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Editorial

In September, 2004, an International Conference was held at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, in which professors from the University of Innsbruck as well as from the Vidyapeeth took part. The theme of the Conference was *Religion, Violence, Communication and a New World Order*. In this issue of *Jnanadeepa* we publish some of the papers prepared for and presented at the Conference.

These papers easily fall into three groups. One group of four papers deals with Violence. The first paper examines the relationship between poverty and violence. Poverty can be seen as the result of violence when *structural violence* forces a large number of people into poverty and misery. But poverty can also be the cause of violence when misery and want drive people to violence. A study of the Islamic fundamentalists who became agents of terror has convinced the author that it is not the very poor who engage in terrorism and that there is a spiritual dimension to this struggle. They seek to destroy the modern Western culture which is decadent and to usher in a new world order shaped by religious tradition. The second paper discusses the Friend-Enemy Pattern in politics and the impact of religion on this is stressed. From the beginning of human civilization we notice a curious phenomenon. People believe that in order to overcome civil wars inside a society one needs an outside enemy. In our day religion is thought to be responsible for the increase in violence, hatred and enmity. Some believe that a political theology of violence is the offspring of monotheism. But the author contends that it is wrong to accuse monotheism of being responsible for the development of such a theology. A third paper examines Jesus' interpretation of the *lex_talionis* (the law of retaliation) found in Matthew 5: 38–42. Basing herself on the experience of the oppressed and the marginalised, the author seeks to interpret the teaching of Jesus by using the Gandhian concept of non-violence and non-cooperation as a hermeneutical key. The author's conclusion is this: Jesus challenges those who are insulted, oppressed or exploited to make a creative and non-violent response that would be a protest against all oppressive systems and dehumanising practices and would enable the victims to recover their human dignity and to restore justice. And a fourth paper discusses the question: Is Divine Omnipotence violent or non-violent? Employing the method of a "dramatic theology", which supposes a real interaction between the Lord of history and the human

agents of history, the author argues that truly a Christian view of divine omnipotence has to conceive it as non violent and as cooperating with human agency.

A second group of two articles deals with a new world order. The first of these discusses the role of religion in the emerging world order. After a careful examination of the life affirming and life-negating factors in the world today, the author points our how religion along with other agencies can contribute to the establishment of a new world order. All religions can and should collaborate in promoting respect for human dignity and in ushering in an era of justice and peace. The other paper deals with the creative role of religion in the emergence of a sustainable world order. The author believes that violence is to some extent inevitable, But the danger we face today is that ours has become an inherently violent society. He looks upon religion as a mid-wife which assists at the birthing of a new humanity and a new world order. The perennial religious values and mystical insights provide us with the hope that we can overcome violence and create a new world order in freedom, peace and joy.

The third group has only one paper which deals with communicative theology. Part one of this paper seeks to compare communicative theology with theology as cross-cultural encounter, while part two discusses the main elements of communicative theology.

Included in this issue are two papers on spirituality which were originally written for the last issue of Jnanadeepa but which, because of some technical problems, were not published then. The first of these seeks to develop a theology for our times. The author contends that for us Christians, spirituality for today consists in an openness and commitment to the Reign of God which Jesus announced in his ministry, served all his life and embodied in his person. An essential element of this spirituality will be the weaving and cherishing of a vision of world solidarity, recognising the equality, dignity and the rights of all persons, groups and nations, irrespective of geography, race, colour, culture, gender, age or status. The other paper develops the spirituality of the diocesan priest. It describes the main elements of the secular spirituality of the diocesan priest which is a spirituality of involvement in the world. It also points out certain aspects of Indian spirituality that would help diocesan priests in India to be more inculturated.

It is our fond hope that the articles in this issue of Jnanadeepa will be of some help to those engaged in the contemporary quest for a peaceful world free from all violence.

