXIII to open the windows of Vatican to let fresh air come in, the uncompromising and value-based affirmation of John Paul II stating that the war against Iraq is unjust for anyone with well-formed conscience, etc. do make us aware that the Holy Spirit does work in the hierarchy in a special way.
36. Cf. J. Dupius(ed.), *The Christian Faith*, Bangalore: TPI, 1996, 106.
37. *Sancta Mater Ecclesia*, for instance, accepts and approves three stages in the formation of the Gospels in 1964. It was commonly accepted view among the Protestant churches immediately after World War I (form criticism; the works of K.L. Schmidt; M. Dibelius; and R. Bultmann) and soon after World War II (redaction criticism; the works of W. Marxsen; H. Conzelmann; and G. Bornkamm, G. Barth and M.J. Held). As a matter of fact, the Catholic Church was forced to accept the findings of the Protestant biblical scholars after such a time-lag!
38. *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1994, 69-70.
39. Ibid., 70.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 72.
42. Ibid., 70-71.
43. Cf. ibid., 72.
44. Cf. 72.
45. Cf. N. K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985, 104-105.
46. Ibid., 92.
47. Ibid., 93.
48. Cf. ibid., 190-201.
49. For a summary view, see A. Fierro, "Exodus Event and Interpretation in Political Theologies" *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics* (ed. N.K. Gottwald), Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983, 473-481.
50. Cf. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, 180-181.
51. See my, "Social Justice in the Old Testament", *Bible Bhashyam* 4 (1978),

174-175 where the chiastic structure of Ex 6:2-8 is worked out and the theological significance is brought to light.

52. *The New Jerusalem Bible*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985,11.
53. For different opinions see Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, 205-210.
54. *The New Jerusalem Bible*, 280-281.
55. Ibid., 281-282.
56. See the chronology of the Prophets, kings and related events in G.M. Soares-Prabhu, *Biblical Spirituality of Liberative Action* (Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Theology Series 4), Pune: JDV, 2003, 107-109.
57. For details cf. ibid., 110-119.
58. Cf. Soares-Prabhu, *A Biblical Theology for India*, 272-296.
59. Ibid., 290.
60. For a brief and insightful survey cf. Soares-Prabhu, *Biblical Spirituality of Liberative Action*, 89-92.
61. Cf. ibid., 3-10.

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Fundamentalism in Politics

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Abstract: Some understand fundamentalism (hereafter F for convenience) as orthodoxy, others as a form of puritanism, yet others as obscurantism or even fanaticism. We may thus refer to two types of Fundamentalism, one positive (F+) and one negative (F-), the former tolerant and the latter intolerant or even hostile. The author analyses fundamentalism from the perspective of Indian politics and suggests some positive steps to deal with it.

Keywords: Fundamentalism, politics, puritanism, Hindutva, civilisation

Fundamentalisms of various hues are looming on the landscape in our time. There is religious fundamentalism, cultural fundamentalism, economic fundamentalism as well as political fundamentalism. The last named concerns us here. Of course, the term fundamentalism is used with considerable elasticity in various contexts. Hence we need to clarify what meaning we attach to it for the purpose of the present discussion. Some understand fundamentalism (hereafter F for convenience) as orthodoxy, others as a form of puritanism, yet others as obscurantism or even fanaticism. Etymologically F is a mindset that emphasizes fidelity and adherence to the foundations, whether of a creed, an ideology or an institution. As such one would not need to quarrel with it. It all depends on what that creed, ideology or institution is and what is the nature of fidelity and adherence to the same. There are creeds, ideologies and institutions with an in-built intolerance in them. Or even if there is no inherent intolerance, the attitude of the adherents may be intolerant. On the other hand, there are creeds etc. that are quite relaxed and laid back in their orientation and whose adherents, while sincere in their convictions, are not hyper about the same. We may thus refer to two types of F, one positive (F+) and one negative (F-), the former tolerant and the latter intolerant or even hostile.

F+ concerns itself with clarifying its basic position to its followers and animating them to adhere to it sincerely. It spells out the implications of this position for day- to- day conduct, policy-making and relationships. But it does not resort to coercion of any kind, nor does it strike a hostile posture towards non-adherents. Conversely, F- takes on a make-or-break attitude towards its life-situation and world-view and deals harshly with non-adherents. It does not rule out drastic measures and even extreme or "final" solutions to deal with non-conformists. But even here, one finds a broad spectrum of types of F- not all of which necessarily resort to extreme measures. In the field of religion, as also of culture, economics or politics, one finds both F+ and F- at work. While F+ is of a benevolent nature and can even contribute to the social weal within limits, F- tends to be disruptive and is not compatible with what one would normally understand by a liberal dispensation. The liberal world-view is a pluralistic one in which a core of minimum consensus co-exists with an array of diverse but mutually tolerant persuasions in various fields. Minimum consensus is required to bind society together while pluralism makes for variety, vitality and vibrancy within the total human community. General historical experience bears out that dull conformism leads to stagnation whereas Socratic questioning, even if often uncomfortable, can lead to interesting results for human welfare and social development. F- does not seem to share this perception.

Before coming to F in politics, we may briefly refer to manifestations of it in religion, culture and economics as these also impinge on the world of politics and are in turn affected by the latter. In religion, to take an example from Christianity, F+ would be seen in the mandate to love God with one's whole heart and soul and strength, while loving one's fellow humans as oneself. F- would be seen in the exclusivist claim that Christ alone is the Saviour of humankind and in the campaign to convert all of humanity to Christianity, on the plea that there can be no salvation outside the Church. In less liberal times, F- manifested itself in the Inquisition, the Crusades and generally in the wielding of the sword in aid of the cross. In Islam, F+ would express itself in the injunction to surrender oneself totally and unconditionally to Allah as the Supreme Being without a rival and to live in the spirit of brotherhood. F- would manifest

itself in the claim that the Koran is the final word on divine revelation and Mohammad the final Prophet. Non-believers are kafirs and therefore second class humans. Those who deviate from the fundamentals could attract harsh penalties such as amputation, stoning or decapitation, depending on the perceived seriousness of the deviation.

In the area of culture, to take an example from India, F+ is seen in the portrayal of Indian civilization and culture as something of worldwide and perennial significance, something that requires to be nurtured and showcased to the rest of the world. This would require the values and wisdom accumulated over the ages to be preserved for the present and future generations. But when the Hindutvavadi zealots make exaggerated claims of the superiority of Hindu culture in its mainly brahminized version over other forms of culture, indigenous or foreign, they are illustrating what F- is all about. They would want to establish Hindu Dharma, as they interpret it, as the very foundation of the Indian Republic. They would want to relegate all non-Hindus to the status of second class citizens. Instances of cultural F can also be cited from China, Iran and other countries. In the field of ecology, too, F is to be found in both its positive and negative versions. When environmentalists advocate the judicious use of planetary resources in all human enterprises, they are four square in the realm of F+. When however they take their ecological concerns to such extremes that they resort to sabotage and violence as instruments of advocacy, they are displaying F-. In the process they may be stifling even legitimate forms of economic activity. While one can live with F+, an exaggerated version of the same can cause it to degenerate into F-, causing stresses and cleavages in society. Liberalism guards against such an eventuality.

Likewise in economics, sundry theories, ideologies and systems illustrate both F+ and F- in various guises. For instance, capitalism is on terra firma when it lays stress on the virtues of private initiative and enterprise. Open and healthy competition in the market under a fair regime of rules is not something to quarrel over. Thus far, capitalism exhibits F+. But when it makes a dogma of laissez-faire, in the sense that the state has little or no role to play in promoting an equitable society, and must only create the conditions for unbridled profit-making, then surely it shows itself up as F-. On

the other hand, socialism in its phase of F+ lays emphasis on the social dimension of economic production and the need to establish a just socio-economic order through the pro-active exercise of political power even if this means curbing the power of private capital. But when this concern goes to the extreme of stifling free enterprise and concentrating all power, both economic and political, in the hands of the state, then surely F- is at work here. Instances can also be cited from other paradigms such as mixed economy, dependency and so on. But we need not expatiate on these here.

The Political Arena

We may now turn our attention to the specific area of politics and examine how F is at work here. In politics, the core issue is the exercise of power in the public domain for the well ordering of society. There is a whole range of permutations and combinations involving ideologies and systems predicated on this exercise of power, resulting in a kaleidoscopic political pattern locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Speaking in the broadest sense, there is a near universal consensus that orderly civil and social life requires the legitimate exercise of power in the public domain. Differences arise over the understanding of legitimacy and the extent of the public domain. Is legitimacy a function of divine right, of superior force, of class, of descent, or of consent of the governed? And where does the private domain end and the public domain begin? Depending on the answers to these questions there will arise different political persuasions and dispensations. Our general experience of power is that it is inherent in the human psyche, either actively or passively. It further has a tendency to expand its sphere of operations and perpetuate itself. This in itself need not be a bad thing. It only shows that the exercise of power in some form or other, whether direct or indirect, is inescapable in the very constitution of human society. It can be used as well as abused, as all things human. It can be directed to benevolent no less than malevolent ends. Power is the capacity to produce results and no progress is possible without this capacity. The will to utilize this capacity is indispensable for any enterprise, whether personal or societal. Absent this will, no decision-making or implementation is feasible. Thus there is a rider to Lord Acton's

dictum that all power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely.

A basic question arises as to how power is to be legitimized and safeguarded from abuse. How is the mandate for the exercise of power to be secured? What are its limitations? What are the ends to which it is to be directed in concrete terms? Under what conditions is the mandate forfeited? All these are vital considerations in discussing the manifestation of F in politics. We will, therefore, focus our attention on these four variables: the mandate, its limitations, its ends and its termination.

To begin with the mandate of politics, there are political theorists and practitioners who are persuaded that there is something sacred or even mystical about political authority. For them power flows from on high as it were. In their view, there is a divine, quasi-divine, or at any rate preternatural origin to political power. Whether it was expressed as the Mandate of Heaven as in Imperial China, or as the Divine Right of Kings in early Western monarchies, or as theocratic rule under the Clergy as in contemporary Iran, the dominant paradigm is one of the innate right to rule of the anointed. In most of today's world this paradigm may no longer be accepted, though traits of it continue to be found among both the so-called elites and the masses. In an era when most members of a state, or at any rate its politically alert, vocal and active segments believed in the paradigm, it could be considered as fundamental to the polity. Deviations from this paradigm would attract sanctions of various kinds. Political F would be seen to be at work here. But whether it was F+ or F- would depend on whether the bulk of the polity viewed the results of this dispensation as positive or negative. How outsiders might rate this paradigm is a different proposition altogether. Liberals might equate it with F- whereas conservatives might view it as illustrative of F+. To the modern mind, which has largely outgrown the Divine Right paradigm, certain features of the latter may still hold some appeal. Even discounting the sacred origin of political authority, one can still appreciate the fact that authority is something that cannot be taken lightly. It is serious business with equally serious consequences for the whole of society. Our approach to it cannot be casual. Authority needs to be invested with a certain sanctity, if not exactly a

mystic aura. Hence the solemnity surrounding oath-taking and investiture ceremonies, even if the political actors concerned are professed atheists. To theists, at least in principle if not in practice, answerability before God would need to go hand in hand with accountability to the people for authority to be legitimized. Hence the dictum: *Vox Populi Vox Dei.* Within these bounds the Divine Right (DR) paradigm would seem to qualify as F+. Problems arise when DR exceeds its brief by acting as a law unto itself , demanding unquestioning conformity with its diktats. It then degenerates into F- and becomes dysfunctional politically. A countervailing movement would then have to be launched as a corrective.

The paradigm of Superior Force (SF) may seem too primitive and crude to merit consideration as a basis of political legitimacy. But it would be disingenuous and indeed dangerous to by-pass it, given the frequent recourse to it in practice at both national and international levels. It is a matter of common observation that coercive power is what holds the state together in the final instance. I say in the final instance because it is usually used only as a last resort when other instruments have failed. Force is no substitute for reason but it may unfortunately have to be pressed into service in aid of reason in times of crisis. This explains the universal existence of penal systems, police forces and standing armies. Elementary human psychology teaches us that human beings are not always motivated by reason and fellow-feeling. They need the stick at times no less than the carrot. Or else society is doomed to fall apart sooner or later. In this framework of reference, SF definitely has a role to play. But it must be borne in mind that brute force by itself cannot be a source of legitimacy unless we hold that might is right. SF slides into F- when resorted to arbitrarily and as a matter of course, to the exclusion of other more humane methods. Another version of SF is not based on military strength but on the sheer weight of numbers. Arithmetic becomes the basis of political legitimacy. The numerical majority has the right to rule and the minority must grin and bear it as best they may. To have voting as the practical method of arriving at political choices and decisions is one thing, and is to a great extent unavoidable. But to elevate majority rule to some kind of sacrosanct principle is quite another. In fact it would qualify as F-. Minorities and majorities are quirks of history or of circumstance and

are subject to flux. No special significance need be attached to them. Today's majorities may be tomorrow's minorities and vice versa.

We may now turn to another paradigm of political legitimization based on Class. In this perspective, the social class or classes that control the means of production in society also hold the levers of power in that society. Their ideas, norms and projects are those that dominate in that society. There is much truth in this formulation. To take the stand that all social classes need to share in the creation no less than in the consumption of national wealth would be an expression of F+. But to go to the extreme of overemphasizing the forces of economic production to the virtual exclusion of other factors, and to harp on the expropriation of one class in order to empower another is to display a form of F-. Class reductionism has been a stumbling block to Marxists the world over. This paradigm needs revising if it is to do justice to contemporary social developments and enhance its relevance.

Yet another paradigm that we may refer to here is the Ethnic Paradigm (EP), predicated on variables such as dynasty, race, tribe or caste. In this perspective, political power is intrinsically linked, as by some kind of divine pre-destination, to a particular royal family, tribe, race or caste. In virtue of this linkage, the royal family, tribe, race or caste concerned is specially endowed to exercise political control over a particular society. This perspective is in vogue in largely traditional societies with a hoary history of domination by a particular dynasty, tribe, race or caste. But even supposedly modern societies have not fully shrugged off this notion either in theory or in practice. Notions of the Ubermensch (the Super Man), the White Man's Burden, Manifest Destiny, Co-Prosperity Sphere, Civilizing Mission and so on have profoundly influenced political developments world-wide in modern times, even as notions such as the Mandate of Heaven being entrusted to the Middle Kingdom (in Imperial China) or the Hindu myth of the allegedly superior Brahmin caste emerging from the head of Brahman (the Supreme Being) in contrast to the lowest caste emerging from his feet, prevailed in earlier times. Many of these notions or myths may not command explicit theoretical respectability today but one should not underestimate their implicit subconscious hold on considerable sections of contemporary society

in many parts of the globe, not excluding the supposedly advanced societies. If the EP restricts itself to a de facto depiction of the relative political strengths of various ethnic formations within scientifically determined parameters and with respect to a certain period of time, it may still pass muster as F+. But if it presses its case too far and claims a de jure status of perennial political supremacy on behalf of any ethnic entity, it will qualify as F-. We may choose to delude ourselves into believing that we have finally discarded ethnic parochialism in favour of cosmopolitanism in our political beliefs and practices. But the fact of the matter is that in ever so many instances – whether at local, regional, national or international levels – we are caught off-guard in our ethnically biased policies and actions. Ethnic fundamentalism is alive and kicking in many parts of the world. Much blood has flowed and destruction been wrought by its depredations. The horrors of ethnic cleansing, whether in erstwhile Yugoslavia, in Burundi or in Gujarat, to name only a few of a long list of ethnic trouble spots, have their own tale to tell. On the other hand, empowerment of Blacks in the United States and in South Africa, as also of the Dalits in India, notwithstanding frequent backlashes, augurs well for more positive and hopeful political developments in other parts of the world as well, so that ethnic fundamentalism does not have the last word.

We may now turn our attention to the paradigm of Liberal Democracy (LD) which is premised on the principle of consent of the governed as the source of political legitimacy. Fundamental to LD is the belief that power over the people properly flows or should flow from the people themselves. To put it simplistically, numerous individual wills merge into a collective will that finally holds sway over the body politic. In this sense the people rule themselves. But the actual situation is much more complex. The purportedly collective will often turns out to be that of the dominant sections of a given society. And these sections may actually represent a minority of the whole society. But their will and interests masquerade as that of the entire society. The challenge of true LD is how to balance the interests and rights of various sections of the political community in such wise that the weaker sections are not driven to the wall. Less organized sections of a national society find it hard to make their voice

heard and stake their claim to a share in the decision-making process. LD must make space for them and give scope even to dissenting views and non-conformism within reasonable limits. Else rule-by – the-people will end up as a charade. Even in LD one can find F at work. One version of it is majoritarianism which is a crude rule-of – thumb for rough and ready democracy. The majority is always right and the minority must always meekly submit to majority rule. There is no fine-tuning of majority rule here. The quantitative element supersedes the qualitative element of true democracy . Here is F- at work. As we have already touched on this aspect earlier in the discussion we need not dwell on it further. Another form of F- is a constant pandering to the whims and fancies of the hoi polloi even when this is detrimental to the long-term interests of society whether in the areas of health, economy or environment. Weak democratic leaderships with no strategic vision are prone to indulge in populism in lieu of sound and vigorous political management. And this is usually done with an eye on electoral gains.

Boundaries of the Political Mandate

It is not only the nature of the mandate of politics but also the extent of its operation that needs clarification. Issues of the public versus private domain, of ends and means and of the termination of the mandate must be addressed under this heading.

Speaking of the boundaries of politics, there are two extremes of the ideological spectrum, with various intermediate positions. One extreme is the maximalist position which would give the largest scope to political activity in any society. The other is the minimalist position which would restrict the scope of politics to the bare minimum. In the latter view that government is best which governs least, since government is at best a necessary evil, politics being the 'last refuge of scoundrels'. For the maximalist, politics is the life-blood of any community. It arises from the very constitution of society which requires a regulatory mechanism for it to hold together and move forward to any civilizational or developmental goal. The logic of this position is that there can be no human progress without law and order. And there can be no law and order without authority. Further, there can be no authority without political power and the ability to

enforce its writ. This is what politics is all about. Remove politics and society falls into anarchy. Hence politics is not a necessary evil but an essential good. It binds society together and energizes it to work towards its goals. The reason why politics becomes all-pervasive is not some unbridled ambition (though ambition does feature here) but the apex role it plays in coordinating and harmonizing the power drives at work in all areas and at all levels of society. This apex role necessarily has to be an over-riding one since it affects the public domain of civil society as a whole. Hence it has the maximum visibility and impact for better or worse. It is this function of the exercise of power that the term 'politics' refers to, though power is at work in other areas too, whether it be in the family, in professional bodies, religious groups or elsewhere. But since the latter exercise of power takes place in the private domain of civil society, the term 'politics' does not properly apply to it, though we do speak of domestic politics, boardroom politics, ecclesiastical politics and so on. It is at the point where the private exercise of power impinges on the wider civil society that the private domain ends and the public domain begins. At this point the public exercise of power, viz. the explicitly political one, asserts itself on behalf of the wider community. Thus politics gets involved, at least indirectly, with almost any and every activity, however apolitical, in society. In this sense it becomes all-pervasive in an enabling sense and not in the sense of hijacking any or all of the other forms of societal activity. Problems arise when politics is apotheosized and given a veto over the latter, which happens not infrequently, illustrating an obnoxious type of political fundamentalism.

The opposite minimalist viewpoint would limit politics to the task of checking crime, providing defence against external enemies and creating conditions for free enterprise. Any further mandate entrusted to politics would shrink the space of private enterprise and civil liberties. The State would loom as a Leviathan over the lives of its members, demoting them from citizens to subjects. While the point that politics needs to be constantly monitored and provided with due checks and balances, given its tendency to exceed its brief and encroach on areas outside its proper jurisdiction, is well taken, any exaggerated attempt to emasculate its role in the public domain would be counterproductive. It would mean that the political estab-

lishment would have to wash its hands off any obligation to play a proactive role in promoting an egalitarian society. A skewed socio-economic order might very likely be the result of this political escapism, with its attendant tensions and social cleavages. This scenario is indicative of another type of political F from the other end of the spectrum. It can have a destabilizing effect on the whole of society in the long term. Thus avoiding either the maximalist or minimalist extremes and evolving a suitable balance between the private and public domains in a manner that suits time, place and circumstance seems to be the best safeguard against F- in any given society.

The question of ends and means is also of vital import for any political set-up. Here too the realist and idealist ends of the ideological spectrum generate their respective forms of F-. For the political realist politics is a down-to-earth, no-nonsense business. When power has to be exercised it must be done effectively and not through half measures. If results are to be achieved certain steps must be taken and should not be permitted to be challenged. Else the credibility of political authority is at stake. Given the human propensity to take short cuts so as to circumvent obligation, political authority has to have demonstrative value in order to secure compliance. Thus a certain ruthlessness is called for on occasion. In this view, whatever means are necessary to achieve desirable ends are in order. But there is a danger lurking here. Where does one draw the line in following a course of political action? Is any and every method that can produce results permissible? If so where is the room for ethics? These basic questions cannot be brushed aside lightly. The institutions and conventions of liberal democracy, particularly constitutional provisions like fundamental rights,universal franchise, free media and judicial review, have been put in place precisely to guard against the F- of a runaway political realism. Idealism on the other hand, while stressing the ethical component of political authority, often takes a purist approach that leads to scruple, vacillation and impracticality. The results on the ground are often disastrous despite the best of motives on the part of leaders of undoubted integrity. Thus here too a balance has to be struck between the perspectives of realism and idealism. This may sound platitudinous but there seems to be no other way of keeping F- at bay.