Kurien Kunnumpuram SJ
Editor

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A Creative Approach to Violence:
A Biblical Perspective

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Abstract

Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis* has often been reduced to pious exhortations: "evil actions are not to be resisted" or "not to testify against an evildoer" or "an attitude of overabundant righteousness toward evil people." Such views present Jesus as someone uninterested in the course of human history and make Jesus' teaching socially and politically irrelevant. On the other hand, the author asserts, the Gospel narratives in general present Jesus' actions as revolutionary, but without recourse to violence. Moreover, the teachings in Matt 5:38-42 in particular explicitly address those who are insulted, oppressed and exploited ("if anyone strikes *you* . . ."). So the author attempts a different reading of the text employing the experience of the oppressed and marginalized, including women, in the light of the Gandhian concept of non-violence and non-cooperation as the hermeneutical key for interpreting Jesus' teaching on retaliation. The present author understands Jesus' commands as imaginative and efficient non-violent responses that would protest against all oppressive systems and dehumanizing practices, and enable the victims to recover their human dignity and restore justice. The readers are challenged to use their creative imagination to find alternative non-violent ways of responding when confronted with similar or new situations of violence and injustice. An imaginative non-violent engagement demands creative ways of blending one's reason and heart, anger and compassion, and it has the inner force to liberate both victims and evildoers at the same time.

Keywords

Lex talionis, Gandhi, non-violence, Jesus' creative response.

We live in an era of ever-increasing violence, in which religions play an important role. The paradox of religion is that, on the one

hand, it is one of the most pervasive and compelling forces that inspires humans to commit themselves to the well-being and welfare of all living beings, while on the other hand, as history shows, religion begets the most outrageous out-group violence.[1] Violence breeds a cycle of violence because humans, consciously or unconsciously, believe in the principle of retaliation. The question, therefore, is how to use religious ideas and values to motivate and mobilize people to break the spiral of violence and to participate in an effective and "sustainable peace building process."[2] It seems therefore very timely to reconsider Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis* (law of retaliation) found in Matthew 5:38-42.[3]

Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis* has often been reduced to pious exhortations: "evil actions are not to be resisted" or "not to testify against an evildoer" or "an attitude of overabundant righteousness toward evil people."[4] Such views present Jesus as someone uninterested in the course of human history and make Jesus' teaching socially and politically irrelevant. The Gospel narratives in general present Jesus' actions as revolutionary, but without recourse to violence.[5] Moreover, the teachings in Matt 5:38-42 in particular explicitly address those who are insulted, oppressed and exploited ("if anyone strikes *you* . . ."). The following reading of the text thus employs the experience of the oppressed and marginalized, including women, in the light of the Gandhian concept of non-violence and non-cooperation as the hermeneutical key for interpreting Jesus' teaching on retaliation.

Matthew 5:38-42 (see also Luke 6:29-30)

> 38 You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you [NRSV].

The literary setting for Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis* (5:38-42) is the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5–7).[6] Jesus is addressing the crowd (including the disciples [cf. 5:1]) gathered

to listen to him (5:1), and the background of the mountain reminds the readers of Mount Sinai and the Law given by Moses. The Evangelist clarifies the underlying presupposition of the Sermon that Jesus came not to abolish but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets (5:17). The six antitheses that follow the introduction therefore need to be interpreted as Jesus' own way of appropriating and fulfilling the Torah. Each antithesis starts off by saying, "You have heard that it was said . . . " (except the third one which begins with, "It was also said . . ."), followed by the formula, "But I say to you." The structure of the fifth antithesis on retaliation can be summarised as follows:

A. Citation from the OT (5:38) – "an Eye for an Eye . . ."
B. Jesus' Appropriation/Interpretation (5:39-42)
  a.The First Prohibition (v. 39a)
    b. Four Examples or Models of Responses (vv. 39b-42a)
      1. Turn the other cheek (v. 39b)
      2. Offer the outer garment (v. 40)
      3. Go the second mile (v. 41)
      4. Give to everyone who begs from you (v. 42a)
  a[1] The Second Prohibition (v. 42b)

After citing the *lex talionis* from the OT, Jesus formulates his own principle, "Do not repay violence for evil/violence," and furnishes four models of responses – turning the other cheek, offering the outer garment, going the second mile, giving to everyone who begs from you – highlighting the implications of his principle. The teaching is concluded by another exhortation to take deliberate means so that the victims do not become violent oppressors themselves when they are in a better economic position. These examples are not meant to be imitated literally, but the readers are awakened to "an infinite variety of creative responses in new and challenging circumstances."[7]

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'" (5:38)

Jesus begins with the OT principle of retaliation ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth") found in Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20;

and Deut 19:21. The Palestinian Targum interpreted the *lex talionis* (Exodus 21) in economic or financial terms: "the value of an eye for an eye; the value of a tooth for a tooth . . ."[8] The Law may appear to be awful and barbarian "as a *carte blanche* for private retaliation."[9] But the goal of the Law in the OT was to limit private revenge and the judicial punishment, to prevent the escalation of violence. "No person was required by the Law to react in like manner toward an offender."[10] As Robert L. Cate has observed, "In the world in which Israel lived, vengeance was the rule of the day. Here they were being told that they could exact *nothing more than justice*."[11]

It is, however, doubtful if this practice was in force or that the Law was in effect in Jesus' time. Josephus speaks about it as an *option* rather than a *necessity*: "He that maimeth any one, let him undergo the like himself, and be deprived of the same member of which he hath deprived the other, unless he that is maimed will accept of [sic] money instead of it; for the law makes the sufferer the judge of the value of what he hath suffered, and permits him to estimate it, unless he will be more severe."[12] The punishment should not exceed the physical injury that one has actually received. The law sets boundaries as to how far retaliation could be carried out. In other words, the *lex talionis* justifies a just and proportionate violence as a legally accepted means of punishment. The Law thus limits retaliation in proportion to the offender's crime and tries to restore justice.[13]

"But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer" (5:39a)

Jesus transcends and perfects the *lex talionis* by saying: *mē antistēnai tō ponērō*. The conventional interpretation of "do not resist an evildoer" has been non-opposition or non-resistance or submission to evil. This interpretation contradicts the basic teaching and actions of Jesus, since, as the Gospels indicate, Jesus himself always opposed evil with his whole being. The difficulty starts with the translation of the Greek text. The Greek verb used in Matt 5:39a is *antistēnai*, which literally means to stand (*stēnai*) against (*anti*). According to Liddell-Scott, one of the usages

anthistēmi is "to stand against, especially in battle."[14] As Walter Wink has aptly observed, the interpreters have not noticed or have ignored the fact that in the LXX *anthistēmi* is often used "as a technical term for warfare."[15] For example, we read in the book of Leviticus: "They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though no one pursues; and you shall have no power to stand against [*antistēnai*] your enemies" (Lev 26:37; see also Deut 7:24; Josh 23:9; Judges 2:14; Dan 8:4; Judith 11:18; Wis 11:21; 2 Maccabees 8:5; 10:18, etc.). The same meaning is implied in Ephesians: "Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand [*antistēnai*] on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm" (6:13). In other words, *antistēnai* means more than simply resisting evil; it implies "violently opposing or confronting the enemy" as in the context of armed warfare.[16]

The next difficulty is with the ambiguous term *ponēros* which literally means "evil." Here it most probably refers to an evildoer/ wrongdoer rather than evil or the one who is evil.[17] Now what do we make of Jesus' command: *mē antistēnai tō ponērō* (Matt 5:39a)? If *antistēnai* implies a violent opposition and *ponēros* refers to a wrongdoer, then Jesus is *not* exhorting his audience to be passive and submissive to evil actions, but Jesus commands his listeners to refuse to repay violence for violence or to refuse to confront violently the evildoer. In the words of Walter Wink, "[Jesus] is urging us to *transcend both passivity and violence* by finding a third way, one that is at once *assertive and yet non-violent*."[18] Drawing inspiration from the *Sermon on the Mount*, Gandhi reaffirms that non-violence "does not mean meek submission to the will of the evildoer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant."[19] The victims of violence can interrupt the spiral of violence only through a creative non-violent response. Non-violence implies and manifests tremendous spiritual power. Gandhi writes: "I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power."[20] Non-violence is the summit of innovative, life enhancing heroism.