Can the mandate of politics be terminated? If so, under what circumstances? Some may argue that politics is a permanent function in society. Hence there will be politics as long as there is society. Thus the mandate of politics is perennial. The Social Contract theorists exemplified by Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau hold that politics is exercised in the nature of a trust, following a contract entered into between the people and the government. Locke in particular lays great stress on Natural Law which for him is the basis of legitimate political authority. If the trust is betrayed , the mandate to rule is forfeited to the people who will determine to whom the mandate is to be given subsequently. The sole purpose of the mandate is the promotion of the security, dignity, rights and interests of the people. Thus we see two elements at work here. One is the admittedly permanent function of political authority and the other the transient and contingent nature of the trustees and their tenure. One should not be confused with the other. There was a time when Louis XIV could boast "L'etat c'est moi" or "I am the State". In more recent times, D.K. Borua claimed that India was Indira and Indira was India. Sycophants and self-anointed political messiahs have not been wanting in earlier or modern times. Certain political parties and regimes consider themselves permanently destined to rule. In this regard they are political fundamentalists par excellence. They visualize themselves as endowed with some extraordinary worldview and prerogatives to rule over lesser mortals. This posture would be amusing if it were not so dangerous. History down to our own times is replete with instances of autocracies that have functioned on this understanding, with disastrous consequences. Limited tenure and circulation of so-called political elites is a sure bet against such fundamentalism.

Conclusions

In light of the foregoing discussion certain broad conclusions emerge in respect of political fundamentalism. F turns out to be a coat of many colours. It emerges from both ends of the political spectrum and affects all manner of ideologies, parties, systems and regimes. It is a function of various factors such as beliefs, ideals, values, interests and drives. No section of society seems to be fully immune to it. While certain types of F are not in themselves dangerous insofar as they do not press their case aggressively, other types

definitely are, as they tend to treat non-adherents and non-conformists with suspicion and even hostility. Such F is what we have termed F- as it has negative social results and can lead to civil strife and even international conflicts in extreme cases. The problem even with F+ is that it can degenerate into F- with relative ease and needs constant safeguarding against such a contingency.

In India numerous instances of F + and F- can be cited from across the political spectrum. The Indian National Congress, which spearheaded the freedom struggle, held sway over most of the country for much of the post-Independence period. While in the early years it could claim with some justification that it represented the core national consensus and had the mandate of the people, it developed a vested interest in power over the years and behaved as though it had a fundamental and permanent right to rule. Its complacence and lackadaisical performance cost it dearly at the hustings. Its F+ had soured into F-. Today's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) displays its own version of F+ and F-. The former is seen in its forthright stand on India's cultural heritage and on the need to nurture it and preserve its perennial values. Nobody would quarrel with that. But F- creeps in when the BJP pushes its agenda of so-called cultural nationalism aggressively, giving it a predominantly Hindu slant with the result that minority groups feel intimidated and relegated to second class citizenship. The Marxist parties and various leftist formations and splinter groups, in their turn, have not lagged behind in their own brands of F+ and F-. While F+ is seen in their advocacy of the marginalized and subaltern sections of the polity, their F- takes the form of extreme measures such as violence and terrorism resorted to by certain radical groups on the one hand, and a contrived rationalization of typically bourgeois middle class positions masquerading as progressive proletarian measures on the part of established mainstream Marxist ruling parties on the other. Examples of F+ and F- can be cited also from various regional parties and movements and in respect of public policies and issues, whether regarding Kashmir, affirmative action (the policy of reservations), mixed economy, liberalization, privatization, globalization, non-alignment and so on. But it is not necessary to go into the details of these at this point. We have already discussed the topic of F at length and the corollaries can flow. On the global scene, a brash type of F- has announced

itself with the campaign to impose Pax Americana on far flung parts of planet earth. It is to be hoped that both nationally and internationally, moderation and good sense prevails all around so that all sections of the world community can enjoy a lasting peace dividend.

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Ideology and Terrorism

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Abstract: While avoiding reductionism, we strive in this article to blend the spiritual as well as the material, the positive as well as the pejorative content of ideology and indicate its constitutive role in the identity-formation of a particular group or an individual. Basing ourselves on this concept of ideology we seek to explain how terrorism is married to a violent ideology. Therefore to dislodge it we need to evolve an ideology that will effectively lead us all to value human life and the virtue of justice.

Keywords: Ideology, terrorism, philosophy, formation

Today, violence has become a life-style. It has become increasingly difficult to distinguish a friend from a foe. As the torch of terror burns bright and the flag of those who claim themselves to be waging a war on terror, flies high, nothing seems to be in a position to free us from the folly of self-annihilation. We have come to know that it is not only guns and bombs that create terror, but also the 'powder', the planes, the *trishuls* and the pickaxes, which have already proved their mettle on this battleground. A deeper reflection on our world reveals that our present scenario is racked by many aggressive ideological conflicts.

Paradoxically, the very notion of ideology seems to have evaporated without any trace, from the writings of the scholar popularly known as Postmodernism and Poststructuralism (Eagleton 1996: xi). Moreover, the concept of ideology is not free from controversy and dispute in the religious arena, although the tribe of those who teach, that no religion is ideologically free is on the increase. 'Let him who has no ideology caste the first stone' was the pebble that one Latin American bishop tossed back at one of his colleagues who charged

that the liberation theologians were ideologically biased. Every religion, then, is embedded in some sort of ideology.

In this paper I wish to take up this controversial and conflict-laden topic. The term 'ideology' defies exhaustive description and unequivocal definition. We shall strive to enter into its evolutionary history first and then try to arrive at a bird's eye-view of the same and finally, we shall attempt to unravel the relationship between ideology and terrorism.

Towards an Understanding of Ideology

The term 'ideology' has a long and complex history. Hence, it is important to walk through the lanes and the by-lanes of its troubled history.

Articulation

The exact history of the genesis of the concept of ideology is shrouded in mystery. Attempts have been made to trace it back to Beacon's *idola*, Hume's *feigning* and Napolean's contemptuous smacking of it as the unrealistic *doctrinairism* (Mukerji 1955: 13). Today, scholars appear to agree that the concept of ideology had reached its full expression a few centuries ago. Hence, it is by hindsight that some of them teach that religion was always mixed with ideology. It is said that the word entered our lexicon due to the labours of the French philosopher A. L. C. Destutt de Tracy, who is said to have employed it for the first time, in 1796 merely as a name for his own ' science of ideas'. It is said that he hatched this 'science of ideas' in his prison cell. Hence, Terry Eagleton pithily remarks, "the notion of ideology was thus brought to birth in thoroughly ideological conditions: ideology belonged to the rational politics, in contrast to the irrationalist barbarism of terror" (Eagleton 1996: 66). De Tracy and his followers called themselves *ideologistes*. Their program aimed at the creation of a democratic, rational and scientific society. Incidentally, this key concept was born at the time of the French Revolution. It was the French Revolution that saw the power of the three ideas-equality, fraternity and liberty (Pieris 1990: 26). Ideology in this sense was a critique of the irrational dogmatism of the *ancienl regime* and an attempt to build a society entirely trans-

parent to reason, free of prejudice, superstition and obscurantism of every kind.

Pejorativisation

The *ideologistes* enjoyed a key policy-making position in the *Deuxieme Classe* (moral and political sciences) at the Institute National. As one would expect, they clashed with Napoleon Bonaparte. He, therefore, dismissed its members as impractical visionaries and persecuted them with ridicule, allegedly under the name of *ideologues* (Eagleton 1996: 67-68). Karl Marx preserved this Napoleonic bias, although he did not deem them as impractical. He, along with his companion, Friedrich Engels, considered the views of 'Young Hegelians' like Ludwig Feuerbach and Max Stirner ideology. They opined that these thinkers were endlessly preoccupied with ideas and the critique of ideas and failed to see that the ideas and other 'products of consciousness' are based on the material conditions of life (Thompson 1984:1). Marx's theory of ideology is mainly embodied in his celebrated work *The German Ideology* 1846. Perhaps his concept of alienation might throw light on this point. He argues that under certain social conditions, human powers, products and processes escape from the control of human subjects and come to assume an apparently autonomous existence, estranged in this way from their agents. Such phenomena then, come to exert an imperious power over them, as a result of which humans summit to what are in fact, the products of their own activity, as an alien force. Thus, ideas are grasped as autonomous entities and readily accepted as belonging to the natural order of things (Eagleton 1996: 70- 71). This view has been assimilated and appropriated by sociologists, anthropologists, political analysts, and today we notice that it has been integrated into the corpus of concepts employed by the social sciences (Thompson 1984:1). In this context we, should note that Marx and Engels were not the first thinkers to see consciousness as socially determined; in different ways Rousseau, Montesquieu and Condorcet had arrived at this view before him (Eagleton 1996: 71-72). Marx and Engels viewed certain forms of consciousness as false and falsehood as somehow structural and necessary to a specific social order. That is, they taught that sometimes consciousness operates as a system of illusion that justifies the politics of status quo. Thus, within the Marxist tradition,

ideology is a term that attempts to picture or map out how cultures are structured in ways that enable the group holding power to have maximum power with minimum conflict. This is not a matter of a conspiracy or a hidden plotting on the part of the ruling elite, but is a matter of how the dominant group works through institutions, values, and conceptions of the world, symbol / ritual networks, in order to legitimise the current state of affairs (Mukerji 1955: 13-14). Hence, one can see why Marx referred to it as false consciousness that provides a canopy to oppression and exploitation

Refinement

Several scholars took seriously these Marxist insights. Considering theirs insights and a host of others, we have come to understand that all thought is partial, partisan and provisional, and in fact all thought is ideological. Hence, in the next section let us trace how this concept undergoes extension and enrichment under the aegis of some of our eminent thinkers. Slowly we discover that ideology is not merely a matter of consciousness. It is not just a false reflection, a screen between reality and us. Such thinking is regarded as belonging to the outmoded 'philosophy of the subject'. Hence we look at ideology in terms of lived relations, rather an mere theoretical cognitions.

George Lukacs

In his great work *History of Class Consciousness,* George Lukacs, the Hungarian Marxist thinker, attacks the correspondence theory of truth. "It is true", he writes " that reality is the criterion for the correctness of the thought but reality is not, it becomes and to become the participation of thought is needed" (Eagleton 1996: 94). Hence thought is both cognitive and creative. This means that we never simply know 'something', since in the very act of knowing we already transform it into something else. Therefore, to know myself is no longer to be the self that I was, the moment I knew it. Hence, it seems that our consciousness is essentially active and dynamic, in which case the notion of ideology as false consciousness, or as some lag or gap between the way things are and the way we know them, stands in need of refinement. He unembarrassedly views Marxism as the ideological expression of the proletariat. So also

science, truth or theory are no longer to be strictly counterposed with ideology. On the contrary, they are just expressions of a particular class ideology. Truth is just bourgeois society coming to consciousness of itself as a whole, and the place where this momentous events takes 'place' is the self-awareness of the proletariat. Thus truth for Lukacs is always related to a particular historical situation and never a affair beyond history altogether. But the proletariat being forced to sell their work in order to survive is uniquely in position to unlock the social order, based on commodity fetishism (capitalism). Hence, ideology for Lukacs is not merely a discourse untrue to the way things are, but one true to them only in a limited and superficial way, ignorant of their deeper tendencies and connections (Eagleton 1996: 93-106).

Karl Mannheim

Karl Mannheim in his book *Ideology and Utopia* teaches that, with the rise of the middle-class society, the old monological world view of the traditional society has fallen away. An authoritarian priestly and political caste that once dominated the field, which determined what is deemed as knowledge, has now yielded ground to a 'free' intelligentsia, caught on the hop with conflicting theoretical perspectives. Such a scenario could definitely be hit by relativism. Contrary to this relativism, Mannheim speaks of what he calls 'relationism', meaning the location of ideas within the social system that generates them. In this context, he makes an interesting observation. He says that ideas are internally shaped by their social origins but their truth-value is not reducible to them. The inevitable one-sidedness of a particular view can be corrected by synthesising with the rival view, thus building up a provisional and dynamic totality of thought. Truth for him remains adequate only to a particular stage of historical development. Hence, preserving the pejorative sense, he refers to ideology as the antiquated beliefs in a set of obsolete myths, norms and ideals, unhinged from the real (Eagleton 1996: 107-110).

Antonio Gramsci

Another thinker on whom the Lukacsian mantle descends, is the Italian Marxist thinker Anthonio Gramsci. The key category in his thought is *hegemony*. He uses the word to mean the ways in which

a governing power from wins those it subjugates consent to its rule. To win hegemony is to establish moral, political and intellectual leadership in social life by diffusing ones 'world view' through out the social fabric of society as a whole, thus equating one's own interest with the interest of the society at large. Basing themselves on this insight, scholars opine that the concept of hegemony is broader than ideology: it includes ideology but is not reducible to it. A ruling group may secure and remain in power by ideological means. But the concept of hegemony enriches the concept of ideology. It lends this otherwise somewhat abstract term a material body and political cutting edge. Hence, Eagleton says " it is with Gramsci that a crucial transition is effected from ideology as a 'system of ideas' to ideology as lived, habitual, social practice-which must then presumably, encompass the unconscious, inarticulate dimensions of social experience as well as the working of the formal institutions". Moreover, hegemony being never a once-and-for-all achievement, but a process that is continuously renewed, recreated, defended and modified, offers its dynamism to the concept of ideology, which perhaps lacks the overtones of struggle and often refers to some kind of ossified and ossifying false consciousness (Eagleton 1996: 112-123).

Theodor Adorno

Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt School teaches that ideology is a form of 'identity-thinking'. He teaches that we are controlled by identity principle, which strives to suppress all contradictions. Our thought is revolted by the sight of 'otherness', that which threatens to escape our closed system and hence, we strive violently to reduce it to our own image and likeness. He views identity as the primal form of all ideology. The opposite of ideology is not truth but heterogeneity or difference. Thus one can trace the echo of the post-structuralist of our days in him. In the face of homogenisation in ideology, he affirms an essential non-identity of thought and reality, the concept and its object, and posits a negative dialectic, which strives perhaps to include within thought, that which is heterogeneous to it (Eagleton 1996: 125-128).

Jurgen Habermas

Habermas, the second generation Frankfurt school thinker, calls ideology a form of communication systematically distorted by power. That is, ideology is a discourse that has become a medium of domination that serves to legitimate relations of organized force. Unlike hermeneutical philosopher like Hans-Georg Gadamer who views misunderstandings and lapses of communication as textual lapses to be rectified by sensitive interpretation, Habermas draws our attention to the possibility of deformity of the entire discursive system. Hence, he says, ideology marks the point when the language is bent out of communicative shape by power interests that impinge on it. Thus, a distorted communication tend to present the appearance of justness and normativity, for it successfully conceals or deform the very norm by which they might judged to be deformed (Eagleton 1996: 128-136).

Louis Althusser

The French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, propounds his theory mainly in his celebrated essay 'Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses' as well as, in scattered fragments of his volume *For Marx*. He says that all thought is conducted within the terms of an unconscious 'problematic' which silently underpins it. A problematic is a paradigm that organises particular categories at any given historical moment, which constitute the limits of what we are able to utter or conceive. A problematic is not an ideology, but is ideological. Althusser does not speak of the discourse of true science, which, for him is free from all ideological taint. But he does speak of the possibility of talking about the problematic of specific ideology or a set of ideologies. This means, that we need to refer to the underlying structure of categories so organised as to exclude the possibility of a certain conception. Its fundamental structure is thus closed, circular and self-confirming: where one moves from within it, one will always be ultimately returned to what is securely known, of which what is known is merely a extension or repetition. A scientific problematic by contrast is open-ended: it can be revolutionised as a new scientific object emerges and a new horizon of questions opens up. Science is an authentically exploratory pursuit, whereas ideology

gives the appearance of moving forward while marching stubbornly on the spot.[1] Thus ideology cannot qualify as knowledge. It denotes a realm of lived relations rather than theoretical cognition. It is not a matter of not knowing or failing to know reality at all. It involves a kind of self- misrecognition. Hence, he defines ideology as a ' representation of the imaginary relationships of the individual to their real conditions of existence'. 'Imaginary' here does not mean 'unreal' but pertaining to the image.[2] ' In ideology' writes Althusser, 'men do indeed express, not the relation between them and their conditions of existence, but *the way* they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence: this presupposes both a real relations and an 'imaginary', 'lived' relation... in ideology the real relation is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation' (Eagleton 1996:142).Thus ideology causes us to think that the world is naturally oriented towards us, spontaneously given to the subject and the subject conversely feels itself as the natural part of the world. Hence, in a way, ideology brings us into being as individuals mainly through what he calls the ideological state apparatus-school, family, church, media and the rest. These ideological structures support the dominant powers and ensure the submission of the oppressed (Eagleton 1996: 136-154).

Pierre Bourdiue

The term ideology is not particularly central to French sociologist Pierre Bourdiue's work but one can trace a relevant concept of *habitus* by which he attempts to map the inculcation in humans of a set of durable dispositions which generates particular practices. Individuals in society act in accordance with what he calls the 'cultural unconsciousness' that lends consistency and unity to their actions without any reference to some conscious intention. In the very spontaneity of our habitual behaviour we reproduce certain tacit norms and values. Thus, habitus he says, is 'history turned into nature', it is a mechanism through which we feel spontaneously disposed to do what social conditions demand of us. A social order strives to naturalise its own arbitrariness and becomes apparently unquestionable through the operation of what he calls habitus. Social life contains a number of different habitus, each system is appropriate to what he calls *field.* A field, he holds, is a competitive

system of social relations which functions according to its own internal logic, composed of institutions or individuals that are competing for the same stake. What is generally at stake in such fields is maximum dominance within them. The achieving of such dominance depends on a set of unspoken rules that structure what can be validly uttered or perceived within it. It is the 'cultural capital' appropriate to the field at a particular time that determines this power play. Hence, we can say that Bourdieu presents ideology as a way of life, not just false consciousness (Eagleton 1996: 156-158).

Towards a New Synthesis

We can see that the concept evolved and got complexified over a period of time due to the efforts of many brilliant thinkers. Our study also reveals to us that the term evades all kinds of reductionist definitions for it appears to be a shorthand term for an immense range of things.scattered in time and space. Hence scholars like Terry Eagleton says, " the word 'ideology', one might say, is a *text*, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands; it is traced through by divergent histories, and it is probably more important to asses what is valuable or can be discarded in each of these lineages than to to merge them forcibly into some Grand Global Theory" (Eagleton 1996: 1). Hence it is probably more useful to think in terms of Ludwig Wittgenstein's doctrine of 'family resemblances'-of a network of overlapping features rather than a constant essence. Let us pass on to some of this interwoven aspect of this multifaceted concept.

A Worldview

Ideology indicates a specific worldview. This spells its traditional essential relationship with ideas. Hence it is often linked with the idea of false consciousness. The view that is regnant today readily ideology as thoroughly evaluative. That is why ideology is thought to be something shady, deformed, distorted or contaminated and as such, has to be dispelled from our mind. Yet, we cannot deny its role in providing meaning for our life. But it is not merely a coherent view meant to explain the world (may be deemed as generating false perspective from our standpoint). That is, it is not just explanatory but in true spirit of Marx it aims at the transformation of the world.

Hence, besides being a 'vision' that conveys meaning to our existence, it seeks to missionize us to shape both our present and the future. Thus, it is concerned about a supposed radical amelioration of the socio-political order with concomitant changes in the psycho-spiritual sphere. Perhaps, the distinction made by Raymond Guess between the descriptive, pejorative and positive definitions of the term indicates what we have stated above. In the descriptive sense, ideology is a belief system characteristic of certain social groups or classes composed of both discursive as well as non-discursive elements. In its pejorative meaning ideology is viewed as a set of values, meanings, and beliefs that are contaminated to its very roots, because they create massive social illusion that legitimate an unjust form of power. Finally, in a more positive sense, ideology is seen as a set of beliefs that cohere and inspire a particular group in the pursuit of political interests deemed as desirable to it. Hence, we can view ideology in summary as unifying[3], rationalising[4], legitimising[5], universalising[6], naturalising[7], action orienting[8] worldview. (Eagleton 1996: 46).

Materialization

The traditional talk of ideology is couched in terms of consciousness and ideas. These terms have their appropriate use but they unwittingly nudge us in the direction of idealism. In this context the Soviet philosopher V N Voloshinov in his *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* offers an important insight when he says, " without sign there is no ideology". In his view, the domain of sign and the domain of ideology are co-extensive. Consciousness can arise only in the material embodiment of the signifier, and since the signifiers are themselves material, they are not just reflections of reality but an integral part of it. Thus consciousness is less something within us than something around us and between us, a network of signifier that constitutes us through and through (Eagleton 1996: 193-194). Hence, Ideology does not merely have ideal or spiritual existence but it is very much material. This means that the ideal realm is not separated from the material realm. Hence, ideology does not consist of ideas as opposed to matter but they have material existence in the sense that they are fully expressed in the objective social forms. Hence like Athusser and others we do not accept the

ideal as the something pure isolated from the social practices, relations and structures. This insertion or inscription of ideology in our life process is carried out through the operation of the ideological state apparatus (Madhu 1995: 339-343).

Identity Formation

Ideology affects our volitional behaviour. It creates us as persons: it calls us and calls us into being. Ideology forms us in as much as we form it. This is achieved through a process of rationalisation and naturalisation. Ideological structure appears natural, 'according to the order of things', innocent and even 'good'. It appears to be a logical conclusion of a historical era. It has an air of progress. Hence, it is internalised and assimilated by individuals as a result their volitional behaviour, is shaped and influenced by it, as we have already seen in the work of Bourdieu. Thus, ideology secures its own reproduction by a manipulative incorporation of the logic by which human subjects are reduced to mere obedient effects.

Terrorism as an Ideology

As the war against terrorism is rising, we are confronted with the politics of Adam's right of naming and blaming a people. While the US puts up a strong face of infinite justice and sustaining freedom, others, particularly the Islamic people, are defined as inherently brutal and uncivilised. Hence, the question of the definition of terrorism itself becomes important. Unfortunately it is next to impossible to find an universally satisfactory definition of terrorism, and the reasons for this are political rather than semantic (Wanek 1978: 1) That is why 'who' defines whom as a terrorist is deeply significant. One man's terrorist is often another man's freedom fighter (Long 1990:10). Isn't the very act of calling someone a terrorist, at times, an act of terror? Hence, the complexity of the issue reveals that it has all the ingredients of an ideology.