Ronald H. Worth pointed out the precedents for non-retaliation in the OT. For example, "to give one's cheek to the smiter" (Lam 3:30a); "I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting" (Isa 50:6). So Jesus' appropriation of non-retaliation was not something totally alien to his audience, but Jesus brought to the center what was on the periphery in the OT by making it a salient feature of his proclamation of God's reign. The disciples of Jesus are asked to resist opposing evil on its own terms, lest they allow the opponents to dictate terms to them. Jesus wants to prevent the escalation of violence, to break the cycle of violence. The same notion of non-retaliation is also found in the Letters of Paul and Peter: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil" (Rom 12:17a); "See that none of you repays evil for evil" (1 Thess 5:15a); "Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse" (1 Peter 3:9a).

"But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also" (5:39b)

What does "striking on the right cheek" imply? The Greek verb *rhapizō* does not mean a blow with a fist, but a "slap on the face" (Liddel and Scott, 1565), a gesture of insult (see, e.g., Ps 3:7; Lam 3:30; Isa 50:6). Jesus is talking about insult rather than physical assault.[21] Unlike in the Lukan version (6:29), the Matthean Jesus deliberately specifies it as the *right* cheek. This detail is of significance in interpreting the teaching of Jesus correctly. Now most people are right handed. Moreover, there seems to be a religious prohibition against the use of the left hand as it was meant to be for unclean tasks.[22] How does one strike the right cheek of another with one's own right hand? It is very difficult to slap a person on the right cheek with one's own right hand. Therefore the detail of the right cheek suggests that the blow is a backhanded slap to demean and insult the receiver. It was observed that a backhand slap was very common to reprove "inferiors" (1 Kings 22:24; cf. also Matt 26:67).[23] Therefore, those who received such treatment were socially or politically or/and economically less

privileged and significant than their opponents. The relationship presupposed here is that between the master and slave, the rich and the poor, man and woman, a Roman officer and a Jewish civilian, oppressor and oppressed. And remember most of the people listening to Jesus were thus degraded in society (cf. "if anyone strikes *you*"). Since both v. 38 (the citation from the OT) and v. 40 (the unjust suing) deal with judicial actions, Roland H. Worth argues that it denotes "the judicial abuse that one is receiving."[24] If taken in this sense, then it implies an undeserved juridical punishment.

What does it mean to "turn the other cheek"? Does Jesus urge his listeners to endure unjust abuse and insults? The conventional interpretation affirms that the point of the saying has to do with self-control under provocation in daily life. Jesus exhorts the crowd to endure "the petty insults and pains of life without physical striking back."[25] In his commentary on Matthew's Gospel, Daniel Harrington writes: "It is possible that 'the other' is a misunderstanding of 'back' in Aramaic (*ʿuḥrâ*/*ʿaḥōrâ*) and that the idea is that, when insulted by a slap on the cheek, *you should simply turn away and not retaliate.*"[26] But if we take the first slap as a backhanded slap to humiliate, then turning the other cheek implies confronting the master as an equal by offering the left cheek for a blow with the master's right fist. No master would wish to establish such equal relationship with his slave. In a master-slave relationship, turning the other cheek makes the master incapable of exercising his dominance and superiority over the slave. In the words of Chilton and McDonald, "The strategy of turning the other cheek (5:39) is a refusal to trade insults or blows, or to inflame the situation; it is *to create a new situation by refusing to assent to the logic of violence.*"[27] The adversaries are stripped of their power to insult, humiliate and dehumanize the less privileged people. By turning the other cheek, the inferior or the oppressed refuses to be degraded or humiliated by the superior or the oppressor. Wink paraphrases the thought of Jesus in the following words: "Stand up for yourselves, defy your masters, assert your humanity; but don't answer the oppressor in kind.

Find a new, third way that is neither cowardly submission nor violent reprisal."[28] In the words of Gandhi, "The first principle of non-violent action . . . is that of non-cooperation with everything humiliating."[29] Gandhi explores the concept further when he writes: "Non-cooperation is not a passive state; it is an intensely active state – more active than physical resistance of violence. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Non-cooperation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and therefore neither punitive nor vindictive nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred."[30] In fact, Gandhi seems to prefer violence more than cowardice *if there is no other option*: "I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence. . . . But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment."[31] Similarly, Jesus' response is neither fighting violently to punish the opponent nor fleeing fearfully from danger, but engaging oneself to assert one's right with nobility and self-dignity as an equal partner to restore justice and well-being to both victims and their opponents (cf. John 18:23). Turning the other cheek is thus an imaginative non-cooperation or non-violent confrontation that has an inbuilt transforming power.

"If anyone wants to sue you and take your coat (chitōn), give your cloak (himation) as well" (5:40)

Unlike the Lukan version that reflects the situation of theft (6:29b), the context of the saying in Matthew is an interaction between a creditor and a debtor over an unpaid loan. The creditor seizes the undergarment (*chitōn*, "a garment worn next to the skin") from the debtor, and Jesus expects the debtor to offer the outer garment (*himation*).[32] The Torah commands that the creditor return the outer garment (*himation*) of the debtor before the sunset so that the poor debtor would have something in which to sleep and cover his body.

> 25 If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them. 26 If you take your neighbor's cloak in pawn, you shall restore it before the sun goes down; 27 for it may be your neighbour's only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And

> if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate (Exod 22:25-27 NRSV; LXX 22:24-26; see also Deut 24:10-13).

Josephus alluded to the practice of slaves wearing two garments (*Ant* 17:136). Jesus exhorts the poor debtor to offer his outer garment along with his undergarment. Offering the outer garment implies that the debtor is standing naked in front of the hard-hearted creditor. It is the persons causing or viewing the nakedness of others who were cursed, shamed or punished rather than the naked person (cf. Gen 9:20-27; Isa 20:1-6).[33] By leaving the court naked, the debtor puts the creditor to shame and protests against the unjust system that enslaved him to be a debtor. "The entire system by which debtors are oppressed has been publicly unmasked. The creditor is revealed to be not a legitimate moneylender but a party to the reduction of an entire social class to landlessness and destitution."[34] This might give an opportunity for the creditor to see the implications of his own actions and policies and thus impel the creditor to change his way of life.

"If anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile" (5:41)

The third example of Jesus implies forced labour. The situation presupposed seems to be the practice of Roman soldiers forcing the Jewish civilians to carry their baggage.[35] The subservient is compelled to carry a soldier's pack for one mile. Now what happens when one refuses to stop at the first mile and carries the baggage yet another mile? Wink has pointed out that carrying the baggage a second mile would violate the military norm. By walking a second mile, the forced labourer or the victim has seized power to respond to the soldiers with self-dignity by taking the initiative to make choices. [36] The soldiers are confused and off guard as they do not know the intention of the person offering the second mile. They cannot be sure whether the victims would complain against them for making them carry their baggage for two miles. "Imagine a Roman infantryman pleading with a Jew to give back his pack! The humour of this scene may have escaped us, but it could scarcely have been lost on Jesus' hearers, who must have been delighted at the prospect of thus discomfiting their oppressors."[37] This

creative non-cooperation or non-violent response empowers the victims to throw the oppressors into a situation of unpredictability, as they can now no longer estimate or calculate the victim's response and thus dictate terms to the victims.

"Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you." (5:42)

Some scholars do not consider v. 42 as an integral part of the original cluster of sayings on retaliation, but as a secondary addition to Jesus' teaching on retaliation. For example, Wink writes: "Matthew has not quite succeeded in integrating v. 42 into the rest of the saying. I will therefore treat v. 42 as a secondary addition of a (probably authentic) saying of Jesus as represented by the Lukan and *Thomas* version" [38] As we shall see, Jesus' second principle (v. 42b) reinforces the first prohibition (v. 39a). Verses 38-42 are addressed to the same audience as referred to as "you" ("I say to *you*" [v. 39a], "if anyone strikes *you*" [39b], if anyone would sue *you*" [v. 40], "if anyone forces *you*" [v. 41]; "give to him who begs from *you*" [v. 42]). Verses 39b-41 focus on what was done to the disciples or Jesus' audience and their response back to the evildoers. Verse 42a-b focuses on what the listeners should do in their turn to the less privileged members of their community. The change of role implied in this final command is very important to understand Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis*. The three examples mentioned before presuppose Jesus' audience or the disciples as the victims of aggression or oppression: those who are struck, sued unjustly, and forced to carry things (If anyone strikes *you* on the right cheek; if anyone would sue *you* and take *your* coat; if anyone forces *you* to go one mile). The situation changes radically in the last command where the listeners are presupposed as potential oppressors who can deal mercilessly with those who are in need, they are in a better economic position, having power and wealth ("give to him who begs *from you* . . "). In this reversal of roles: the oppressed have now the power and means to provide for others, and they are commanded NOT to imitate those who oppressed them before. Jesus exhorts the

crowd to give generously to everyone who begs from them in order to eradicate unequal distributions (v. 42a). This exhortation is followed by the second prohibition: "do not refuse anyone who would borrow from you" (v. 42b; see the first prohibition: "do not resist an evildoer" [v. 39a]). The first prohibition in v. 39a thus parallels the second prohibition in v. 42b. In between these two prohibitions, Jesus provides four examples that illustrate his interpretation of the *lex talionis*. It seems therefore reasonable to regard v. 42 as an integral part of Jesus' teaching on retaliation.

The earliest form of Matt 5:42 seems to be found in the Gospel of Thomas 95: "If you have money, do not lend it at interest. Rather give [it] to someone from whom you will not get it back." When we read v. 42 within the context of unjust suing and the loss of garments in v. 40, we derive the meaning that Jesus warns the listeners that they should not, in their turn, become oppressors to others (cf. the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matt 18:23-35). Verse 42 seems to imply a situation of need arising from injustice and the exploitative tax system. Jesus is not advocating generous almsgiving and money-lending but abolishing an unequal relationship characterized by ranking (between those having and those not having) and envisaging a new society where there will be no disparity between the rich and the poor, the oppressor and the oppressed or those having and not having. So let me paraphrase the teaching of Jesus as follows: Do not become evildoers yourselves as you fight against them. The warning of Nietzsche brings out the same principle very powerfully: "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster."[39] In the words of Michael Walzer, "Here is the ultimate tyranny: those who resist the aggression are forced to imitate, and perhaps even to exceed, the brutality of the aggressor."[40] So Jesus' second prohibition is the endorsement of the first prohibition. To put it differently, Jesus warns the listeners not to become evildoers themselves by demeaning and humiliating the economically poor and less privileged people, but to restore economic equality. Jesus invites his listeners to acknowledge the

need of the poor, the exploited, and to respect their dignity. It is a call to abolish the unequal relationship by restoring justice that results from the equal distribution of wealth and resources.

Conclusion

Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis* in Matt 5:38-42 can be paraphrased as follows:

The *Lex Talionis* (5:38): "an Eye for an Eye . . ."