Terror as a Philosophy

The terrorists claim that they are struggling for a cause, which they deem to be liberative. Terrorism is motivated by a deeply held sense of grievance over some form of injustice. To achieve these

political goals, the terrorists indulge in a systematic transformation of the political ends into moral imperatives that are used to justify whatever means are deemed necessary to attain those goals. Some see terrorism as the weapon of the weak because the strong also control the doctrinal system and their terror does not count as terror (Chomsky 2001: 9). Therefore, although many eyebrows might be raised as regards the justification of the violent means employed, they operate as though they are often performing a saintly act. Think of the pilots who crashed the plans onto the twin towers or consider the conviction of the Kashmiri militant that liberation of Kashmir is a sacred act or even the perpetrators of the war on terrorism who are apparently on an avenging path which seems to say 'give war a chance' (Arokiasamy vidya jyoti 2002:3). Hence, one can clearly notice the ideal or the spiritual element, which is constitutive ideology. This becomes evident if we understand that the impact of terrorism on the general public is more psychological rather than physical (Long 1990: 1). The terrorist's worldview is heavily dependent on the insider-outsider dialectics as every other fundamentalist group. It identifies and recognises the outsider as an enemy. Thus the Islamic militants share a common conviction that western countries, particularly the U.S., Russia, India and Israel as Satan's agents and by that, token enemies of Islam (Ansari:Frontline Aug 2001 : 66). U.S and its allies view the Islamic terrorists as the depraved opponents of western civilisation and consider its massacre in Afghanistan as an act of just war (Chomsky 2001: 8). It is this insider / outsider dialectics that provides the fire-power that motivates and sustains terrorist activities

The Organising of Terror

Like biological organisms the terrorist groups are born, mature and die. Hence in the Marxist sense the production and continuation of terrorist activity needs the production of the conditions that produce and sustain them. Hence, the terrorist ideology needs to be materially inscribed and inserted in structural forms that will constitute the ideological apparatus that would lead to the reproduction of the life and activity of the respective terrorist groups. This ideological apparatus includes both the tacit as well as the active support of

agents. Mainly, it includes recruiting strategies, doctrinization, training in terror tactics, financial support base etc.

The Making of a Terrorist

Terrorist perspective although largely collective –held by the entire group - is deeply personal - held by the individual member. Each individual terrorist is shaped and made by the worldview of the group he / she belongs to. Hence, the development of the terrorist behaviour, links the psychology of the individual terrorist to the environment in which the individual lives. Erik Erikson's concept of identity might provide us a framework to understand how the terrorist ideology plays its role in forming the identity and personality of the terrorist. Erikson teaches that the development of personal identity is basic to the integrity and continuity of the personality. Identity is not something that is developed in a vacuum but in the collective experience of one's ethnic, familial, communal, and national past (Long 1990: 17-18). No terrorist is a lunatic or an evil monster but he / she is a human being quite often the innocent victim of our society. Hence, we cannot refer to the terrorist behaviour as antisocial, psychopathic and totally ignore the political, social, economic and even religious factors that make up the ideology which in its turn becomes the breeding ground of individual terrorists. It is said that the Islamic terrorists are even given names of the 'Islamic warriors' of the past. " These names are given to them not only to conceal their identity but also to create a jihadi spirit in them'' declares a militant (Ansari: Frontline Aug 2001 : 70).

Conclusion

Our study reveals that we do not have an all-encompassing monological definition of ideology. To compress this multivalent term would be unhelpful even if it were possible. Therefore, while avoiding reductionism, we have striven to arrive at a more or less general understanding of the term, that blends the spiritual as well as the material, the positive as well as it pejorative content and indicates its constitutive role in the identity-formation of a particular group or a individual.

Basing ourselves on this understanding, we are enabled to see how terrorism is married to a violent ideology. Therefore to dislodge it we need to evolve an ideology that will effectively lead us all to value human life and the virtue of justice.

Notes

1 Such an opposition between science and ideology finds few defenders today and is clearly open to a range of cogent criticisms. For instance, science as such can be viewed as the triumph of the technological way of seeing the world which acts as an important part of the ideological legitimisation of the bourgeoisie, which among other things successfully translate moral political questions into technical ones answerable by the calculations of experts. Thus it appears that Althusser is mistaken to view all ideology as pre-scientific, a body of superstitions and prejudices with which science effects a preternaturally clean break.

2 Jaques Lacan in his essay, 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I' teaches that an infant in front of a mirror identifies with its on image , feeling itself at once within and in front of the mirror. Similarly Athusser point out that in the ideological sphere a human subject transcends its true state of difuseness or de-centredness and finds a coherent image of itself reflected back in the 'mirror' of a dominant ideological discourse.

3 Ideology is unifying in the sense that it is homogenising not necessarily homogeneous. There can be many ideologies and sub-ideologies hanging together. It is said that the ideology dominates to the extent it is able to enter the consciousness of its subjects by recognising the 'other' to itself and by inscribing this 'otherness' as a potentially disruptive force. Thus for instance we might say that militant Islamic *jihad* thrives on by picturing the non-islamic world as the enemies of God or that the Hindutva forces live on rendering the non-Hindus aliens in their own land.

4 Ideology does not merely express social interests but rationalises them. In this context we understand the term rationalisation, taking clue from psychoanalysis. J. Laplanche and J.B Pontalis define rationalisation in terms of psychoanalysis as a procedure whereby a subject attempts to an explanation that is either logically consistent or ethically acceptable for attitudes, ideas, feelings etc., but whose true motives remain hidden. Therefore when we refer to ideology as rationalising we are already discreding it. Those who hold such an ideology try and defend the indefensible, cloaking some disreputable motives in high sounding ethical terms. Thus for instance America believes that the throwing of

its military weight around in the name of war on terror is in the interest of global freedom.

5 Legitimisation refers to the process by which the ruling power comes to secure from its subjects a tacit consent to its authority.

6 Universalisation or eternalization is a process by which the values and interests that are specific to a certain place, time or group are projected as values and interests of all humanity.

7 Naturalisation is a process by which ideologies are thought to belong to the natural order and as such self-evident. Therefore they are identified with the common sense of a society so that nobody could imagine how they might be different. Thus, for instance, one could say that the Ram temple issue exhibits tendencies that attempt to reduce the controversial into the obvious

8 However metaphysical the ideas may appear to be they are always capable of furnishing their adherents with motivation, prescription, imperatives and so on.

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The Buddhist Understanding of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

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Abstract: The author deals with forgiveness and reconciliation in the social sphere, i.e., on the horizontal plane as seen in Buddhism. In Buddhism too, as in all religions, there is doubtless a gap between theory and practice, between the ideal and the existential. Nevertheless Buddhism has not been so belligerent as some other religions. Besides it can draw inspiration from its rich spiritual resources, which can enable it to shun communalism and maintain a broad-minded and dialogical attitude towards others. Be that as it may, while granting that divergent world-views result in differences with regard to the nature, motivation and expression of forgiveness and reconciliation, Buddhists and others need to hearken to the call of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation, to heal a broken world and build bridges of friendship and harmony.

Keywords: Forgiveness, brokenness, reconciliation, Buddhism, *Mettā*

In this article we are concerned with forgiveness and reconciliation in the social sphere, i.e., on the horizontal plane, and not on the vertical level, in relationship to a Supreme Being. Although forgiveness and reconciliation are related, they are distinct from each other. Forgiveness involves the giving up of resentment, anger and hatred. It paves the way for reconciliation. In forgiveness the victims unconditionally hold out the olive branch to the offenders; reconciliation takes place when the perpetrators admit their offence and respond by extending the hand of friendship. Forgiveness may be localized in one person or group, i.e., it may be one-sided, but reconciliation involves mutuality, the restoration of harmony and trust between both parties.

There are two forms of Buddhism, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. In Hīnayāna only one school is living, viz., Theravāda, whose original texts are in the Pāli language. In Mahāyāna there are many schools existing, and their original texts in India were in Sanskrit. We shall first present the Buddhist understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation. This will be further elucidated through concrete examples. Then we shall relate forgiveness and reconciliation with the four Buddhist virtues of friendliness, compassion, joy and equanimity. Throughout this process we shall endeavour to bring out the distinctive characteristics of Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation, which spring from the specific world-views of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

I. The Buddhist Understanding of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

In Buddhism, forgiveness forms part of the Buddhist virtue of forbearance (Pāli *Khanti*; Sanskrit *Kṣānti*). Forbearance consists mainly in the absence of anger, hate and malice, and the forgiving (*marṣaṇa*) of offences by others (*parāpakāra*). All this is included in what is normally called forgiveness. But, secondarily, forbearance also includes the patient endurance of adversity, hardship, pain and suffering, the acceptance of the Buddha and his doctrines, and the practice of the Buddhist religion (Dayal 1932: 209). In the tenfold list of perfections (*pāramitā*) that the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva[1] strives to specialize in forbearance is usually listed as the third perfection, and it is praised to the skies in Buddhist literature.

Ideally, forgiveness is absolute, complete and universal. One must forgive all types of offences (injury, insult, abuse, criticism), everywhere (in private and in public), at all times (past, present and future), in all circumstances (in sickness or health), in thought (not entertaining angry thoughts), word (not speaking harshly) and deed (not harming physically), without any exception (whether friend, enemy or indifferent person), and however wicked the offending person or however terrible the injury may be. (See the texts cited in Dayal 1932: 209-210). Even if people criticize the Buddha or his Religion (*dhamma*) or the Order (*saṅgha*), one should not be angry or bear ill will towards them, but merely point out what is wrong

(*Brahmajāla-sutta*, in *Dīgha-nikāya*, pt I, 1.1.5, p. 5). Whoever bears enmity even to thieves who sever one's limbs, one by one, with a saw, does not carry out the teaching of the Buddha. Even in such a circumstance, one should not be harsh to the thieves or hate them, but rather one should be kind and compassionate and cultivate friendliness (*mettā*) towards them as well as towards the whole world (*Kakacūpama-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikāya*, pt I, 21.5.20, pp. 172-173).

To achieve this high ideal is no easy task, but the Bodhisattvas in particular strive to reach this cherished goal, trying all the time not to bear malice or ill will towards anyone even when their life is in grave danger. If, on the other hand, they fail to reach this lofty goal, the Bodhisattvas can repent and confess their fault and reflect how they fall short of the ideal and resolve not to engage in acrimonious disputes, not to reply harshly, not to harbour malice or bear ill will, and so on and so forth (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 24, pp. 208-209).

In the Buddhist texts, one finds many reasons to motivate oneself to avoid resentment towards those who have offended oneself. Buddhaghosa, a Theravāda Buddhist, includes the following reasons in his *Visuddhimagga*: remembering the scriptural passages that exhort one to practise forbearance and avoid hatred, reflecting on the harmful effects of anger on oneself, developing compassion for one's enemies who will suffer in purgatories due to their succumbing to anger, recalling to mind the many examples of the Buddha, who in previous lives as a human adult or child and even as an animal did not entertain the slightest hatred towards his tormentors, reflecting that one's enemy may have been one's loving parents or brothers or sisters or sons or daughters in previous lives, realizing that the one with whom one is angry is not a substantial soul, but merely a series of momentary aggregates of various elements, and therefore one cannot make that person the target of one's anger (*Visuddhimagga*, 9.15-38, see Ñyāṇamoli 1964: 324-332). Similarly, Mahāyāna texts too try to motivate one to practise forgiveness. Firstly, one should follow the teaching and example of the Buddhas in forgiveness. The Buddhas will not forgive people unless they forgive others who offend them. Secondly, in reference to the person to be forgiven one may reflect in this manner: the present enemy may have been one's

friend or relative or teacher in a former birth. Since Buddhism does not believe in a finite soul, strictly speaking there is no perpetrator of injuries and insults, nor is any one injured or insulted.[2] All beings are evanescent and subject to pain and suffering, and so one should rather lighten their burden than be angry and unforgiving. The adversaries are conditioned by the results of their deeds (*karman*) in past lives, and are therefore not acting freely. Thirdly, one may also think with regard to oneself in the following vein: One is suffering insult and injury as a consequence of one's own evil deeds in previous existences. One's enemies are actually one's friends and beneficiaries for they preserve one from such worldly goods as wealth and fame, and give one the golden opportunity to practise forbearance, which leads to salvation. Fourthly, one should ponder over the ill effects of an angry and unforgiving attitude: it results in terrible punishments in various purgatories, and wipes out the merit one has gained through several lives. Hence it is better to bear up with the comparatively negligible sufferings inflicted on one in this life than face the terrible tortures in the future. Revenge always brings evil consequences on oneself. Being at peace with others results in great happiness to oneself. Often one is unforgiving because of pride, which needs to be replaced by the spirit of humble service. Finally, mercy and love urge us to forgive others (See the texts cited in Dayal 1932: 210-212). It also helps us to realize in our meditational practice that those who inflict pain on us are acting thus because of their suffering, caused perhaps by the inexperience of their parents, who in turn may have been victims of their parents. Once we understand the circumstances on account of which a person has misbehaved, our anger ceases, we become compassionate towards that person and we can forgive even without that person being present (Thich Nhat Hanh, cited by Singh 1995: 23-24).

It is noteworthy that many of these reasons are mentioned also by modern writers on forgiveness and reconciliation. They speak of shifting the focus of attention from oneself to the aggressor: instead of asking "Why me?" one asks "Why them?" In doing so, one realizes that the enemy too is driven by fear and other conditioning factors. This enables the victim to feel compassion for the offender (Botcharova 2002: 299-300). This compassion is not sympathy, but rather empathy for the aggressor's humanity (Shriver, Jr. 1997: 8).

They have also pointed out that examples of extraordinary people who practised forgiveness in extremely difficult situations and even sacrificed their lives for the cause of reconciliation can inspire victims to find the courage to forgive (Worthington, Jr. 2002: 186-187). It is also helpful to realize that we too have our faults for which we deserve punishment, and yet are often not penalized for them (Dawson 2002: 247-248). The spirit of humility is important in the process of reconciliation (Lederach 2002: 198-199).

On the other hand, we can easily see that some of the reasons spring from the specifically Buddhist world-view. For example, strictly speaking, no one offends nor is any one offended for there are no finite souls or substantial agents: every finite being is a series of momentary aggregates. In Theravāda the aggregates are real, but they exist only for a moment, so who is offending whom? The aggregates of the succeeding moment are different from those of the previous moment. One cannot therefore hold the aggregates of the succeeding moment responsible for what was perpetrated by those of the previous moment.[3] In Mahāyāna the aggregates do not even exist; in fact, nothing exists except the one Supreme Reality, the Ādi Buddha. It is interesting to note that the law of *karman* is invoked not to condemn the offender, but to understand the aggressor's predicament. Theravāda does not accept a God, so there is no question of recourse to the Christian idea that God forgives us and therefore we too should forgive others, or that God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others. But Mahāyāna does propose a similar motive. The Buddhas, who are manifestations of the supreme Ādi Buddha, will not forgive those who do not extend forgiveness to others.[4]

The Buddhist texts usually speak of forgiveness, rather than reconciliation. The latter, however, is particularly found in the Confessions made by the monks and nuns. On new moon and full moon days, the monks and nuns assemble together for their fortnightly meetings, called *Uposatha* [Sanskrit *Upavastha*], at which they recite the monastic code, called *Pātimokkha* [Sanskrit *Prātimokṣa*], which contains the rules and regulations of monastic life. After each rule is recited, there is a pause so that any monk or nun who has broken that rule may confess it and accept the prescribed penalty. The rules for the monks and nuns are not all the same. (Dutt 1941:

305-312.) A few transgressions are so serious that the sanction is expulsion from the Order. In the case of some infractions, after imposing a temporary expulsion, the Order reassembles to consider readmitting the transgressor. In this way, the one who has violated those rules is reconciled with the members of the monastic community. In some infringements one just expresses regret, e.g., for having struck another monk. In some other cases, the offenders must give up what they had wrongly appropriated, e.g., gold or silver or what was meant for the community, and must also express regret for having done so. Here we see that restitution is involved in addition to contrition. There are also practical rules for the settling of disputes about the observance of the rules. For instance, one way is that the disagreeing persons talk to each other and settle their differences, and thus become reconciled to one other.

Many modern writers on reconciliation emphasize the need for justice too and deprecate cheap forgiveness. However, in this context, it is important to lay stress on restorative justice, rather than on retributive justice. In restorative justice the aim is to restore harmony by healing the victim and rehabilitating the aggressor through a punishment that is not vengeful but reformative (Shriver, Jr. 2002: 156-157). It is worth remarking that in the Buddhist Confession, the justice is restorative, not retributive. Most of the prescribed punishments are meant to reform the one who has breached the rule and bring about reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator.

There is a well-known Buddhist saying: "Never does hatred cease by hatred, but hatred ceases by love. This is the eternal law (*dhamma*)." (*Dhammapada*, v. 5, in *Khuddaka-nikāya*, pt I, p. 17). Anger and hatred are great obstacles to forgiveness and reconciliation. Buddhism emphatically points out that wrath and animosity affect the unforgiving enraged or hostile persons more than the ones on whom they vent their spleen. The one who is full of rancour experiences mental agony and anguish, while the one who bears no resentment does not feel such pain and grief. (*Anguttara-nikāya*, 5.18.4, pt 2, p. 451). Anger may or may not make the other person suffer, but it definitely makes oneself suffer. Moreover, in accordance with the law of *karman* [Pali *kamma*] it will not lead to liberation but to damnation in purgatories. An infuriated person is like one

who wants to hit another with a burning ember or faeces in one's hand, but actually ends up being the one to suffer burns or to stink (*Visuddhimagga*, 9.22-23; see Ñyāṇamoli 1964: 326-327).

In a programme entitled "Eye for an Eye" and telecast on 16th and 17th May 1999, CNN showed that rage and revenge not only rob one of peace of soul but also tear apart the body. Laboratory experiments demonstrated that in unforgiving conditions one's blood pressure, heart rate and sweat rate shot up. Indeed, revenge is not sweet, but bitter, while forgiveness and reconciliation take the hurt away (Sheth 2001: 76).

II. Some Buddhist Examples of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Concrete examples not only spell out and explain a little more the Buddhist understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation, but also complement the theory to some extent. They also illustrate the ideal as well as other levels of forgiveness and reconciliation. We shall mention a few instances from the texts, from history and from the contemporary world.

Let me begin by briefly narrating the three most celebrated stories in Buddhism, illustrating the virtue of forbearance. Of these the most famous is that of Khantivādī. In one of his previous lives as a Bodhisattva, Gautama Buddha was born as Kuṇḍalakumāra, who was later known as Khantivādī [Sanskrit Kṣāntivādin], i.e., "One who preached the doctrine of forbearance". Angry with Khantivādī, King Kalābu tested his forbearance by inflicting one agonizing torture after another: he first had him scourged all over his body, then had his hands and feet chopped off, and then his nose and ears cut off. Even though he was taunted by the king after every torment, Khantivādī never got angry, declaring himself to be a preacher and practitioner of forbearance. Finally, the king kicked him on his chest near the heart and walked off in a huff. The commander-in-chief requested Khantivādī to vent his wrath only on the king, but to spare the others and the kingdom. However, instead of taking revenge, Khantivādī uttered a blessing, "Long live the king!" (*Khantivādī-jātaka-vaṇṇanā*, in *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*, 4.2.3, No. 313, vol. 3, pp. 34-37).[5]

Another well-known anecdote is that of Puṇṇa [Sanskrit Pūrṇa] who opts to stay in a place called Sunāparanta [Sanskrit Śroṇāparānta], but the Buddha warns him that the people there are fierce and rough and asks him how he would react if they were to abuse and revile him. Puṇṇa answers that he would consider them very good since they would not strike him with their hands. The Buddha then asks him how he would respond if they were to strike him with their hands. To which he replies that he would think of them as very good since they would not pelt him with clods of earth. And Puṇṇa proceeds in this way, every time excusing them for not being worse: for their not hitting him with a stick, and not stabbing him with a knife. And if this last were to happen, he would rejoice that he would be freed of his body without his even looking for a knife to take his own life, of which he was so ashamed and disgusted. The Buddha then congratulates him for his great control and calmness, which resulted in such a laudable attitude of forbearance (*Puṇṇovāda-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikāya*, pt III, 45.2.2, pp. 358-360).[6]

Dharmavivardhana, better known as Kuṇāla, was the virtuous son of King Aśoka. His stepmother Tiṣyarakṣitā declared her burning love for him because of his beautiful eyes. On being rejected by him, she ordered his eyes to be pulled out. But accepting this as the fruit of his own past deeds (*karman*), he did not bear any malice towards her. He then went about with his wife begging on the streets, and making his living by singing and playing the *vīṇā* (a musical instrument). Later when Aśoka heard of her dastardly deed, he wanted to put her to death by pulling out her eyes, cutting off her tongue, poisoning her, etc. But Kuṇāla asked the king to spare her life, declaring that he harboured no anger towards her. Kuṇāla then miraculously regained his eyes. Nevertheless, the king had Tiśyarakṣitā burnt alive in a lac house (*jatugṛha*) (*Kuṇālāvadāna*, in *Divyāavadāna*, 27, pp. 261-270).

We notice in these instances that the ideal is not even to feel anger or hatred even in the most trying circumstances. We could say that, strictly speaking, there is nothing to forgive, for there is no offence taken in the first place. The ideal seems to be a sort of stoic attitude of not being perturbed at all. The ordinary person of course cannot reach such heights of equanimity. Occasionally, the Bud-

dhist texts do give more down-to-earth examples of people who get annoyed with one another but eventually do get reconciled. Two monks residing in Kosambi quarrelled with each other. Then this enmity between the two spread not only to their monastic disciples but also to their friends and others, who thus took sides with one or the other monk. In spite of many efforts made by the Buddha to reconcile them, they refused to do so. It was only when they felt the pinch of being deprived of food offerings from the lay folk that they came to their senses and decided to forgive each other and be reunited. Finally, the two factions also begged the Buddha's forgiveness. (*Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, 1.5; see Burlingame 1921: pt I, 176-183).

On occasion the Buddha brings about reconciliation. In the Introduction to the Kuṇāla Jātaka, it is reported that when the Koliya and Sākyan tribes were about to engage in a bloody battle over the right to the waters of the river Rohiṇī, the Buddha persuaded them to desist from fighting by making them realize that there was no point in killing warriors of priceless value for the sake of some water that had comparatively little worth (*Kuṇāla-jātaka-vaṇṇanā*, in *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*, 5.21.4, No. 536, vol. 5, pp. 408-410). Not all, however, paid heed to the Buddha's mediations. He was unable to persuade the stubborn monk Tissa to ask forgiveness for not welcoming some visiting monks with respect and hospitality. Tissa was unforgiving because he was angry with those monks for having abused him for this fault of omission. In fact, in a previous life too he was not willing to ask pardon (*Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, 1.3; see Burlingame 1921: pt I, 166-170).

There were times when the Buddha was harsh with some of his interlocutors, even humiliating them at times (Sheth 1988: 60). But it is explained that he occasionally used disagreeable words out of compassion, just as we would remove a stick or a stone from a child's mouth, even if it pains the child (*Abhayarājakumāra-sutta*, in *Majjhima-nikāya*, pt II, 8.1.3-8.2, pp. 68-70). Even so, one can cite some texts that speak disparagingly of other traditions or even of other Buddhist sects. For example, the followers of Theravāda are accused of not being true followers of the Buddha and hence they do not attain salvation. The Theravādins on the other hand are said to consider Mahāyāna as a heretical religion. (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-*

sūtra, at 2.37, p. 29; 2.54-55, p. 31; 12.8-9, p. 164). One of the chronicles of Sri Lanka, the *Mahāvaṁsa*, often portrays the island's Tamilians as enemies of the Sinhalese. Even though he had conquered King Elāra, King Duṭṭhagāmaṇi was disconsolate for he realized that he had slaughtered millions in the battle. But some Arahants[7] consoled him by telling him that this action of his would not prevent him from attaining a temporary heaven. He had killed only one and a half human beings, i.e., those who had declared themselves to be Buddhists, fully or partially. The rest were unbelievers and immoral, not worth any more than mere animals. He would bring glory to Buddhism and so should not let his heart be troubled. (*Mahāvaṁsa*, 25.103-111; see Geiger 1912: 177-178). To our modern sensibilities in this age of dialogue, it is shocking to read that, according to the writers of this book, which of course was composed in a different era, people who have attained liberation consider the vanquished non-Buddhists as sub-humans. Hatred often dehumanises the enemy and thus gets rid of possible qualms of conscience (Schriver, Jr. 2002: 160-161).

Let us now leave the traditional texts and cite a couple of illustrations from Buddhist history. In the 13th Rock Edict, the Emperor Asoka publicly expresses his remorse and confesses how the carnage at Kalinga caused him great anguish. He also declares that he pardons, as far as it is possible, all those who have wronged him. He makes peace with the people living in the forests. He wishes all beings to be free from injury and to enjoy gentleness or joyousness (Basak: 1959: 71-72) He even took care to omit the 13th Edict from the texts carved on the rocks in Kalinga, lest even his words of repentance would serve as a spark to re-ignite adverse emotions in the Kalingas by reviving the memory of his fateful attack on their country. (Thapar, cited by Gandhi 1999: 52). The father of Hōnen, the leader of the Japanese Jodo-shu school, was fatally wounded by a gang of robbers who attacked their home. On his deathbed, his father exhorted his son never to take revenge but rather to pray for the salvation of his father as well as of the attackers (Anesaki 1963:171-172).

We now turn to some examples in the contemporary world. The Dalai Lama, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, has al-

ways embraced the policy of peaceful resistance to the Chinese, who invaded Tibet in 1950. He refers to the Chinese as his brothers and sisters and is motivated by tolerance, compassion and love. While wanting autonomy, he admits the fact that Tibet would continue to be linked with China (Gandhi 1999: 400). He has said, "Tolerance can be learnt only from an enemy. Therefore, in a way, enemies are precious, in that they help us to grow....Compassion and love are necessary in order for us to obtain happiness or tranquillity. [Human nature is one.] When we return to this basis, all people are the same. Then we can truly say the words *brother*, *sister*...This gives us inner strength." (Cited by May 1994: 178). Realizing the oneness of humanity is one of the ways that facilitates forgiveness or at least reduces unforgiveness (Worthington 2002: 181). It should be noted, however, that this oneness in Mahāyāna is radical and metaphysical, and not just a sort of psychological unity or a common humanity shared with one another for, according to Mahāyāna, there is only one Reality, and everything else is illusion; everything is identical with that one Reality.

The Thai Buddhist Sulak Sivaraksa also appeals to the sense of the one human family: "We must come to see that there is no 'other'. We are all one human family. It is greed, hatred and delusion that we need to overcome" (Cited by May 1994: 179).

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh did not bear any hatred towards the Catholic Diem regime that persecuted him, nor to the Viet Cong or the American soldiers who attacked Vietnam. He could find excuses for the atrocities perpetrated by American soldiers in Vietnam, attributing these to their hard life in the swamps and jungles infested by mosquitoes and other insects, and to their being in constant danger of death. Although initially angry, he did not blame a sea-pirate who had raped a twelve-year old girl, thinking that if he had had the same historical, economic and educational background as that pirate he would probably have behaved in the same way. This attitude of Thich Nhat Hanh is based on the Buddhist doctrine of Dependent or Conditioned Co-production (*pratītya-samutpāda*; Pali *paṭṭicca-saumuppāda*), according to which no being or event arises without a conditioning factor: this (resulting) being or event is because that (preceding) being or event is; this (result-

ing) being or event is not because that (preceding) being or event is not. (Nichols 1985: 2-3). It thus helps the Buddhist to pay attention to attenuating circumstances, and hence be more understanding and forgiving. Another principle on which Thich Nhat Hanh bases his tolerant and reconciliatory spirit is the Mahāyāna doctrine of the oneness of all reality, which he interprets in practical life as an attitude of "inter-being", of identifying oneself with the other. He identifies himself with that twelve-year old girl who jumped into the sea after being raped, and with the pirate who raped her, thinking of his own heart which is not yet capable of seeing and loving, but wanting to discover his own true being and thus keep the door of compassion open in his heart. In his own words, "Interbeing means that you cannot be a separate entity. You can only interbe with other people and elements" (May 1994: 179-180).

In war-torn Cambodia Maha Ghosananda, five-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee, led nine *Dhammayietras* [=*Dharmayātras*] or Pilgrimages of Truth to promote peace. Often opponents met and walked together in the spirit of reconciliation. In his first *Dhammayietra*, he preached repeatedly, "The suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes Great Compassion. Great Compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful family. A peaceful family makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world" (*Letter from Cambodia*, March 2002, p. 1).

The Sri Lankan monk H. Uttarananda, who was a member of the now defunct Humanist Bhikkhus'[8] Association (*Mānava-hitavādī Bhikkhu Sangamaya*), proposed a Buddhist-Humanist view of the national ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. Following the typical Buddhist "middle path", he wanted to avoid the two extremes of a Sinhala Buddhist State and a free Eelam State. He acknowledged the inhuman atrocities perpetrated on Tamils in 1983 and thereafter by racist fanatics and governments, and was able to sympathetically understand the exasperated violent reactions of Tamils whose pent up rage boiled over due to the prolonged racist attitudes of successive governments. He called for reconciliation and strengthening of racial unity and peace (Uttarananda 1991: 6-9, 12-13). Apologies, whether

private or public, do help in the process of reconciliation (Shriver, Jr. 2002: 163).

In a Press Conference in Tokyo on 3rd June 2002, the four Mahānāyakes or "Patriarchs" of the Theravāda Buddhist Order of Sri Lanka, publicly released a Press Statement, which declared that the Order was for peace and development in Sri Lanka and solicited the support of the Japanese people in the peace process and in confidence-building measures which would benefit all three communities affected by the war, viz., the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Muslims.[9] The Sri Lankan newspaper *The Island* (5th Nov., 2002, p. 1) reported that the Mahānāyake of Asgiriya conferred his blessings on both the UNP Government of Ranil Wickremansinghe as well as the LTTE in their efforts to restore peace through peace talks in Thailand.

On the more modest scale of the family, Heidi Singh narrates how she was able to eventually become reconciled with her estranged father by practising the meditation of friendliness (*mettā*), reflecting on appropriate Buddhist texts given to her by her Buddhist teachers, reciting Buddhist Scriptural passages, and observing the precepts of moral life (Singh 1995: 15-24).

III. The Four *Brahma-vihāras* or Sublime States

Forgiveness and reconciliation are intimately linked with the group of four Buddhist virtues called *Brahma-vihāras* (Sublime States), viz., *mettā* [Sanskrit *maitrī*] (friendliness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (joy) and *upekkhā* [Sanskrit *upekṣā*] (equanimity). While in Theravāda the exclusive practice of these virtues resulted only in rebirth in the temporary heavenly world of the god Brahmā, in later Mahāyāna it led to *nirvāṇa* or salvation. *Mettā* or *Maitrī* is practised towards those who are happy; its contrary is malice. *Karuṇā*, on the other hand, is directed to those who suffer and are unhappy. While Theravāda gives more importance to *mettā*, Mahāyāna emphasizes *karuṇā* more (Dayal 1932: 227-228). All these four Sublime States are to be cultivated or developed through meditation. Progress in these virtues helps one to be more forgiving and reconciliatory. In fact, to develop a forgiving and reconciling disposition, it is not

enough to just make a good resolution to do so. It is meditation that brings about the necessary transformation.

Mettā essentially consists in the wish that all beings may be happy. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so one should cultivate unlimited love towards all beings (*Metta-sutta*, in *Suttanipāta*, 1.8, in *Khuddaka-nikāya*, pt I, pp. 290-291). The cultivation of *mettā* is the best way to prevent anger from arising and to remove anger in case it has arisen. (*Aunguttara-nikāya*, 1.2.7, pt I, p. 5). The mind of one who has acquired perfection in *mettā* cannot be affected even by the most hostile person, just as the earth cannot be destroyed, space cannot be painted on, and the river Gaṅgā cannot be burned (*Kakacūpamasutta*, in *Majjhima-nikāya*, pt I, 21.4.16-18, pp. 170-171).

Before embarking on the development of *mettā*, one must engage in preliminary reflections on the dangers of hate and the advantages of forbearance (*khanti*). Then one proceeds through meditation to cultivate *mettā* in order to protect the mind from the dangers of anger and lead it into the advantages of forbearance. One begins by practising *mettā* towards oneself, wishing welfare and happiness to oneself. After this one concentrates on engendering *mettā* towards one's teacher, then towards a dear friend, next towards a neutral person, and finally towards a hostile person. Several reflections are suggested to enable one to overcome resentment towards one's enemy. This *mettā* is to be perfected in such a way that eventually one makes no distinction between oneself, the dear person, the neutral person and the enemy. *Mettā* reaches its climax when more and more beings are included in the range of one's *mettā*, until it extends to all beings, human, animal or plant, and is radiated in all the directions of the universe (*Visuddhimagga*, 9.1-76, see Ñyāṇamoli 1964: 321-340).

A similar meditational order, but with some variation, is followed for the cultivation of *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity). In the development of these qualities, just as in the case of *mettā*, perfection is obtained by making no distinction between anyone, and suffusing all the directions of the universe with that particular virtue (*Visuddhimagga*, 9.77-89; see Ñyāṇamoli 1964: 340-343).

In the context of our topic of forgiveness and reconciliation, therefore, the Buddhist should practise friendliness, compassion, joy and equanimity towards a hostile person, even to the extent of not making any distinction between a hostile person, a neutral person, a dear one or oneself.

While traditionally these four *Brahma-vihāras* were generally applied only in the purely spiritual realm, nowadays Buddhists are gradually spelling out the wider social implications of these sublime states. In many countries there is emerging an "engaged Buddhism" where even monks are becoming socially involved and work towards community development. For instance, Seri Phongphit describes the social contributions of eight monks and three laymen in Thailand, all of whom are motivated by these four virtues as well as by other Buddhist attitudes (Phongphit 1988). In the context of compassion (*karuṇā*), for instance, Phongphit points out, "A rich man who does not care for the miserable conditions of the poor lacks this quality...Those who shut themselves up in ivory towers, in the midst of an unjust world, cannot be called compassionate" (Phongphit 1988: 26). We have seen that Buddhist *mettā* or friendship extends not only to one or other individual friend or enemy, but also to all human beings, nay, even to all animals and plants, and is radiated in all directions. Similar is the case with the other three sublime virtues. Thus forgiveness and reconciliation, in the Buddhist perspective, is all inclusive, encompassing not only all human beings, but also the whole of nature.

IV. The Specific Characteristics of Buddhist *Mettā*

While dealing with Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation we have already highlighted a number of unique characteristics. It will be helpful now to make a brief comparison between Buddhist *mettā* and Christian love. This will serve to bring out the distinctive characteristics of Buddhist *mettā* and, by implication, further elucidate the nature of Buddhist forgiveness and reconciliation.

With regard to Theravāda, I follow to a large extent the comparison made by King (1962: 64-97), differing from him slightly in detail and emphasis. One major flaw of King, however, is that on the basis of his study of Theravāda he makes generalized statements about

the whole of Buddhism. I shall therefore also briefly point out the specific characteristics of *maitrī* and forgiveness in Mahāyāna too, which differs from Theravāda in some important respects.

Mettā and Christian love do resemble each other, e.g., both are opposed to malice and both go to the extent of loving one's enemy and even sacrificing one's life for another. But there are many important differences, springing from their different world-views. Unlike Christian love, *mettā* is extended to all beings, not just to human beings. Buddhist *mettā* is therefore more universal. On the other hand, while in Christianity love is the highest virtue,[10] *mettā* is the lowest of the four *Brahma-vihāras*, and in Theravāda the four *Brahma-vihāras* lead at best to rebirth in the world of Brahmā; only when they are linked with Insight (*Vipassanā*) can they lead to *nibbāna* or liberation (Aronson 1980: 74-77). Moreover, the exercise of these four States is meant primarily for one's own spiritual advancement, and only secondarily for the benefit of others. In Theravāda one helps or saves others by first saving oneself.

Christians love others because God has loved them,[11] or they forgive others because otherwise God will not forgive them.[12] But Theravāda Buddhism does not admit any Supreme Being, hence the motivation is not the same. In Theravāda, charity begins at home: one loves or practises friendliness first towards oneself; only then can one extend friendliness towards others. In Christianity the person loved has intrinsic worth: the person is a child of God and has an immortal soul. In Theravāda, on the other hand, the person loved is neither created by a God nor has a soul: each person is just a series of momentary aggregates, subject to the law of *karman*, and therefore does not have intrinsic worth, but should be an object of compassion. Theravāda *mettā* is more "atomistically individualistic" and not so inter-personal and community-oriented as Christian love.

While the cultivation and expression of Christian love is spontaneous, personal, and generally emotional at least to a certain extent, Theravāda *mettā*, even if it comes naturally in the case of those who have attained perfection in it, is developed through a systematic, calculated method and expressed in a more impersonal, detached and emotionally more sedate manner. This impersonality and detachment is important not only in the fourth Sublime State, but also

in the three other Sublime States: in the practice of *mettā* one must guard against personal attachment; in the case of *karuṇā* (compassion) one must avoid aversion and sadness, and so, strictly speaking, *karuṇā* does not include sympathy or suffering with the other, but it does involve empathy for the other; and in *muditā* (joy) one must be careful not to give oneself to merriment. In fact, the exercise of these three Sublime States is governed by the highest State of *upekkhā* (equanimity). This does not mean, however, that the ideal for the Theravāda person is to have no concern for the welfare of others, as King argues.[13] In Theravāda the life of the Buddha as well as his teachings do show a certain measure of altruism and concern for the welfare of others (Aronson 1980: 86-94).

More specifically, in the context of forgiveness and reconciliation, Christian forgiveness and reconciliation is something active, it brings about a change, a healing, a restoration because it is based on an inter-personal, communitarian world-view. In Theravāda on the other hand, one can only do good or harm to oneself, for each one is reaping the fruits of one's own *karman*. One can help another only indirectly by one's example, by trying not to provoke resentment and anger in others and by the tranquil, detached vibrations of *mettā* sent out in different directions. Disagreeing with an acrobat, his apprentice pointed out that they would perform their act successfully not by watching out for each other but by each one watching out for himself (*Sedaka-sutta*, in *Saṅyutta-nikāya*, 47.19, pt 4, pp. 144-145).

Coming now to Mahāyāna, we notice that there are closer affinities with Christianity. The exclusive practice of the four *Brahmavihāras* leads one to *nirvāṇa* or salvation, unlike in Theravāda. Mahāyāna is far more altruistic than Theravāda. In fact, it is in a sense more altruistic than Christianity too, since the ideal for the Bodhisattvas is to delay their salvation until the smallest insect is saved.[14] Their compassion too is so great as to impel them to take on the sufferings of others, even in the worst purgatory. They also give others grace and transfer their merits to them. So in Mahāyāna the ideal is to think more of the other and less of oneself. Then again the Buddhas will not forgive people unless they forgive others. This too brings Mahāyāna closer to Christianity. However, it should be noted

that even here there are differences. For example, it is not the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are the highest, but it is the Ādi Buddha that is the Supreme Being. But the dealings of the Mahāyāna Buddhists are with the former. As in Theravāda, and unlike in Christianity, the person has no intrinsic worth. In fact, compared to Theravāda, the person in Mahāyāna has even less worth, for the person does not exist; only the Ādi Buddha exists. And yet, paradoxically, the ideal is to even delay one's salvation for the sake of other persons who do not really exist even for a moment, except on the level of ignorance and from the practical point of view. In a sense, according to the doctrine of dependent co-production, interdependence or a sort of interrelatedness exists, but persons do not exist. Moreover, the interrelatedness in the Mahāyāna world-view is on the ontological level; ultimately there is absolute identity. As a result, while in Christianity one concentrates on overcoming differences between alienated people, in Mahāyāna one transcends these differences. Hence in Mahāyāna one can more easily identify oneself even with the oppressor. On the other hand, even though the Bodhisattvas take on the sufferings of others and thus lighten their burden, they must maintain detachment as in Theravāda and, in both Theravāda as well as Mahāyāna, aggressors as well as victims are exhorted to be detached from the causes of suffering (May 1994: 177, 180-181).

Thus we see that while there are similarities in love, forgiveness and reconciliation between Christianity and Buddhism, there are many distinctions arising from the divergent world-views not only of Christianity but also of Theravāda and Mahāyāna. These differences are found not only with regard to the presuppositions, but also in reference to the motivation as well as the expression of love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

In the context of the views of many Western writers on forgiveness and reconciliation, it should be pointed out that the emphasis in Buddhism is in the first place on not even feeling hurt or on remaining unperturbed by even the most cruel and vehement aggressor. In this sense, strictly speaking, there is no need of forgiveness for no offence has been taken! The ideal is to practise forbearance, to put up with the trials and sufferings inflicted by others and not bear any grudge or malice toward the opponents. If one does not

succeed in this stoic ideal, and experiences hurt and resentment, one must try and bring oneself to forgive the perpetrator. Buddhists have always maintained that anger and hatred harm the perpetrator more than the victim. A deeper realization of this has dawned on the consciousness of the modern world only in recent years. Although desired, reconciliation is not so actively sought for. If the aggressor is moved to repentance and becomes reconciled, it's well and good, but it is not the deliberate goal of every act of forbearance and forgiveness. Justice and reparation too are not insisted upon in every instance. We have seen that in the case of the Buddhist Confession, both reconciliation and justice are integral parts of it, but Confession is reserved only for monks and nuns. It should be clarified that what is not always insisted upon is justice in the near future; eventual justice will of course surely take place, for it is based on the law of *karman*. Both forgiveness and reconciliation are practised more on the plane of individuals than on the level of groups.

V. Some Socio-Political Implications of Buddhist Reconciliation and Love for the Modern World

Although Buddhist reconciliation and love are traditionally practised more on the individual plane than on the wider socio-political level, we have seen that there are instances of the latter in early Buddhism and especially in contemporary Buddhism. The deep wounds inflicted by Hindus and Muslims on each other at the time of India's Partition have not yet healed even after so many years. Unless both sides acknowledge their responsibilities, their *karman*, in the terrible atrocities perpetrated on one another, and unless they adopt the Buddhist approach of condoning or attenuating the offences of the other by realizing that circumstances have played a major role in shaping the adverse reactions, the two sides will always look on each other with prejudice, suspicion and hatred, and clash with each other even at the slightest provocation, as has been recently evidenced during the terrible Gujarat riots, which have flared up again and again. We have to learn to practise Buddhist love (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) not only towards friends but also in reference to enemies. It is indeed remarkable that India and Pakistan have recently begun making peace overtures. Both sides have been accepting a certain amount of responsibility and are extending the hand of friendship to

each other. Of course we are a long way from complete harmony between both nations, but the peace initiatives being taken by the Indian and Pakistani governments do bode well for more cordial relations between the two countries. In the predominantly Buddhist country of Sri Lanka, recent attempts at reconciliation between Sinhalese and the LTTE, with the help of Norwegian mediation, look promising. The Buddhist monks can surely set a fine example by recapturing the Buddhist spirit of forgiveness and forbearance.

If India tries to go back to its religio-cultural roots, shaped by Buddhism (and other religions), she will be able to regain her pristine non-violent and tolerant approach towards conflict situations. This would help reduce the animosity between linguistic groups, castes and religions, and bring about greater equality between the rich and the poor, between men and women.

Israel and Palestine too are slowly beginning to realize what Buddhism had understood long ago, viz., that harbouring hatred for each other only brings greater harm to oneself. The Buddha had taught and had illustrated with examples how violence breeds violence, how anger and hatred adversely affect those who are unforgiving. While revenge brings on evil consequences, reconciliation and peace bring happiness. The Buddha was able to convince the Koliya and Sākya tribes of the futility of war, for it brought greater loss than gain. We have also the shining example of King Asoka who publicly confessed the violence and carnage that he had inflicted and made peace with his enemies. While insisting on autonomy for Tibet, the Dalai Lama emphasizes the oneness of humanity, which can help bring together opposed ethnic groups in Fiji, and Protestants and Catholics battling each other in Northern Ireland. The idea of "inter-being" propagated by Thich Nhat Hanh can provide a powerful motive to people in Bosnia and Kosovo, and East Timor and Indonesia to place themselves in the shoes of their opponents, and not only be compassionate towards them but also rejoice with them.

VI. Conclusion

· Buddhism has been one of the more peaceful religions in the world. The historian Toynbee has written: "The three Judaic religions have a record of intolerance, hatred, malice, uncharitableness,

and persecution that is black by comparison with Buddhism's record." (Toynbee 1966: 167). However, Buddhism too has had its share of hatred, violence and unforgiveness. At the Buddha's death rivals fought to possess his relics. Later, Buddhists quarrelled over his tooth relic. In Burma King Anawratha of Pagan attacked the kingdom of Thaton in order to seize a copy of the Scriptures and the relics of the Buddha. A Theravāda king in Sri Lanka attacked a Mahāyāna monastery and destroyed its sacred texts. The Tibetan monk Pelgyi Dorje assassinated King Lang Darma because he persecuted Buddhism. The Gelugpa sect of Tibet often ransacked and destroyed the monasteries of other Buddhist schools. A number of Chinese messianic groups engaged in armed rebellions. In Japan Nichiren founded a militant sect, vehemently condemning other schools. Bands of Japanese monks attacked and plundered other monasteries. In Mongolia Shamanism suffered severe persecution at the hands of Buddhists.

Coming to modern times, in India there are frequent clashes between Buddhists and Hindus. In Burma monks played a part in the bloody Buddhist-Muslim riots of 1938. Terrible looting and massacres have marked the ethnic conflicts between the Sinhalese and Tamilians in Sri Lanka. In Tibet there are violent protests against the Chinese government (Sheth 1988: 44-45). Indeed, Buddhism in Asia has been labelled "a faith in flames" (Schecter 1967: xi).

In Buddhism too, as in all religions, there is doubtless a gap between theory and practice, between the ideal and the existential. Nevertheless Buddhism has not been so belligerent as some other religions (Sheth 1988: 63-64). Besides it can draw inspiration from its rich spiritual resources, which can enable it to shun communalism and maintain a broad-minded and dialogical attitude towards others (Sheth 1988: 46-60). Be that as it may, while granting that divergent world-views result in differences with regard to the nature, motivation and expression of forgiveness and reconciliation, Buddhists and others need to hearken to the call of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation, to heal a broken world and build bridges of friendship and harmony.

Notes

1. Special beings who, particularly in Mahāyāna, delay their salvation for the sake of helping others, take on the sufferings of others, transfer their merits to them and give them grace.
2. It is interesting to note the contrary case in the Hindu *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.19), where Krishna urges Arjuna to fight against the Kauravas since the soul – which constitutes the essence of a person and is inactive – is neither a slayer nor is slain.
3. Of course, by the same logic, there is no forgiver either and there is no reason to forgive, for the aggregates that were offended and hurt are different from the aggregates of the succeeding moment. Buddhists, however, chose the other alternative rather than this one.
4. Note, however, that in Mahāyāna all this is only on the practical level for, from the point of view of the absolute truth, everything is illusory, except the one Reality, the îdi Buddha.
5. A Sanskrit version is found in the *Kṣānti-jātaka* in the *Jātaka-mālā*, 28, pp. 189ff.
6. A Sanskrit version, belonging to the Sarvāstivāda School, is found in the *Pūrṇāvadāna*, in the *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 23-24.
7. Those who have attained *nibbāna* or liberation while living.
8. Bhikkhu literally means a mendicant and refers to a Buddhist monk: the initial practice of begging for food is now defunct, except in a couple of countries like Thailand and Mynmar.
9. From the text of the Press Release, sent to me by the Japanese Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.
10. See, e.g., 1.Cor 13.13.
11. See 1 John 4.7-11, 19.
12. See Mt 6.12; 18.21-35.
13. King (1962: 79) points out that in equanimity, while one is not indifferent, one does not really *care* whether beings are happy (the concern of *mettā*), or are released from suffering (the concern of *karuṇā*), or enjoy the success of their endeavours (the concern of *muditā*) (Cf. *Visuddhimagga*, 9.93-95, 123; see Ñyāṇamoli 1964: 344, 352).
14. Cf in this context, St Paul's yearning to die and be with Christ, and yet, on the other hand, his wanting to stay on to help the Philippians to progress in the faith and increase their joy in it: Phil 1. 21-26.

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Education

for Peace and Reconciliation

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Abstract: The author describes a new venture where education is used to promote personal growth that is integral, communal harmony between religions, and reconciliation between groups. This is a personal experience that promotes values and reconciliation through direct living encounter.

Keywords: peace, reconciliation, Dharma Bharathi, education, value education.

The urgency and importance of education for peace and reconciliation is the result of increasing conflicts in human life. The very existence of traditional institutions such as family, religion, state and society is being questioned. Their foundations are shaking. Globalization has not only affected the economic life of people. It has influenced culture, faith and human relations. Individualism replaces a sense of community. Commitment and responsibility to society and family is replaced by individual competence. Competence without developing character makes people arrogant, insensitive and intolerant.

Another characteristic of the market culture is consumerism. Market which is flooded with goods has created unlimited greed and lust in human beings. The noble virtue of the 'ethic of enough' is not understood by many. A person is valued for what he/she 'has' and not for what he/she 'is'. Status is given more importance than identity. Hence, everyone is busy increasing his/her possessions to ensure his/her status in the society rather than developing an identity

which will give him/her an imperishable place in history. In this context even university degrees are considered material possessions which can be bought.

In the market culture competition replaces cooperation. In cut-throat competition might becomes right. The weak and the marginalized get eliminated. The outcome is a dehumanized society where a small minority of the rich and the powerful rule over the majority, depriving them of their human dignity and right to live. Today eighty per cent of the resources of the world are possessed by twenty percent of the population. At the global level we see a broken world. Humanity is wounded and bleeding! Ethnic quarrels, communal riots, terrorism and threats of war create tension in the lives of people. Even the poor countries are spending millions for strengthening their defensive and offensive forces, while a vast majority of their population is starving.

The Indian situation calls for our immediate attention. Even after 55 years of independence the country has 460 million illiterates and 375 million who are living below the poverty line. Primary education has not reached a large number of people. Economic liberlization has benefited only a handful of people. Hence what we need today is a shift from the culture of greed and hatred to a civilization of love and peace. Educating the youth of the country in values of love, brotherhood/sisterhood, justice, peace, sharing, tolerance, respect etc. is an excellent means for building a new humanity.

India is blessed with 'unity in diversity'. It is a land of religions, cultures, arts and literature. It is the oldest living civilization in the world. But religious fundamentalism, communalism, regionalism and casteism are threatening to tear apart the fabric of the nation.

Value education is not religious education

It is important to know that value education is not religious education. Every religious community is busy giving religious education to their students. Some of them become over-zealous and go out of their community to impose it on students and teachers belonging to other communities. This creates tension and conflict between the communities. In religious education what is taught are the be-

liefs and rituals of that particular community. Values are common to all just as truth is common to all. Truth is beyond the walls of church, temple and mosque. Nobody can monopolise it. Hence the need to clarify that value education is distinct from religious education. The eternal values are derived from the original sprit of the religions. Institutionalized and politicized religions promote more rituals than values. It is in this context that Dr. Radhakrishnan has said: 'This place would be much more religious if all the religions go'.

Paradigm shift from religiosity to spirituality

Since education for peace is based on the fundamental and original values of all religions, it is important to see the distinction between religiosity and spirituality. Understanding this distinction is the key to solving much of the conflicts and tensions which take place in the name of God and religion.

Religiosity promotes *rituals*, rules and regulations, whereas spirituality promotes *values* such as justice, peace, love, brotherhood/sisterhood, equality, freedom, forgiveness, sensitivity etc. Religiosity promotes and builds structure and hierarchy. Spirituality concentrates on charism and the original spirit of the founder. When religiosity gets prominence religion becomes an institution. Originally all religions started as a way of life. Later they not only got institutionalized but vested interests politicized them to meet their selfish ends. Spirituality makes efforts to keep the religion a movement, a way of life. When people blindly follow religiosity there is a danger of fundamentalism which leads to intolerance. Spiritual people are more flexible and respectful of other faiths.

Religiosity divides people because it concentrates on rituals and practices. It looks at people in terms of their dress, food, language, place of worship, names of gods etc. On the contrary, spirituality unites people. Is there any difference in emotions of love, honesty, justice and appreciation according to one's religion or caste? Emotion of love is same for Hindus, Christians and Muslims. Who can prevent a Muslim girl feeling love for a Hindu boy? Is there a special meaning of honesty and peace of mind for people of different religions and caste? Feeling of frustration and joy is one and the same

for anyone irrespective of his/her religion and caste. That is why we say that spirituality, which is founded on values, unites people.

Religiosity makes people stagnant forcing them to follow the old traditions without reviewing them. They go with the crowd and cultivate a culture of 'everybody is doing, so we also should do'. Those who are rooted in spirituality and uphold values will be creative and refuse to accept traditions blindly. Instead of going with the crowd they make a difference by a life of values and make the world go with them. They will get involved in the struggles of society as proactive citizens with great altruism and set new trends by living by values.

The most significant of all differences is the attitude to pluralism. Religiosity promotes uniformity in belief, worship, language, culture, behaviour, dress, food etc. It does not tolerate any differences. Most of the religious and ethnic conflicts have resulted from an ignorance of this basic difference. More people have died for their beliefs than for truth. Religious leaders and priests promote religiosity which has nothing to do with the original teachings of their founders. They manipulate religious institutions and misinterpret the holy scriptures; this is an unholy exercise and a crime against humanity. Priests of all religions promote religiosity to oppress people by exploiting their religious sentiments. The need of the hour is to have prophets who defend eternal human values and liberate the common people from the fear of God's punishment. God is love and he/she does not punish people. God liberates his/her people. The role of spirituality is to liberate people and make them creative so that they may bear fruit, fruit that will last forever.

The founders of all religions opposed religiosity which did not make people spiritual. Surely a religious person can be spiritual. One can be true to his/her religious practices if they do not stand in the way of spiritual values. In fact the worship in the church, temple, mosque or *gurudwara* should enable a person to recognize God in the poor and the hungry whom he/she meets in the streets. Truly spiritual people will recognize God in their enemies, in the strange fellow passengers in the train and people who suffer famine and war in a far away country.

The aim of education for peace is to promote reconciliation. It has to break the walls that divide people in the name of religion, caste or colour. It should give birth to enlightened leaders who are rooted in values and have clarity of vision which is broad, inclusive and lasting. The purpose of value education is to build responsible citizens with commitment to the nation and concern for the whole universe. The test of authentic education for peace is the heritage of this great nation. Pluralism is our national heritage and a unique gift of God. Unity in diversity is not just tolerance of differences, it is acceptance, appreciation and promotion of differences. Only a person with genuine spirituality can do this. Our education should aim at this herculian task. This is only possible when there is a paradigm shift in the mind-set of teachers, parents and policy-makers. This is the only way to save this great nation from disintegration and degeneration. The religious and political power brokers have hijacked Mother India. The time has come again for the birth of Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Mahavir, Jesus, Mohammad, Gandhi and Tagore to save human civilization from killing each other. The aim of education for peace and reconciliation is exactly this.

While presenting the fundamental duties, the Constitution of India *(Article 51 A)* especially mentions the significance of spirituality which goes beyond narrow religious divisions: promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood/sisterhood among all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional diversities'. This could be the basis of our education for peace programme. The NCERT document recognizes this important dimension. 'Value based education would help the nation fight against all kinds of fanaticism, ill will, violence, fatalism, dishonesty, avarice, corruption, exploitation and drug abuse'.

An effective Experiment in Value Education for peace and reconciliation

The Indore based Dharma Bharathi National Institute of Value Education for peace has been experimenting successfully with some practical and innovative modules in value education during the last nine years. Though Dharma Bharati is an Institute its functions are a movement to make value education a way of life. It has experimented

with two practical modules for personal transformation and for national reconstruction. It is worth mentioning that the movement has reached six hundred schools and colleges across the country affecting positively the lives of thousands of students and teachers.

Value Education for peace promoted by this voluntary association is a positive response to the conflicts and chaos which threaten the very existence of human society. It aims at building a civilization of love based on a pluralistic spirituality. While it promotes such a spirituality it also expresses concern for universal solidarity. Narrow patriotism and destructive nationalism block our creativity.

The value Education which Dharma Bharathi promotes has an additional term, 'for peace'. What is so unique about this additional term 'peace'? By this expression Dharma Bharathi wants to communicate the significance of the value of peace in human life. Perhaps peace is the most sought after value today. Modern life with its consumeristic, individualistic and competitive style has lost the precious gift of peace. Through its programme of value education, Dharma Bharathi wants to promote peace within the individual, peace within society and peace with nature. When a person is able to experience these three dimensions of peace, he/she will have peace with God. Hence the programme of value education for peace consists of four important dimensions, namely, psychological, sociological, ecological and theological (divine).

Vision of Education for Peace and reconciliation

Value education promoted by Dharma Bharathi is based on the spiritual foundations of all the world religions. The vision statement is inspired by some of the unique and positive values of these religions. The statement promotes a paradigm shift from a narrow understanding of religiosity to a broad and liberative spirituality. Dharma Bharathi aims at building a nation with the universal family spirit of the Hindus and the Bahais; the discipline and fellowship of the Muslims; the courage of the Sikhs; the compassion of the Buddhists; the non-violence of the Jains; the creativity of the Parsis; the indomitability of the Jews; the cosmic solidarity of the Tribals and the self-sacrifice and forgiveness of the Christians.

Goal of Education for Peace and reconciliation

Education for peace and reconciliation is a dream that the world be blessed with enlightened leaders and responsible citizens who care for the welfare of humanity in the years to come. It is a hope that humanity will be rebuilt when the students who sit in the classrooms today will take up responsible positions in their homes, community, government offices and other fields. They will be agents of peace and builders of a universal family.

The movement has long-term and short-term goals: the long – term goals are to prepare the youth to take up the leadership of the nation in their own life situations; to enlighten their conscience and character; to make them responsible citizens who will work for inter-religious harmony, global solidarity, moral regeneration and nation-building. The short-term goal is to bring about attitudinal changes in the young minds by effective animation and follow-up. Literacy programme for the illiterate people by students, building houses for the poor and the homeless in the neighbourhood of the school, making personal sacrifices and collecting funds to help the needy and establishing discipline and order in the school, ecological preservation like tree planting and anti-deforestation campaign, inter-religious conventions and cultural programmes which promote unity and harmony irrespective of caste, creed and culture, etc. are the main activities proposed for this purpose.

The specific objectives of the movement of value education for peace are: training of enlightened leaders, educating the youth to be responsible citizens, generating universal solidarity and ecological consciousness, working for harmony among religions and ethnic groups and making education a means for social transformation and nation building.

The vision and objectives of Dharma Bharathi are realized through the practice of five paths for personal transformation.

Pray daily for peace according to one's religious tradition, to be an agent of peace and reconciliation.

This looks very simple and silly for intelligent adults. To say a prayer like 'God give peace in my mind, my family, my country and

in the whole world' does not take much time and effort. It can be said within a few seconds anywhere. Saying a prayer alone has no value. Peace is not possible without forgiveness and reconciliation. One needs to pray for peace and joy of his/her enemy. He/she will have to take the name of his/her adversary and pray daily, 'God bless (N) and his/her life'. A true prayer for peace will make one desire the welfare of all especially of those who have damaged one's reputation. The result would be an experience of true peace within oneself. When individuals experience peace in their hearts there will be peace in the country.

Skip a meal a week to express solidarity with the hungry and contribute the savings to the poor and the needy.

Fasting is not strange to the Indians. People of all religions undertake this noble discipline as part of their religiosity. This module is with a special purpose. It is to be conscious of the millions of our hungry brothers and sisters who are deprived of food and other necessities of life. To skip a meal is not a big sacrifice for those who are used to fasting for the whole day. The money saved by this act is to be given to the poor in need.

This rule is not strictly applied to the students. What is important is the spirit and attitude. The students are asked to sacrifice something from their money. They skip an ice cream or a chocolate. Thousands of students practise this very faithfully and use the amount saved to help people in need.

Do a good deed a day without any selfish motive to develop a loving concern for the nation.

Nation building is not only the responsibility of the ministers and social workers. Every citizen, every student, every child can be a partner in building the nation by performing ordinary acts with extraordinary intention. Through this module, teachers and students are made aware that they build the nation when they save electricity and water. When one deliberately helps a stranger in the street, giving a helping hand to elderly person to board the train or pick up a piece of paper from the school corridor to deposit in the dustbin, he/she is sharing in the noble task of building the nation.

Honour parents, teachers and all human beings

According to ancient Indian culture and tradition, parents and teachers are respected. They are considered to be visible gods on earth. Even with the influence of the market culture this good tradition is still alive. What is significant in this module is the expression of 'honouring all human beings'. Respecting parents and teachers is common. Even murderers and thieves do the same. What about honouring the maid servant who cleans the house, the driver, the peon and all those who are junior to us? Do we honour them?

There is a clear distinction between honour and respect. Respect can be a show of social obligation and politeness. Honour comes from the heart as a result of genuine spirituality. Only a person who has discovered his/her identity can honour others. Status conscious and petty minded people cannot honour others especially the poor and the weak. 'When one learns to honour all human beings he/she will start accepting and appreciating diversity, the otherness of others.'

Respect the earth and save its resources

Earth is our mother and she needs to be respected. This is expressed by saving her resources like water, tree, etc. One who respects mother earth will not dirty her face by throwing plastics and waste materials that pollute. Through this module students and teachers learn to keep the earth clean as part of their self-discipline.

At first the self-revitalization programme appears to be rather simple and suitable only for primary school students but as one takes it up seriously it really becomes challenging and even difficult. As one carries on with it, it penetrates the deeper self and begins to make the programme more meaningful. With acts of kindness, respect for others, one will enjoy inner serenity. Where teachers and animators practised the *five paths* sincerely, Dharma Bharathi took root and grew. Where teachers merely imposed it on others without practising it themselves, it withered away and rigidified into a mere ritual. The programme is a panacea for the dehumanized society of today and has the potential to bring more meaning to human lives, according to the experience of many individuals who practise it.

Action programme for national reconstruction

When individuals experience the realities of society at a deeper level and analyze them they become aware of the causes of poverty, exploitation, violence and fundamentalism. Deeper awareness leads to reflection and contemplation of issues which gives birth to convictions. These convictions help persons to formulate a vision of life which enables them to set their goals, determine their policies and priorities. This was the process which helped many saints and great personalities to make a difference in the world by their life of vision and values.

The impact of the sincere practice of the *five paths* is also very radical. Hundreds of students and teachers have given testimony of the changes that took place in their values and attitudes. Personal transformation urges a person to be proactive, to go out and make things happen in the world. He/she will search for and find opportunities, time and resources. This can be done individually or collectively. In schools and colleges this takes place in groups of students and teachers who have had a similar experience by the practice of the *five paths.*

This action programme is directed towards national reconstruction and social transformation. Involvement in these activities provides food for reflection. These activities are undertaken in groups. They can be also performed by individuals in their personal capacity.

1. *Enlightened Leadership*

To promote leadership qualities of self discipline, fellowship, universal vision, courage, compassion, selfless service, self-giving, love and respect for all religions. These qualities are developed by the practice of the five paths, the study of the lives of great women and men, developing organizational skills, etc.

2. *Empowering women*

To undertake activities which will promote the dignity of women and empower them by giving more opportunities for them and creating a healthy attitude of respect towards them.

3. Caring and sharing

To promote a compassionate and caring attitude towards needy fellow beings. This programme is realized by giving financial support, extending personal help to the needy, sharing meals with the poor, building houses for the homeless, etc.

4. Art and culture

To develop creative talents inherent in individuals for personal growth and the good of humanity. This objective is achieved through creating opportunities to exercise the talents in music, dance, drama, art, painting, writing, public speaking, etc. with special emphasis on one's own cultural tradition.

5. Light and Life

To promote life and uphold human dignity. Eye donation, blood donation, human rights and anti-abortion campaign are some of the means for relalizing these objectives. Eye is the light of the body and blood is its life.

6. Literate India

To create awareness among the students to use their talents and to create infrastructure to eradicate illiteracy at all levels.

7. Green India

To create an awareness of the need to protect the enviornment and maintain ecological balance. Tree planting, gardening, organic farming, anti-pollution campaign, campaign against consumerism, formation of eco-clubs, etc, are the activities suggested.

8. Clean India

To promote a sense of cleanliness in personal and public life. Keeping the home and surroundings clean, undertaking cleanliness drive in schools/colleges and public areas, etc. are some of the activities recommended.

9. Knit India

To promote national integration and communal harmony. Joint celebration of religious and national festivals, interreligious prayer

meetings and dialogue, organizing regional and national youth camps etc. are proposed.

10. Heal India

To promote health care for all. Visiting the sick, organizing health camps, sponsoring rural dispensaries, promoting the use of herbal medicines, anti-drug campaign, etc. may be adopted.

Education for value – based living should not be compartmentalized. The conscientization of the triangle of education - students, teachers and parents - is envisaged to assure their integral development as enlightened leaders. The Value Education for Peace which Dharma Bharathi promotes is rooted in the personal practice of the five paths for self-revitalization.

Generally, there is a feeling that value education is for the students. Teachers and elders speak eloquently of the urgency of value education keeping the students in mind. In fact teachers, principals and parents need value education more urgently than the students. The youth experiences a value conflict everywhere in society. The student sees scams in the school administration. He/she witnesses contradictory values practised by the parents at home. Yet all of them preach values to him. He/she ends up in frustration and anger.

The consequence of this hypocrisy is the alienation of the youth from family, religion, and the mainstream of the society. They may even form terrorist and mafia groups.

Text books, classroom teaching or sermons of godmen cannot make the youth moral. They need help to formulate a vision, a dream, for life which is lasting and will bear fruit. This is possible only when the students are brought closer to the realities of life. They need to study and analyze the socio-political and economic context of the country in the general context of the world. There should be a political will to get into the real business of education. Politicians and parties should keep away from the school/university campus. Leave campus to true educationists. The *Saraswati* temples should not be a place to reward the party loyalists and power brokers. Education can never be reformed without reforming the quality of teachers. Party loyalties and religious beliefs should not be the criteria to

appoint teachers in the school and colleges. There should a system to test the quality of life and wisdom of the teachers more than his/her degree/certificates while appointing them.

What Unites the Members of Different Religions?

The unifying element in the movement is its spirituality. Dharma Bharathi basically is a spiritual movement. It respects and recognizes the uniqueness of all religions. It goes beyond the rituals and structures which divide people. It clearly distinguishes between religiosity and spirituality. Religiosity has to do with rituals, rules, institutions and hierarchy. Spirituality promotes values which unite people. It liberates human beings from fundamentalism and futile conflicts. The spirituality and fundamental positive values of all these religions unite the members and give them direction to work for a common cause.

What is Unique about the Dharma Bharathi?

There are innumerable associations and movements involved in various types of developmental activities. There are organizations which cater to the needs of students, children, women and other sections of the society. There are movements that work for protecting the environment, human rights and other social and political issues. But Dharma Bharathi is a movement which has a holistic and integral approach. While it works for the welfare of students and youth it also has pogrammes for teachers and parents. It includes programmes to create ecological consciousness as well as empower women and protect the values of democracy and human rights. In short it is a movement for all sections of society responding positively to all the issues which people face.

It is an inter-religious movement both in content and structure. The movement is not only rooted in inter-religious spirituality but its functions are managed by an inter-religious governing body. The members of this movement belong to different religious and cultural backgrounds. The seven member governing body of the movement consists of persons belonging to different religions.

It is a movement which genuinely practises values of transparency, accountability and democracy at all levels. Frequent evalua-

tion by the team members both at the local and national level is a special mark of the movement. The democratic and decentralized working style promotes the growth of each member. Financial integrity of the movement through transparency and accountability is known to all who are associated with the movement.

Dharma Bharathi is rooted in the cultural traditions of the country. While scientifically analyzing the changes affecting the life of modern society, the movement also preserves the noble traditions and values of the past. This is very visible in the vision and practical modules of the movement.

It is a movement which promotes patriotism. But at the same time it warns people about the dangers of narrow nationalism which generates hatred and hostility towards other communities and countries. The movement promotes the universal vision of considering the whole world as a family.

Preaching only what is practised

Dharma Bharathi insists on practising what is preached. The movement does not allow anyone to talk about values to groups if the person himself/herself does not live by them. This is the strength of the programme. The movement has made a deliberate option not to own land or building for its functioning. Its national office in Indore and regional office in Bangalore function from rented apartments. The expenses are met by the schools and institutions which are associated with the movement. Well wishers and friends sponsor items in times of need. The entire financial affairs are conducted in total transparency. As part of accountability the income and expenditure are sent to all the donors. The annual General Body is kept open to non-members and invitees. All are given freedom to express their opinions and ask for clarifications.

Book of life as Text for Value Education

The reason for explaining the inner dynamics of the Dharma Bharathi is to show how the whole functioning of the school/college becomes an education in value development for the students, teachers, parents and neighbourhood. Creating an atmosphere in the school for participative management and transparency in finances and de-

cision-making will motivate the students and the teachers. They in turn become the heralds of value education. This is the most powerful pedagogy to meet the present culture of dehumanization and discrimination.

According to this programme value education starts from the office of the Principal. The policies and programmes are based on the broad principles of participation, transparency, team work, open and frank evaluation. If implemented in true spirit the teachers, the students and the parents would become partners in sharing responsibilities and commitment.

Impact of Value Education for Peace

As per feed back received from beneficiaries

A teacher says: "through the practice of the five paths I have become a person more caring and sharing, ready to accept even hostile persons. 'Forget and forgive' has become my motto'. *(Mrs. Kawaljit Kaur, Ranchi)*

A psychologist says : 'In my several years of experience I have come across many social movements with creative vision which have captured my attention. But what seems so special in Dharma Bharathi movement of Value Education for Peace is that it has a personal dimension for self-revitalization geared towards social transformation. Dharma Bharathi takes out " the plank in one's own eyes before taking out the speck from others eyes". *(Dr.Loretta Pinto)*

General public reports

"Dharma Bharathi has brought many changes in my life. The greatest change being peace of mind". *(Vinay Dhanani, Punasa, M.P.)*

"I have become more patient, self-controlled, disciplined and service-minded after joining Dharma Bharathi". *(Madhu, Noida, U.P.)*

"I have learned to care and share by developing a feeling of solidarity with the poor". *(Neha Sahani, Sagar, M.P.)*

Earlier I used to destroy plants inside the school campus. But now I have learnt to respect the earth and protect the plants". *(Usha Rani, Karur, T.N.)*

"As per my religious practice I used to fast. But never shared the savings with the needy. But now I can experience the pain of hunger when I fast and so I understand the agony of hungry people. I have developed love for these people". *(Hafsa Siddiqua, Hyderabad, A.P.)*

"I have learned to respect all religions according to the vision of Dharma Bharathi in this fanatical world". *(Rajan, Etawah, U.P.)*

"I used to throw away food and did not know the value of it. The 'skip a meal a week' exercise has changed my habit of wasting food. I am very happy to help the poor and needy by doing this exercise". *(M.Surekha, Kurnool, A.P.)*

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Embodied Immortality

Philosophical and Religious Implications

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Abstract: In this article the author studies the possibility for embodied (physical) immortality and its philosophical and theological implications. The author pleads for a consciousness that is widened, deepened and renewed to cope with the technological advancements. Finally enhancement of life is advocated as the key criterion for sound scientific, technological and philosophical developments.

Keywords: Superhumans, consciousness, death, values, vision, meaning, eternal life, God of life

"Being born is not a crime; so why must it carry a sentence of death?" (Ettinger 1964).

"Death is a disease; cure it!" (Ettinger 1964).

Introduction: Crises, Opportunities

It is with such challenging and provocative statements that the anti-ageing research marches forward.[1] Today's world, which has witnessed unprecedented technological growth, has experimented with the human body, with human life and is at the point of experimenting with human death too. What are the religious and philosophical implications?

This article is a modest attempt to relate the possibility of anti-ageing or embodied immortality to religion and philosophy. I do not affirm that embodied immortality is possible now. For the sake of the article I only assume that embodied immortality is plausible and then put forward its philosophical and religious challenges and implications. My goal is to show that embodied immortality is not the eternal life promised by religion. I also argue that embodied immor-

tality, if at all attainable, may be warmly welcomed by religion critically, creatively and constructively.

Terminological clarifications: By the term "anti-ageing" I assume the possibility that ageing can be stopped and even reversed. Further, when I speak of embodied immortality or physical immortality, what is suggested is that death may be either conquered or postponed indefinitely. "Age-reversing" guarantees the vitality of youth more or less in spite of the temporal progress. So, by embodied immortality is meant a sufficiently long life-span which borders on immortality. For instance, if the life-span of human beings can be prolonged to more than a few thousand years, we can assume that for our practical purpose they have attained embodied (or physical) immortality.

Since the topic is vast, I am forced to be selective in my approach. I will cover briefly two religious traditions (Christianity and Hinduism) and see how embodied immortality can be meaningfully responded to and accepted by both of these traditions.

1. Scientific Fact: Death a Matter of Fact

a. Death as a Natural Phenomenon

Phenomenologically speaking, just like everything that lives in nature, humans too are born, grow and die. What is specific to humans is that we are aware of it, particularly of our own death. Death, "the possibility of our impossibility" has disturbed us from primordial times. What is death? How is it related to life? Is there any life after death? The answers to these penetrating questions have been diverse. In 497 BC the Greek writer Sophocles maintained that death is the only thing from which man cannot flee (Kremer 1972: 4).

One of the predominant philosophical views is that death is natural. Either death is nothingness or it leads to nothingness. Beginning with Democritus of the Greek tradition and the Carvakas of the Indian tradition and, in our times, logical positivists and materialists, death is regarded as a natural process, following the law of matter (or more scientifically, the law of entropy). Thus, a famous historian could claim "death is the price paid by life for an enhance-

ment of the complexity of a organism's structure" (Arnold Toynbee quoted in Enright 1987: 3).

This sentiment is turned to a joyous one by "Seneca the Younger," the eclectic Roman philosopher (63-65 AD) who exhorted: "Let us go to our sleep with joy and gladness; let us say: 'I have lived; the course which Fortune set for me is finished;'[2] and if God is pleased to add another day, we should welcome it with glad hearts.... When a man has said: "I have lived!" every morning he arises he receives a bonus" (Bolt 1998: 52). These scholars regard the *thanatos*, the death instinct as powerful as the eros, the life instinct. In fact, *thanatos* restores the higher organization to a simpler, pre-vital state.

b. The Possibility of the Impossibility of Dasein

Similar philosophical views on death are proposed by Martin Heidegger. The human way of existing is Dasein, "being-there," i.e., being there in an inseparable relationship with the world. Existence is potentiality-for-being. As potential (or possibility), human being is inherently incomplete. "If existence is definitive for Dasein's Being and if its essence is constituted in part by potentiality-for-Being, then, as long as Dasein exists, it must in each case, as such a potentiality, not yet be something" (1962: 276). Therefore, the basic constitution of Dasein is that there is constantly something still to be settled. Still more poignantly, Dasein's inherent incompleteness moves, not towards completeness, but towards death. The "end" of Being-in-the-world is death. This end, which belongs to the potentiality-for-Being – i.e., its very existence – limits and determines in every case whatever totality is possible for Dasein (1962: 276-277). Therefore, for human beings, to be alive is to be incomplete, and for one's life to have been completed would be to be dead. "As long as Dasein is as an entity, it has not yet reached its "wholeness." But if it gains "wholeness," this gain becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-world. Hence, Dasein's possibility of Being-a-whole must at the same time be a Being-unto-death. Therefore, the meaning of human existence is to be found within. Human life is realised not by ignoring mortality, but by taking the inevitability of death fully and frankly into account (Hick 1976: 97-101). Death therefore becomes the "possibility of the impossibility" of Dasein.

c. Natural Longing to Overcome Death

Death is natural. It is definite and certain. It is important for us to realize that the "survival instinct" is as natural as and more compelling than the "death instinct." From our very beginnings, evident from the rudimentary wall paintings found in paleontological tombs in France, we human beings have been speculating on the meaning and implications of death.

Humans rebel against death, refuse to acknowledge it and seek to escape from it. The Indian philosopher Radhakrishnan is emphatic when he affirms: "Man is not an aggregate of chemical compounds. He is not a slot in the machine with predictable responses to outside stimulations. He is neither a puppet in the hands of fate nor a pawn in the cosmic chess, moved by the impersonal forces of Nature, Fate or Destiny. He is the master of his Fate, the captain of his Soul" (quoted in Rao n.d.: 194).

So the question before us is about death or the overcoming of death. We are in a bind. "The thought of death gives us the thrill of annihilation; that of Immortality gives us the thrill of endless duration. And, strange, in each case the result is identical. Anguish oppresses our heart, and we catch ourselves saying: No, this cannot be" (Mainage & Lelen 1930: 241).

We have seen that death is the normal pattern of nature. At the same time the longing to overcome death is also intrinsic to humans and to nature. So, the question is: is not the longing for the death of death also as natural as death itself?

2. Phenomenological Religion: Death a Matter for the Spirit

Faced with definite death, we rebel at the thought expressed by the poet William Blake

"I am an outcast –

I am left to the trampling foot and the spurning heel."

When asked what the greatest wonder in the whole world was, the ancient Indian sage, King Yudhisthira replied: "That we see people dying all around us and never think that we too will die"

(Brahmaprana 2001: 337). To the natural and inevitable phenomenon of death, the human response has been one of rebellion or denial. We can claim that the typical human way of coping with death is a religious one. Religion tries not only to understand the phenomenon of death but also to transform it into a victory.

This view is strongly supported by the Indian guru Bhagavan Rajneesh and more coherently by the philosopher Cupitt: "Religion survives, surely, because the progressive weakening of religious institutions and religious thought does not alter the fact that at the deepest level religious needs and impulses are as great as ever ... We are still prompted to religious dread and longing by the thought of our own death, our own littleness, and the precariousness of human values in the face of Nature's vast indifference. What immense epochs there were before us and will be after us, of which we know nothing and that know nothing of us" (1984: 32).[3]

Now, let us study how Christianity and Hinduism encounter the mystery of death from their diverse perspectives.

a. Christianity: Victory over Death

Unlike Judaism, which does not have an explicit theory of life after death,[4] the Christian religion cannot be separated from its firm belief in the after-life . The cornerstone of Christian faith is resurrection, which is the affirmation of life in its fullness, including life after death. Though resurrection may be interpreted differently, what the Christian faith generally asserts is the resurrection of the body (or person) of Christ, which is the symbol of our individual resurrection. Christian faith is not about the immortality of the soul. Unlike Platonism[5] or Hinduism, Christian faith radically denies the death of the body (or person) and asserts that what survives is not merely the soul of the person, but the person in his or her totality.

Therefore, resurrection asserts that with death the person does not "pass away" but "pass into" a (glorified) transformed existence.[6] That is why Paul, one of the first preachers of the Christian vision, revels in challenging death! He boasts:

> When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor 15: 54-57)

Thus, Christian faith is a radical denial of the finality of death, and the affirmation of the death of death, whereby death is transformed into the fullness of life. With death the contingencies of human life are transcended, and we enter into a phase where we are embraced by the unconditional love of God. In clear terms, faith for a Christian is the living victory of life over death.

b. Hinduism: Victory over Birth and Death

Not so definitive and clear is the Hindu way of understanding life and death. Here the opposition is not seen primarily in terms of life and death, as is the case with Christianity, but in terms of birth and death. Not just death, but the opposition between birth and death is overcome in Hinduism.

In the Hindu world of *samsara* (changing world), where we are controlled by *maya* (illusion)[7] and where *kala* (time) has a role to play, birth as well as death are natural. Death for Hinduism is the departure of the subtle body (*suksma sarira*) from the worn out gross body (*sthula sarira*). At the same time both are not really real. Birth is an epiphenomenon and so is death.[8] What is significant in Hindu tradition is to realize the "vanity" of both birth and death and to realize that truly we are beyond both. Truly we are part of the eternal, cosmic Spirit, which is Brahman. The world of *Prakrti* and *Purusha* (the eternal dual principles)[9] is to be overcome so as to realize the true nature of oneself.

Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful!
I am food! I am food! I am food!
I am a food-eater! I am a food-eater! I am a food-eater!
I am a frame-maker! I am a frame-maker! I am a frame-maker!
I am the first-born of the world-order (*rta*),
Antecedent to the gods, in the navel of immortality!
Who gives me away, he indeed had aided me!
I, who am food, eat the eater of food!
I have overcome the whole world!
He who knows this, is a brilliant shining light.

Such is the mystic Upanishad. (Taittirya Upanisad 3.10.6)[10]

In the Indian tradition the school of Vedanta sees death as a harvest time wherein the culmination of a lifetime of actions and desires determines one's destiny (Brahmaprana 2001: 340). Be that it may, the Tibetan Buddhists and Near Death Experience specialists are one with brain researchers, depth psychologists, yogis and all mystics of various religious traditions in affirming (or, at least, pointing) that a human being dies into a "reality far more amazing than anyone of us can possibly imagine" (Tugwell 1990: 163).

c. Life as Accepting Death and Going Beyond

The general pattern of facing death in the case of a human person has been broadly classified as (Moody 1975):

1. Denial
2. Depression
3. Anger.
4. Bargain.
5. Acceptance

Studying the death of Moses on these lines the theologian Berkowitz maintains that even Moses exhibited his desperate attempts to avoid death, was willing to give up almost anything, including his very humanity, in order to avoid death (2001: 305). Finally, without being able to enter the promised land, he accepted death.

The moment of death is the most important moment of one's life. "It is the moment of focusing a whole life into a single point of incandescent surrender. It is the moment, where one is totally free – freed from every bond and bondage, and freed for Love beyond all reckoning" (Tugwell 1990: 163).

Even the agnostic philosopher Horkheimer is convinced of the significance of death in the personal life of human beings. He asserts that death reflects the hope and longing that the earthly life is absurd and not final.[11] Therein lies the meaning of death, obviously with a religious significance.

In this section, we have seen that religions enable humans to cope with the enigmas of existence, the most important of them being death. Religions provide us humans with a way of understanding, explaining and living out death. So they help us to confront the absurdity of death and make it still meaningful for us.

3. Religious Promise: Life Eternal

a. Salvation as Eternal Life

The general religious way prepares for and leads to eternal life. Most religious leaders and mystics have proclaimed a life beyond this world, a life unlimited by the contingencies of this life. It is in this context that we can understand the utterance of Jesus, "I have come so that you may have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 6:12). As scripture scholars point out, Jesus meant a different mode of life, a life in the presence of God.

Elaborate theories have been developed in all religions regarding the fullness of life. Soteriology, or the theory of salvation, is precisely this. Further, eschatology, which deals with the "last things" and the life to come, also features the "final victory of good over evil" and a fulfilled life. In Buddhism the eight-fold path leads to such an eternal life. The three *margas* (ways of salvation) of Hinduism (*jnana maga, karma marga* and the *bhakti marga – ways of knowledge, devotion and action*) are ways for final self-realization, that is salvation and the ultimate annihilation of the self in the Absolute Brahman. Though terms and categories differ, basically all religions point to an ultimate reality which is beyond words and which refers to final fulfilment: a fulfilment beyond the temporary and existential limitations of our present-day existence.

b. Salvation as This-Worldly

Though most religions today have a rather elaborate theory of salvation (or final fulfilment) all religions recognise the tension between this worldly fulfilment and the other worldly (final) fulfilment. There are a few spiritualities which neglect or negate this world fulfilment. By and large, most religions see an ambiguous relationship between these two polarities: fulfilment in this world and the final fulfilment in the ultimate sphere.

By and large Judaism and Christianity are religions which are predominantly this-worldly. Still, popular piety assumes a fulfilment that is exclusively other-worldly. Today the majority of Christian scholars respond to this problem by bringing in the notion of "inaugurated eschatology," which is the final fulfilment of humans but which is "already and not yet." So Hans Küng affirms, "God's heaven refers man to the earth. Hope of heaven must be rooted in the earth, if it is to remain human" (1984: 247). Even the Calvinist theory of predestination could be understood from this light. The Catholic Church also echoes the same sentiment.[12]

c. Eternal, Inaugurated Life

As already noted, the eternal life promised by religion already has a this-worldly dimension. This is also evident from the tension in Christian theology between this worldly Church and the other-worldly Kingdom of God. Theologians have been at pains to relate both, taking care not to identify them. The basic insight is that there is no salvation independent of this world or exclusively of this world. We can also see how this-worldly betterment is taken seriously by some groups in Hinduism. The ideal of the ascetic life in Hinduism is to obtain "liberation in this life" (*jivan mukta*). People try to attain this-worldly fulfilment, which is a symbol of final fulfilment, using alchemic or chemical means.

The search for 'eternal youth' is a characteristic feature of some Tantric schools like the Siddhas and Nathas, and of other sects derived from them like the Kapalikas and Aughars. All these resort to *rasa-yana*, that is, alchemy. According to the Siddha school of Hinduism, the *yogic* and alchemic practices known as *kaya sadhana*[13] lead to an artificial extension of one's life-span, with the aim of augmenting the possibilities for the attainment of living liberation (Filippi 1996: 102).

A scholar describes his own not so promising experience of seeing a case of anti-aging. "When she came to me she looked like a fifteen year old girl, but she is much, much older than that. Death cannot come to take her until she herself desires it. She remains naked, but covers herself with her long matted locks, and she carries a trident, Shiva's symbol. Once I playfully asked her, 'Why don't you

let me see your real form?' She showed me – and my God! It was horrible! I was nauseated by the sight; all her skin was wrinkled; her eyelids droped down onto her cheeks and she had to pick them with her fingers in order to see me. She has become immortal [sic] through the use of mercury" (cited in Filippi 1996: 102). My point is only to note that such "crude" methods were in practice in ancient India.

The famous indologist M. Eliade also narrates how important these practices are. The "elixir" obtained by alchemy corresponds to the "immortality' pursued by *tantric* yoga; just as the disciple works directly on his body and his psychomental life in order to transmute the flesh into a "divine body" and free the Spirit, so the alchemist works on matter to change it into "gold" – that is, to hasten its process of maturation to "finish" it (1969: 283). Further, Eliade quotes from an authoritative source in Buddhism, Vagisvarakirti said that he "conjured up quantities of the elixir of life, and distributed it to others, so that old people, 150 years old and more, became young again." [14]

This is further corroborated by the famous ancient traveller Marco Polo. Referring to the *chugchi (yogins)* who "live 150 or 200 years," he writes: "The people make use of a very strange beverage, for they make a potion of sulphur and quicksilver and mix together and this they drink twice every month. This, they say, gives them long life; and it is a potion they are used to take from their childhood."[15]

Though such attempts at bodily immortality was made, it is obvious that such alchemic practices have not been successful. Can the modern scientists do something where alchemists have failed? If immortality has become at least a theoretical plausibility, it has profound philosophical and religious implications. In the next section I show that religions do not need to be defensive in the face of the plausibility (or even possibility) of human immortality. Simultaneously we need to realize that embodied immortality challenges our present world-view, which does not allow death to have the final word. Such a (theoretical) shift is enough to make us take seriously the question of the plausibility (though not the possibility) of bodily

immortality in the realms of philosophy and religion. Such a world-view challenges our basic assumptions about human life.

4. Philosophical Challenges: Crucial Concerns

a. Who am I? The Meaning of Self

One of the crucial questions that everyone has to face is: Who am I? In the context of the possibility of physical immortality, this becomes all the more problematic. Assuming that there is the possibility of age-reversing and eliminating death (or postponing it to an indefinite future), the question becomes still more problematic.

Am I my body? Since I do not need to get rid of my body through death, can't I be fully identified with my body? What about the "spiritual" dimension of myself? Can I be regarded as a beautiful and complex machine? How do I explain the aesthetic, moral, intellectual and mystical dimensions of my everyday life?

It is natural that we use things and employ them to improve our capabilities and even to broaden our own self. We long for more things to better and perfect ourselves. Does this process of self-expansion turn to self-aggrandisement? Since we long for everything and we become "everything," and in the process we seem to cease to be what we are. We become what we adore.

Furthermore, when we look at the evolution of human society, a slow process of evolution of the self is discernible. Early people identified themselves with the tribe or the clan. In medieval societies, one's identity was rooted in the family. Today we have a highly developed personal identity, which is radically different from the early communal, tribal identity. If physical immortality is possible, this will further alter our identity. We shall identify ourselves more with our bodies. In such a situation what is the role of society? Of religion? Of the spiritual?

b. What is life? The Visions of Life

It is self-evident that the beauty of life lies in its paradoxical aspects. There is pain and pleasure; there is death at every moment. Life today is so precious because it is so fragile; it is cherished so

much precisely because it is not fully understood. Life is beautiful today because we cannot control it fully.

That is why the spiritual masters of today speak of self-abandonment and letting go as necessary features of life. Picturing life as a seed which necessarily has to die so that it bears abundant fruit, they visualise life as an ever open encounter with different people, circumstances and events. There is unpredictability, and it makes life so thrilling.

Further, facticity does not exhaust our lives. It is possibility – openness to the totally unknown – that makes today's human life attractive and treasured. This constitute the transcendence of human life.

The existential question to be posed in the context of physical immortality is: Does it rob life of this transcendence? Does it make life a complicated machine, totally predictable, totally controlled and so totally worthless? That brings to mind the frightening scenarios of the "Brave New World" or "1984." Will the quest for embodied immortality reduce itself to furthering the "culture of narcissism" (Küng 1984: 239)?

It is important to keep in mind that at the core of human existence, there is so much chaos, unpredictability, self-emptying. Human beings are essentially paradoxical and mysterious. These mysterious dimensions of life can be expressed in different ways. If we eliminate these dimensions altogether, won't we cease to be human?

c. Should I Act? The Horizon of Values

Closely related to the paradoxical dimensions of human life is the element of altruism present in human beings. However we may try to explain it (Dawkins 1996), our present human existence is constituted by love. Every religion points to this self-giving or self-sacrificing aspect of life. Every great person points to the "selflessness" that is intrinsic to an authentic human life.

That is why the Beatitudes of Christ (Mt 5) are still meaningful for humanity. That is why the *nishkama karma* advocated by *Bhagavad Gita* resonates with us. That is why even atheists can vi-

brate with the hymn of love as given in 1 Cor 13. There is something in us which makes giving holier than taking and suffering for others a worthy cause. There is, in short, something in us which makes love an absolute value: something which is greater than our own selves. It is a value for which I am ready to pay even with my life! Without such unconditional values, human life, as we know it today, is not worth living.

We need to ask ourselves if the quest for immortality is a quest for a personal, selfish gain. The highest degree of selfishness is if I can buy for myself physical immortality and cause others to pay for it. Will personal immortality be a "profitable business" where greed and money rule? Will we eliminate all values from our lives? By making a group of human beings immortal , are we creating a society which has forgotten to give, to value, suffer and so to love? That would be tragic. A society without values will perish because it finds nothing to live for. That would be the paradox of an amoral, immortal society, which decides to eliminate itself because it does not know what to live for.

These values are crucial because they enable us to relish and enjoy life. They enable us to love and enjoy life. It is tragic to usher in immortality after robbing us of the capacity to cherish joy in life.[16]

5. A Creative Response: Affirmation of Life

The responses to the frightening or fantastic scenarios and scientific possibilities described above may be summed up as total opposition (active denial), orphic admiration (passive submission) or creative appreciation (prophetic acceptance).

a. Active Denial

Opponents of this project advocate the policy of "denying or delaying" the whole issue of search for physical immortality. According to them, science is constantly creating new opportunities for us, but new opportunities always generate new problems for society. These social problems inevitably fall into the hands of our politicians and the general public and affect life negatively. The first impulse of these people is to be cautious, apprehensive and overly critical. The first instinct, prompted by religious zealots, will be to ban it.

"It's new; it's something that's never been done before; therefore it must be wrong – perhaps evil." After all, wasn't that the immediate reaction to the news that a sheep had been cloned? "Ban it!" cried the presidents of the U.S. and France. The scientists are trying "to play God!" (Peters 1998: 33), they chanted. The Clinton administration wanted to pass a law outlawing human cloning.[17]

This way of responding reminds us of active denial or positive confrontation and will only lead to conflict between science and society or religion and offers no creative contribution. The greatest drawback of this method is that it simply does not work. If we persist in blocking all progress, one day the block will block us out of existence. Society (or religion) can suppress the scientific quest for some time but one day it will break through and then it will pay back with vengeance. In the long run such a method is counter-productive.

b. **Passive Submission**

The diametrically opposed view is characterised by total admiration and blind absorption of the new changes brought about by science. There are enthusiasts who crave for new technologies, without in any way personalising or critically reflecting on them. Again, the pressure to push such research forward as rapidly as possible and make the results available to everyone will be overwhelming. We are talking of life and death here, and the basic animal drive to stay alive is far too powerful to deny or even delay. No matter how expensive it may be, no matter how much it distorts our society, people will want to extend their lives as far as they can.[18]

The problem with such an approach is that it simply does not contribute anything constructive to society. If society is constantly carried on and pushed forward by science, the dominion of science over society will never stop. If we swim all the time along with the current, the current will never cease carrying us on. So we cease to have our own identity, our own convictions or values.

c. Prophetic Acceptance

So what is called for, I believe, is a creative appreciation, a prophetic and affirmative response to the scientific revolution. We should be aware that the research may not develop in the way we wish. The promised immortality may not arrive. It may take longer than imagined. There is a theoretical possibility and a practical probability that physical immorality is achievable, but it may just be hype and hope that will never be realized.

The role of religion and society in general is to guide and shape the human longing, not blindly follow the steps science has taken. Such a view nurtures hope for the future and evaluates the dangers posed by technology. It affirms life and even immortal life, without belittling our weak and fragile life.

This demands a genuine dialogue between science and society, an enriching partnership between the two and trusting critique of one another. This calls for a readiness to listen and to change stands based on informed opinion and calculated facts given by the mutual encounter of both society (religion) and science. This calls for commitment both to the larger values of society and to the particular values of scientific progress as well as possible physical immortality. It is a commitment that also demands at times a definite "no" to some directions of lopsided growth.

We should recall that "living longer" does not necessarily lead to "living fully." "Longer life is not necessarily a happier one, a more fulfilled one." Quantity of life has to be matched with quality of life.

6. Religious Implications: Let Life Be

a. Bodily Immortality vs Ontological Dependence

Humans are contingent, finite and limited. Emptiness exists in all dimensions of our life. Besides our spatio-temporal limitations, we experience limitedness at the moral, existential, aesthetic and ontological levels. Given our limitedness and the awareness of our limitedness, humans tend to transcend them.

It may be recalled that resuscitation (*Auferweckung*) is not resurrection (*Auferstehung*) nor is ever-lasting life eternal life. In the

same manner, embodied immortality is not the fullness of human existence. We may take 'unending life' or 'endless life' as equivalent to 'everlasting life,' 'life without any end,' 'life for ever and ever.' But eternity is different and implies that 'temporal features are not the whole story' or that things pass beyond the spatio-temporal dimension. Simultaneously, eternity could contain time (Ramsey 1960: 95-96).[19] If we do not maintain this distinction between "everlasting life" (similar to *Auferweckung*) and "eternity" (similar to *Auferstehung*) the assertion of St. Bernard may become true of us: "They will be finished without finishing, they will die without dying."[20] Or, we can say with John Hick, if we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present. Our life has no end in just the way our visual field has no limits (1976: 104).

If we keep the above distinction in mind it becomes obvious that embodied immortality cannot be the sole goal of any healthy eschatological hope, though we cannot ignore it either. Eschatological hope is, in short, the assertion that humans are dependent (temporarily, physically, psychologically, spatially and finally ontologically) on God the Fullness of Being. Only when humans can acknowledge their ontological dependence can they claim that their eschaton has arrived. So we will always remain "two-legged gods" in the words of Hegel, even if we attain embodied immortality (Küng 1984: 249). We would never have attained *nirvana* promised by Eastern traditions or union with God.

Physical immortality is one of the steps to overcome the temporal limitations imposed on us. It has to be definitely welcomed. It is hoped that along with the "curing of death," cures for most other diseases will be found. Both are to be appreciated. At the same time it would be inappropriate to consider it a panacea for all our human limitations.

Basic human brokenness, existential angst, philosophical emptiness and ontological vacuum are to be considered seriously as part of human existence. Physical immortality is only one step, a right step, in this direction of fostering life. What we, as serious and committed philosophers, need to reflect on is our own basic ontological finitude — our basic ontological dependence!

It seems to me that religions can welcome physical immortality creatively, constructively and critically. Religion owes it to humanity to point to the need for "transcendence" that even immortal human beings have. Religion need not feel threatened by embodied immortality, for a God who is intimidated by humans does not deserve to be a god.[21] Such a god may be comparable to the *asuras* or *devas* of Hindu mythology, not the absolute Brahman.

b. God as God of the Living

It would be beneficial to keep the conceptual difference between contingency (perishability and dependence) and immortality (non-perishability and dependence). Only temporal contingency is ruled out by immortality. Again it is useful to recall that God is the God of life and is life-enhancing. Further, both science and religion, as human enterprises are meant to foster and promote life.

In general, religions affirm, in no uncertain terms, that God is the sole creator and sustainer of the world and specifically of human life. Theologically this means that we are eternally dependent on Him, not that human life necessarily needs to be temporally finite. The crucial point to be noted is that even our possible temporal immortal life is ontologically dependent – totally and completely – on God.[22] The angels, for instance, are examples of beings who are immortal and at the same time eternally dependent on God. So God as creator of human beings does not necessarily require that humans must be mortal.[23]

We should ask if the immortality that science promises brings with it betterment of other human contingencies. Does human immortality necessarily eliminate suffering and pain? It may be remembered that immortal life is not identical with the eternal life that Jesus promises to give. It may be emphasised that we cannot have eternal life without immortality, not vice-versa. Eternal life implies the eschatological fullness of life. Eschatological concerns are valid even in an immortal human existence. Eschatological fullness deals with human "salvation," "*nirvana*" our final, ultimate "yes" to human life and it involves axiological, ontological fulfilment, besides temporal fulfilment: only the last is assured by immortality. Immortality does not rule out total ontological dependency.

Thus ethical concerns are still valid in an immortal human society. These ethical concerns have to inform human life and behaviour and life even if we live an immortal life. Only that can lead to human fullness. Besides ethical concerns, the ontological dependency of humans on God also needs to be asserted even in an immortal (temporal fullness) human life.

With these cautions, we can say that since God is life-affirming and the human task – both from religious and scientific perspectives – will be to seek for immortality, if such a task is ever feasible. So the search for immortality can very well be conceived of as a "sacred duty," "*sanatana dharma*" or "holy task" provided we realise that such a task does not imply replacing God or "playing God" (Peters 1997).

We worship God not because we will die, but because we are alive. Or as the Hindus say, we worship God since we need to realize our ultimate oneness with the Divine. God is the God of the living, not of the dead or the would-be-dead. Therefore, theologically, belief in God is not necessarily for the concerns of the future only; the concerns of the present are enough to postulate or affirm God.[24]

If the "glory of God is a human being fully alive" then obviously a human being who is "immortal" gives "more" glory to God. Such humans are more to the image of God. Such humans make us "created co-creators" (Peters 1998: 33) in the most appropriate sense. This implies that the God we believe in is not the "God of the gaps," the God who satisfies one only at the limit situation of one's death. We do not need crisis moments to lead us to God. It is the conviction of a genuine believer that God can be found in the depths of our daily lives and not only at the end of our lives. God is present both in limit-situations and in the everyday life of people as well as in our strengths and glorious achievements.[25]

c. Emerging Consciousness

Our basic concern is that immortality and superhuman status is being limited to a privileged few. The editorial of *Geneletter* echoes this view: "While I am optimistic about technology providing us

with new ways to attack important social problems, I do not think it is a cure-all. Making sure everyone can benefit from the new, genetically-informed medicine is a moral and political dilemma as much as a technological challenge. To be properly dealt with, it will require continued broad-based, informed public debate and democratic action" (Billings 2000).[26]

An immortality limited to a privileged few will mean that the same economic structure that exists in today's world will go on. Some of the people will be able to enjoy the advantages of science while the majority of the people will remain untouched by it. Can we allow such a situation to exist when we are dealing with life in its totality?[27]

Can we humans allow a superhuman status obviously limited to a few wealthy people? This might lead to the destruction of the human race and to the possible emergence of another race. It would be no problem if the emergence of such a new species is the outcome of a "natural" evolution where humans will gradually evolve into superhumans. Here the scenario is frighteningly different.

On the other hand, should we humans not evolve a radically different way of behaviour which accepts the motto: "Eine welt oder keine Welt!" (one world or no world)? Unfortunately, the tragic disparity that exists today between human beings, which makes 80% of our humans almost superfluous, by not really producing anything and not even consuming properly, just cannot go on in the new ethical framework.

It is calculated that the development of a single medicine through gene technique costs $500 million (Boombranche 2000: 12). So the achievement of immortality and superhuman status is economically a Herculean task. Should we allow multinational companies like Celera, Human Genome, Millennium, Affymetrix and Medarexs to shape the future of the human race using mainly economic criteria? That would be a horrendous prospect. In a situation where life and precisely the totality of the sacred human life is at stake we cannot allow "market economy" to control the procedure. Can patent rights limit or foster our very human survival and evolution?[28]

This critical situation demands that science and religion (the two pillars of today's civilisation) work together and enrich each

other. They have to critique and dialogue, leading to a new life style. There should be serious discernment: the criterion must somehow include the "sacredness of life." It might lead to enlarging the horizon of ethics and deepening its commitment to life, including human, animal and even super-human life. An interdisciplinary approach, where diversity and individuality are respected and at the same time transcended, is inevitable.

That will enable us to cope with the futuristic embodied immortality of human beings and further human evolution into super-human beings. This calls for both openness to life and commitment to values. The whole life is at stake – we cannot afford to be lethargic here.

It must still be affirmed that the possible future immortal scenario raises fundamental moral problems, demanding from us a totally new consciousness which is:

1. A renewed consciousness: The very idea of moral consciousness as one branch of religion or philosophy is at stake. An informed ethics has to shape the future world of ours and include all branches of human knowledge and particularly philosophy, religion and science. Thus a new moral consciousness is called for.

2. A broadened consciousness: This includes not just individuals with their formed conscience, but humans as a totality and also the whole living species. The vision such an ethics fosters is a holistic, integrating and life-respecting one.

3. A deepened consciousness: It is based not on any given norms (deontological ethics) but in consonance with the technological wonder. It is not one which opposes totally or agrees with fully, but which guides and co-determines the destiny of the whole human life in particular and life in general. The ethical norm of love may still be valid but it has to be interpreted to include non-human beings as the "face of the other." It must be complemented by the wisdom *(jnana)* or enlightenment of the Eastern traditions.

Conclusion: Enhancement of Life

Throughout this article we have been appreciating the marvellous technological possibilities that have taken us to the dawn of

embodied immortality, at the same time creatively critiquing it and maintaining an attitude of "prophetic acceptance." We are in a position now to acknowledge that embodied immortality would not merely be a technological accomplishment, but a human achievement. As a human achievement it is a collective, conscious, committed and cosmic decision that the whole of humanity takes about itself. A collective decision where all humanity, not a privileged few, is informed of the consequences; a conscious decision where the community of humans take responsibility for what is happening to itself; a committed decision, where we commit ourselves for the enhancement of life; a cosmic decision where we are aware that the decision we make will have truly cosmic consequences. Promoting and fostering life is the driving force of our quest for this technological progress.[29]

We also take care not to reduce science to technology. Science is a more comprehensive, general, global vision which humans have of themselves and of the cosmos. Similarly religion is not to be reduced to ethics. Religion propels us to a sacred spirit, where we can be truly human and divine at the same time. Therefore, the quest for physical immortality is not merely one of technology, but of science and of the human spirit.

Let us be aware that there are many unhealthy and growth-demoting factors in our human life. The greed for money, the orientation for profit, human *hubris*, and the craving for instant success are serious human factors which can make technology extremely dangerous. Let us realize that together with the widening of technological capabilities, we need to expand our moral consciousness and deepen our religious vision. The opportunities are really great: the emergence of a new species, very close to gods themselves. What is needed is a healthy humility before God and before the cosmos. Technological achievement untempered by humility leads to dehumanization and disaster.

The danger we are confronted with is colossal. What is at stake is everything: the whole of humanity. The extinction of humanity is a real possibility. So too the final flowering of humanity. The choice is ours. Let us make a collective, conscious, considered choice for life – including embodied immortality! Let us remain humble in our technological achievement and respectful in our religious convic-

tions. That will lead us closer to Hindu *nirvana* and Christian salvation.

Notes

1. This article is part of a larger project on research physical immortality. For supporting this project, I am grateful to John Templeton Foundation (www.templeton.org) and to Dr. Stephen Post. His editorial comments have been valuable.
2. This is a quote from the first century B C Roman poet Vergil, *Aeneid* 4. 653.
3. It may be noted that even secular scholars and philosophers have joined in this effort. "Recovering the value of death, and recovering the value in death, is important to us all... There is now an important congruence of the religious and the secular and ... they can now reinforce each other in a human attitude to death" (Bowker 1991: 42).
4. G.F. Moore "Jeder versuch, die jüdischen Vorstellungen über das "Zukünftige Leben zu systematisieren, zwingt sie in eine Ordnung und Logik, die sie nicht haben. Wie schon bemekt, ihre religiöse Bedeutung liegt in der ausdrücklichen Etablierung einer Vergeltungslehre nach dem Tod und naciht in der Vielfalt der Wege, mit der Mensch sich dies vorstellt" (quoted in Schmitz 1992).
5. There is an insightful criticism that St Paul and Augustine have made Christianity Platonism (Christy 2000).
6. For an elaborate treatment on resurrection, Bultmann, Marxsen, Schlette, Pesch and Pannenberg may be consulted (Soares-Prabhu 1980).
7. *Maya* is termed the "advaitin's Gordian knot" (Nayak 1987: 48).
8. *Samsara* is the world of flux, of activities, the passing world. *Maya* is popularly translated as illusion. *Kala* is time the temporal dimension of the world and is also the word for the God of death.
9. *Prakrti* stands for the material principle and *Purusha* for the conscious principle. Both are eternal and uncreated.
10. *Rta* means also rhythm, order, etc.
11. Sie [die Religion] kann aber dem Menschen bewußt machen, daß er ein endliches Wesen ist, daß er leiden und sterben muss; daß aber über dem Leid und dem Tod die Sehnsucht steht, dieses irdische Dasein möge nicht absurd, nicht das Letzte sein. So for an individual, when he accepts his own death, it becomes a promise of life. (See K Pandikattu and K Suriano, *Promises of Life*, Media House, New Delhi: 2001.)
12. In many documents of the Church the tension between this worldly and other worldly is maintained and this worldly is never totally ignored.

For instance, the Second Vatican Council Document asserts: "A hope related to the end of the time [death] does not diminish the importance of intervening duties, but rather undergirds the acquittal of them with fresh incentives." *The Church Today*, 21.

13. J. Parry calls it "physical culture."
14. Edward Conze, *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development*: 179 Cited in Eliade 179.
15. Sir Henry Yule, *The Bond of Ser Marco Polo*, ed. Henri cordie, II 365, Cited in Eliade 275
16. Such issues really ask if embodied mortality is catering to the collective selfishness of a privileged few. It definitely calls for a new mode of living where material poverty is eliminated and basic facilities are provided to all. A world where "Selfishness incorporated" reigns the very talk of embodied immortality could be ridiculous and funny. Some other philosophical difficulties associated with embodied immortality such as immortal boredom and "immorally inhuman" are not taken seriously by me in this article. Other issues like the scarcity of resources and the elimination of offspring in the case of embodied immortality are also ignored.
17. But while many people are justifiably wary of cloning humans, the offer of virtual immortality will be too powerful to sweep under the rug. Right or wrong, good or bad, no matter what the eventual consequences to society, most people do not want to die. Most people will leap at the chance to extend their lives indefinitely, to be youthful and vigorous for centuries or millennia. The politicians' and the public's second instinct will be to control the research. Write laws and set up bureaucracies that keep the scientists on a tight leash. Control the purse-strings for research, so that only compliant scientists can receive government funding. Delay the whole process as much as possible, so that we can at least postpone the problem.
18. The cyborg generation may not really care about their own individual or even human identity, but only about the survival which technology promises. Such a passive and uncritical submission, reminiscent of orphic adoration will not lead to true progress and the development of human destiny.
19. Boethius' classical definition of eternity is noteworthy here: "Interminabilis vitae simul et perfecta possessio" or "the whole and perfect possession simultaneously of interminable life" (Küng 1984: 273). Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae* Vol. V, n. 6. time and eternity: G. Ebling. *Dogmatik des christlichen Glaubens, vol. III*, Tübingen 1979, 408-36.

20. "Sine fine finientur, sine morte morientur." *De diversis* 42.6
21. In spite of the Tower of Babel, I interpret the story of the Tower of Babel as an expression of human hubris, rather than God's arrogance.
22. This may call to mind the finite regress that is discussed in connection with the "proofs for God's existence."
23. This raises the issue if God wanted humans to be immortal when he created them. The answer to this question can only be guessed. Scripturally there does not seem to be any conclusive evidence for one way or another.
24. Cf. P Tillich and E. Gilson are two theologians significant in this area.
25. We can very well agree with Sartre, Augustine and Heidegger that humans are never satisfied unless they become gods and affirm that embodied immortality does not make them gods.
26. For this section I am indebted to the paper I presented in Human Condition and Genetic Manipulation at the Luso-American Foundation, Portugal, Lisbon 2000.
27. Such a possibility of human immortality has deep rooted religious consequences. Religions can ignore the challenges posed by immortality only at the danger of instant self mortality. The obvious danger of such a possibility is that each person becomes so preoccupied with his own individual immortality that he forgets the human community and life in general. The larger issues of providing justice for the impoverished, fostering of life in general and love as the most significant human value may be forgotten. At the same time, physical immortality does not render God superfluous, religion redundant and human longing unnecessary. Even in immortal humans there is scope for meaningful hope, relevant religion and a liberating God. At the same time, immortality necessitates a human hope that may be detached from physical death. In our ordinary understanding of human longing, death is the starting point of eschatology or human hope. That view has to be given up; we need to delve deep into the "inaugurated eschatology" which theologians have taken seriously. We still need to take death seriously, but death may not be given the supreme importance and inevitability that was its due once. Human hope and fulfilment has to begin with this present world, with the here and now. However, overcoming physical death and attaining physical immortality does not solve the problem of human contingency. The issue of human finitude has to be addressed in a much wider sense. The tendency of those seeking physical immortality – passive acceptance – is to reduce human life to a physicalistic or mechanistic view point, stressing that attainment of physical immortality – temporal unlimitedness – necessarily leads to human fulfillment. We need to focus on the existential and ontological contingency of human

condition, not merely that of the temporal conditioning.

28. The "Statement on the Patenting of Human Genes and DNA-Sequences" is significant in our context. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Humangenetik (German Society of Human Genetics) acknowledges the importance of patenting for the development of diagnostic and therapeutic products, but is opposed to the patenting of the human genome and its DNA sequences. Their position is based on the idea that the human genome is common property, the unrestricted access to which should be guaranteed, and that human DNA sequences are discoveries, not inventions. Furthermore, patenting human DNA sequences can hinder the use of specific sequence variants by others, and thereby impede further research. (From their website)
29. The larger society must have a role to play in determining our future, not just the few individual scientists who quest for knowledge, or the corporate managers who seek profit. Further, religions have a significant role to play in determining the destiny of life. So we suggest briefly a possible response to the technological marvel of (possible) embodied immortality.

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Sexual Abuse

Data from Clinical Experience

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Abstract: Sexual abuse in India among the populace at large and particularly within the Church circles has not received much attention. However, there is a growing awareness of its existence and expression of concern about it today. After analyzing the data the study points out there is no evidence to support the assumption held by some that sexually abused women tend to enter religious life or that religious life is a refuge for sexually wounded women.

Keywords: sexual abuse, religious life, clinic experience, coping with sexual abuse.

There has been a growing concern in recent years about sexual abuse, especially by the clergy. Very recently there was renewed media coverage (see Butterfield & Hontz 2002: 6; Jose 2002: 9). There is much anger in the United States of America about alleged inaction and even cover-ups by ecclesiastical authorities there when the matter was brought to their notice. However, Church authorities today are taking a serious view of sex abuse, particularly pedophilia within its ranks (*The New Leader*, February 16-28, 2002: 13; May 16-31, 2002: 13). In his *Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 2002*, Pope John Paul II publicly acknowledged the prevalence of sexual abuse by the clergy (though not directly mentioning it by name). He wrote: "As priests, we are personally and profoundly afflicted by the sins of some of our brothers who have betrayed the grace of ordination in succumbing even to the most grievous forms of the *mysterium iniquitatis* at work in the world" (*L'Osservatore Romano* March 27, 2002: 8). The situation in the United States was considered serious

enough for Pope John Paul II to call the US Cardinals over to the Vatican to discuss the matter. Consequently the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops met for three days in June, 2002, to address the issue (*The New Leader,* July 1-15, 2002: 13; USCCB: 2002). The problem of sexual abuse within the Church is not restricted to the United States. The media has been reporting such abuses in Ireland, Australia and elsewhere (Horgan 2000; *The Hindu,* June 4, 2002: 15; *The New Leader*, May 1-15, 2001: 17).

Sexual abuse in India among the populace at large and particularly within Church circles has not received much attention. However, there is a growing awareness of its existence and expression of concern about it today. There are occasional media reports (*The New Leader*, July 1-15, 2001: 25). Pinki Virani's *Bitter Chocolate* (2000) was a harsh eye opener for many people. Virani reported statistics from studies by various organizations that showed high prevalence rates of sexual abuse in India.

According to the *World Health Organization* one out of every ten children in India is being sexually abused at any given point of time(Virani 2000: 19). A *Tata Institute of Social Sciences* study in 1985 among adults between the ages 20 and 24 showed that one out of three girls (30%) were sexually abused as children, and one out of every ten boys (10%). Fifty percent of this child abuse happened at home(Virani 2000: 19).

Sakshi, the Delhi-based organization, which spearheaded work on Child Sexual Abuse in the early 1990's, did a study of 357 school-going girl children, and 63% admitted to having been victims, around half of whom had abusers from within their homes and close family circles(Virani 2000: 20). *RAHI* of Delhi did a survey specifically addressing non-lower-class women. This Child Sexual Abuse survey was conducted among 600 English-speaking middle-and-upper-class women in Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Goa and Chennai. Seventy six percent of these 600 women whose ages ranged from 15 to 66 had been sexually abused in childhood. Forty percent of these abused women had a family member as perpetrator. Seventy one percent were abused by relatives or family friends(Virani 2000: 20).

Other organizations in India working on child rights have collated data that show that five out of every eight girls (62.5%) and three out of every 8 boys (37.5%) are victims of Child Sexual Abuse in India. The Police officially peg Child Sexual Abuse in India at 40% for girls and 25% for boys under the age of 16 (Virani 2000: 21).

What about the situation within the Indian Church? There are some anecdotal accounts of sexual abuse within the Church (Mannath, *The New Leader*, April 1-15, 2002: 1). At the second *National Gathering of Catholic Psychologists and Counsellors* (*Bosco Psychological Services,* 2001) held in New Delhi last year concern was expressed about the prevalence of sexual abuse, particularly of religious women. It was reported that more than 50% of new recruits have been sexually abused prior to entering religious life. (Some placed that number even higher.) It was also reported that a high percentage of women religious were sexually abused after entering religious life. During the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican, a Superior General from India called for a forum to deal with what she called the "increasing exploitation and abuses" of nuns in India (Bourdeaux 2001: 10). However, there are no reliable research data available to support these claims. The present study is a small effort to provide research-based data on sexual abuse within the Church.

The purpose of the present study was to find what evidence clinical experience offered of the prevalence of sexual abuse within the church. It also sought to learn from Catholic clinicians the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual consequences of sexual abuse they encountered in their clients.

Method

Procedure

One hundred and fifty five Catholic clinicians (all those psychologists and counsellors whose names and addresses were available to the researcher) were mailed a 3-page questionnaire, along with a covering letter that described the purpose and anonymity/confidentiality issues of the study.

The questionnaire defined sexual abuse for the purposes of this research as follows:

> *Any form of sexual exploitation and/or unwanted sexually-oriented contact with a person of the same or opposite sex, including hugging and kissing (with a sexual intent), genital display, genital fondling, and/or sexual intercourse (attempted and/or completed). Included here are any forms of sexual contact between two persons with unequal power status (e.g. Superior-subject, priest/brother-nun, parish priest-parishioner, teacher-student, counsellor-client) even with mutual consent. (Experiences of mutual sex play and exploration between prepubescent children and mutually chosen sexual contact between unrelated adolescents of about the same age are not included here) (Haugaard 2000: 1036-1039; Fortune 1989: 38).*

The questionnaire had four sections: a) Some Information about yourself as a Psychotherapist/Counsellor; b) Some Information about your Psychotherapy/Counselling Clients; c) Some Information about the Effects of Sexual Abuse you have Encountered in your Clients; and d) Space for Comments. The questionnaire was to be answered anonymously and returned to the researcher in the stamped envelope provided, by a stipulated date.

Results

Sixty of the 155 questionnaires, that is 38.7%, were returned by the stipulated date. One was returned blank with no explanation. Six were returned unanswered with the explanation that the psychologist was not in clinical practice. Four of the questionnaires could not be utilized for lack of numerical indicators and because of other errors. There were only one layman psychologist and one laywoman psychologist among the respondents. Their questionnaires were excluded so as to make the respondent population homogeneous. That is, data has been collected only from religious or priest clinicians. The number of completed questionnaires used in the analysis of data thus amounted to 47 or 30.32% of the total number surveyed.

Among the respondents were 25 female and 22 male psychologists/counsellors. The mean years of clinical practice were 9.89.

Nearly 77% of them (19 women, 17 men) had a Master's degree in psychology and 23.4% (6 women, 5 men) had a Doctoral degree in psychology.

The total number of clients about whom data were provided by the 47 clinicians was 17522. Of these 3140 were laywomen (17.92%), 2455 laymen (14.01%), 9164 professed religious women (52.3%), 2388 professed religious men (13.63%) and 375 diocesan priests (2.14%). Together there were 12304 women (70.22%) and 5218 men (29.78%). Table 1 and 2 display data on prevalence of sexual abuse.

Table 1

Prevalence of Sexual Abuse: Data from 47 Clinicians

Client		Abused as child	Abused as adult	Lifetime abuse
Category	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %
Laywomen	3140 17.92	905 28.82	320 10.19	1225 39.01
Laymen	2455 14.01	669 27.25	158 6.44	827 33.69
Religious Women	9164 52.3	2574 28.08	1644 17.94	4218 46.02
Religious Men	2388 13.63	395 16.54	175 7.33	570 23.87
Diocesan Priests	375 2.14	49 13.07	25 6.67	74 19.74
Total	*17522* *100*	*4592* *26.21*	*2322* *13.25*	*6914* *39.46*

Table 2

Prevalence rates of Sexual Abuse: Difference among Men and Women

Client		Abused as child	Abused as adult	Lifetime abuse
Category	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %
Women	12304 70.22	3479 28.28	1964 15.96	5443 44.24
Men	5218 29.78	1113 21.33	358 6.86	1471 28.19
Total	17522 100	4592 26.21	2322 13.25	6914 39.46

Prevalence of Sexual Abuse

As Table 1 shows, 39.01% of the laywomen in this study had lifetime sexual abuse: 905 or 28.82% during childhood and 320 or 10.19% in adulthood. The lifetime sexual abuse of laymen, however, is 33.69%. Six hundred and sixty-nine, that is 27.25%, were abused in childhood and 158 or 6.44% in adulthood. Although the figures are lower for men than for women, the overall lifetime abuse for men is just 5.32% less than that for women.

The picture is different for religious women. Against 1225 laywomen who suffered lifetime sexual abuse there are 4218 religious women. The percentage for childhood abuse for religious women is slightly less than that for laywomen: 28.08 for religious and 28.82 for laywomen. But the experience of sexual abuse in adulthood for religious women is higher than that for laywomen: 17.94% for religious women against 10.19% for other women. Religious women have the highest rate of lifetime sexual abuse, namely 46.02%.

The picture for religious men and diocesan priests differs. The overall lifetime abuse for diocesans is less than that for religious men: 19.74% for diocesan priests but 23.87 for religious. Abuse in childhood for diocesans is again less than for religious men. Whereas

it is 13.07% for diocesans it is 16.54% for religious men. But when it comes to abuse in adulthood the difference is not that wide. There is only a 0.66% difference between the two groups: 6.67% for diocesans and 7.33% for religious.

When compared with the percentages given for laymen it appears that sexual abuse in adulthood is more frequent for religious men and diocesan priests. Adulthood sexual abuse of laymen is 6.44%, but 7.33% for religious and 6.67% for diocesan priests. The same was noticed between lay and religious women. While 10.19% of laywomen reported adult sexual abuse, 17.94% religious women did so.

As Table 2 shows, 39.46% of the clients in this study reported lifetime sexual abuse: 4592 or 26.21% in childhood and 2322 or 13.25% in adulthood. More women than men reported being abused in childhood as also in adulthood. While 21.33% of the men reported childhood sexual abuse, 28.22% of the women reported such abuse. The difference in the abuse rate of men and women widened considerably in adulthood. While the reported rate for sexual abuse in adulthood for men was 6.86% that of women was more than double at 15.96%. Lifetime abuse of women was considerably higher than of men: 44.24% for women and 28.19% for men.

Overall: in this study 6914 men and women, that is 39.46%, reported lifetime sexual abuse. More women than men were sexually abused in childhood as well as adulthood. The prevalence of sexual abuse in adulthood was considerably higher for religious women and men than for lay women and men.

Discussion and Conclusions

The prevalence rate of childhood sexual abuse of women (28.28%) found in this study is only slightly less than the rates found in the Tata Institute of Social Sciences study (Virani 2000: 19). That study found that 1 out of 3 girls (30%) were sexually abused as children. It is much lower than the 76% rate for non-lower-class women found by RAHI (Virani 2000: 20). However, the rate found in this study (28.28%) falls within the range found in international surveys of childhood sexual abuse. Surveys of child sexual abuse in large

non-clinical populations of adults conducted in at least 21 countries have found rates ranging from 7% to 36% for women (Finkelhor 1994: 409-417). The prevalence rate of 21.33% of child sexual abuse of men as against 28.28% of women found in the present study is rather high. Most international studies have found females to be abused at 1.5 to 3 times the rate for males(Finkelhor 1994: 409-417).

A significant finding from this study is the situation of women religious in regard to sexual abuse. It is noteworthy that more than 50% of those who sought psychotherapy/ counselling are religious women (52.3%), more than almost 3 times that of any of the other 4 groups in the study, laywomen (17.92%), laymen (14.01%), religious men (13.63) and diocesan priests (2.14%). Whether their experience of sexual abuse was a factor in their choosing to have psychotherapy/counselling cannot be concluded from this study, but requires further exploration. The 28.08% prevalence rate for childhood sexual abuse of religious women in this study is much higher than that found in a national survey of the sexual trauma experiences of American Catholic nuns. A 1998 study by Chibnall, Wolf, and Duckro (Chibnall, Wolf & Duckro 1998: 142-167) of 2,500 nuns, randomly selected from the nearly 29,000 names submitted, found the prevalence of child sexual abuse among the American nuns was 18.6%.

A disproportionate number of religious women, compared to the other 4 groups were abused as adults, that is, after entering religious life. While 28.82% lay women were abused in childhood, only 10.19% were abused as adults. Although fewer religious women than laywomen were abused in childhood (28.08% as against 28.82%), a much higher percentage of religious women (17.94) than lay women (10.19) were abused as adults, pushing the lifetime sexual abuse rate for religious women to 46.02%, that is almost 1 in every 2 religious women. This perhaps is the most significant finding from the study. This finding points to a dysfunctional situation in the Church, wherein more religious women are sexually victimized as compared to adult women in the general population. The prevalence rate of sexual abuse of women after entering religious life in this study (17.94%) is also much higher than that in the American nun study cited earlier

(12.5%)(Chibnall, Wolf & Duckro 1998: 151). Our religious women may be an unprotected group in the Church.

However, data from the present study do not support the assumption held by some that sexually abused women tend to enter religious life or that religious life is a refuge for sexually wounded women. The rates for childhood sexual abuse for laywomen (28.82%) and religious women (28.08%, prior to entering religious life) are almost equal. In fact, the rate is slightly higher for laywomen. Also, data show that only less than 3 out of 10 religious women have been sexually abused in childhood.

At the same time, there is data that support the assumption that clients, as well as non-clients, are reluctant to disclose sexual abuse (under reporting). A finding in the American nun study cited earlier is relevant here (Chibnall, Wolf & Duckro 1998: 150, 153). Of those nuns who had been abused in childhood, 23.6% had never discussed the abuse with another person until the study. These women had kept their experience of sexual abuse secret for a mean of 54.3 years. For those who had discussed the abuse, a mean of 24.7 years elapsed between the onset of the abuse and their first disclosure. Of those who discussed the abuse, 47.7% were either in mental health therapy (12.9%) or had had therapy (32.7%) that directly addressed their experience of child sexual abuse. Of those women who were sexually exploited during religious life, 24.7% had never discussed the experience with another person. Of those who had discussed the exploitation, 50.9% were either in mental health therapy (13.9%) or had had therapy (37%) that directly addressed their experience of sexual exploitation. Those who had been exploited by a man were significantly more likely than those exploited by a woman to have discussed the experience with another person (81% vs. 61%, respectively). Across the international epidemiological studies reviewed by Finkelhor cited earlier, only about half the victims had disclosed their abuse experience to anyone (Finkelhor 1994: 411). Thus there is a great deal of secrecy around experiences of sexual abuse; and psychotherapy/counselling appear to provide a safe place where these can be disclosed. This does not mean that religious women sought therapy primarily because they had been sexually abused. It could very well be that having entered therapy for whatever reason, they

found the therapeutic climate conducive to disclosing their sexual abuse experience. It is also likely that not all who had been sexually abused disclosed that experience in psychotherapy/counselling. This being so, the actual prevalence rates of sexual abuse in the population studied could be higher than what the figures indicate.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study have to be noted. The data are based on the recollections of psychotherapists and counsellors. For those who have not kept accurate records of their clinical encounters, recollections after a period of some years can be defective or erroneous. Moreover, clinicians' reports are based on the self-report of clients. There is no guarantee that the abuse happened as reported.

Further, data of this study come from a clinical (those seeking help of psychotherapist/counsellor) population. Can conclusions drawn from this data be generalized to non-clinical populations? There is a common assumption that those who seek psychotherapy/counselling are more traumatized than those who do not. At the same time, many persons, within and without religious life, who are victimized, do not, as noted earlier, disclose their abuse experience and seek help. Thus, an assumption that there is a greater prevalence of sexual abuse in the clinical population need not always be true.

The objectives of the present study were limited to examining the prevalence of sexual abuse among a clinical population, and the physical, emotional and spiritual impact of the abuse manifested by the clients. The impact will be described in a forthcoming article in this Journal. Further research is needed to ascertain the prevalence rate of sexual abuse among non-clinical populations, as also to know who the perpetrators of abuse are, what factors lead to sexual abuse in childhood as well as in adulthood and to ascertain what role the experience of sexual victimization plays in motivation to enter or abandon religious life or priesthood.

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Book Review

Norman Tanner, ***Is the Church too Asian? Reflections on the Ecumenical Councils,*** Chavara Institute of Indian and Interreligious Studies, Rome and Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore, 2002, pp. 1-91.

Norman Tanner, who teaches in Oxford and London Universities is one of the authorities on the Ecumenical Councils in the English speaking world. His magisterial two volumes, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* and the handy *The Councils of the Church: A Short History* have contributed a great deal to make the Councils of the Church which seem such a distant reality for most people including teachers and students of theology, familiar to us. He has lectured world wide on the topic. Therefore, when he speaks about the Councils one listens to him with interest.

This small book of about 90 pages with the provocative title *Is the Church too Asian* is the Placid Lectures the author gave at the Chavara Institute of Indian and Interreligious Studies in Rome. As the author says in the introduction, his intention has been to honour Placid Podipara who was well known for his promotion of dialogue and understanding between East and West and for his initiatives in recovering the genuinely Indian features of Christianity. The author tries to do this by trying to recall the contributions of Asia and in a special way, India, to Christianity through the Ecumenical Councils. In order to do this, he makes a quick survey of all the Councils of the Church under the familiar headings: the Early Church, Middle Ages and Trent, and the Vatican Councils.

As can be expected, the author stresses the Councils of the first millennium and their eastern character in a special way. The places where these Councils were held, the participants at these Councils, the language used, the philosophy behind the credal statements, and the mentality behind the decrees of these Councils, etc. point, according to him, to their eastern character. The Councils of the Middle Ages which were Councils of the Western Church were held to deal mainly with disciplinary matters which were of interest to the Western Church of the

time. They hardly tried to go beyond any of the formulations of the early Councils. Whether this was because of an inferiority complex that the West felt both physically and culturally, as the author suggests, is to be debated. In any case, one can hardly speak of a direct contribution of the East in these Councils. When we come to the Vatican Councils we have better evidence of a more substantial contribution of Asia, but by then the East-West dichotomy had grown substantially and hence these contributions have been rather marginally considered in comparison to that of the West. Sure, there were some prelates who were quite independent and outspoken like Patriarch Maximos IV at Vatican II whom the author mentions frequently but these were few. However, some decrees of Vatican II do bear the stamp of the interventions by Asian bishops as has been pointed out in the book, but one can hardly speak of a real Asian influence.

One problem with the thesis of the book is the apparent confusion about East and West. The cultural and geographical divide between East and West today is quite sharp and hardly anyone would speak of Greek philosophy as Eastern. The merit of the book is precisely in challenging this view through a historical hermeneutics. It is surely a small but a firm step in correcting the incurable Eurocentrism of many Church historians who have basically denied any Asian influence on Christianity at all. Here is at least one who speaks of a need for liberation from "western colonial theology and spirituality." The question posed at the beginning of the book is answered in the negative but the book has been a help in recovering the Asian roots of Christianity. The book is also a short and easy reading through the Councils, perhaps the shortest history of the Councils so far.

Isaac Padinjarekuttu

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There is a growing awareness today that we need to seriously deal with women's concerns. The next issue (January 2004) of *Jnanadeepa* will discuss women's issues. It will examine the place and role of women according to the different religious traditions of India; it will seek to develop feminist perspectives on Christian faith and doctrine; it will investigate how modern developments like Globalization and Hindutva affect women. The issue will also deal with the search for a women's own spirituality.

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