Jesus' Appropriation/Interpretation of the *lex talionis* (5:39-42)

a.He First Prohibition (v. 39a) – "do not repay evil/violence for evil/violence"

b. Four Examples or Models of Responses (vv. 39b-42a)

1. Turn the other cheek (v. 39b) – abolish the relationship of ranking and recover human dignity
2. Offer the outer garment (v. 40) – unveil the unjust system and shame the creditor
3. Go the second mile (v. 41) – seize the initiative to protest non-violently against forced labour
4. Give to everyone who begs from you (v. 42a) – eradicate unequal distribution

a[1]. The Second Prohibition (v. 42b) – "do not be/become a violent oppressor yourself"

The first prohibition in v. 39a: "do not repay evil/violence for evil/violence" parallels the second prohibition in v. 42b: "do not be/become a violent oppressor yourself." At the centre are the four examples or models that illustrate Jesus' interpretation (vv. 39b-42a). As the above reading demonstrates, Jesus' appropriation of the *lex talionis* in Matt 5:39-42 evokes imaginative non-violent strategies to break the cycle of violence. Jesus exhorts neither withdrawal nor violent confrontation, nor does he encourage an otherworldly or eschatological spirituality of overabundant goodness and generosity that has no social and political implication for the present reality. Rather, Jesus commands an imaginative and efficient non-violent response that would protest against all oppressive systems and dehumanizing practices, and enable the

victims to recover their human dignity and restore justice. The readers are challenged to use their creative imagination to find alternative non-violent ways of responding when confronted with similar or new situations of violence and injustice. An imaginative non-violent engagement demands creative ways of blending one's reason and heart, anger and compassion, and it has the inner force to liberate both victims and evildoers at the same time. It calls for an economic, social, religious and political restructuring of the entire system, where the terms of reference are no more domination or power relations but the active presence of attainable justice and human dignity.

Notes

1 See Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002.

2 See the detailed discussion in Luc Reychler, "Peace Architecture: The Prevention of Violence," in *The Social Psychology of Group Identity and Social Conflict: Theory, Application, and Practice*, eds., Alice H. Eagly, Reuben M. Baron, and V. Lee Hamilton; Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2004, 133-146.

3 Gandhi speaks of both the *Sermon on the Mount* and the *G¥ta* as sources of inspiration for his philosophy of non-violence as a way of life; see *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 32 (1970), 61. For an exposition of Gandhi's understanding of non-violence, see Noel Sheth, "The Non-Violence of Mahatma Gandhi," *Jnanadeepa* 4 (2001), 1: 59-78.

4 See the discussion in Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* , Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987, 81-82.

5 See André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004.

6 The Sermon on the Mount consists of an introduction/setting (5:1-20), six antitheses (5:21-48), three acts of piety (6:1-18), wisdom sayings and other teachings (6:19-7:12), warnings about judgment (7:13-29); see Daniel J, Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991, 76.

7 Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*, New York: Doubleday, 1998, 110. See also Robert C. Tannehill, "The

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14. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968, 140.

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17. Harrington, *Matthew*, 88.

18. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 101 (italics are mine).

19. *Young India*, August 11, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 133.

20. *Young India*, August 11, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 133.

21. See Worth, *Sermon on the Mount*, 244-46; Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 101; Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 278.

22. See, for example, the Community Rule of the Qumran community: "And whoever takes out his left hand to gesticulate with it shall be punished ten days" (1QS 7:15). See also Wink, *Powers That Be*, 101.

23. The Code of Hammurabi decrees confirm the same idea: "If a man has smitten the cheek of a man who is his superior, he shall be given sixty lashes with an ox whip in the assembly" (par. 202). See also the discussion in Wink, *Powers That Be*, 101; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 151-52.

24. Worth, *Sermon on the Mount*, 235.
25. Worth, *Sermon on the Mount*, 242.
26. Harrington, *Matthew*, 88 (italics are mine). Although it is possible, it remains best a hypothesis that is not necessary to interpret the text as it stands today.
27. Bruce Chilton and J. I. H. McDonald, *Jesus and the Ethics of the Kingdom*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 104 (italics are mine).
28. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 103.
29. Gandhi, *Harijan*, March 10, 1946. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 83 (1981), 206.
30. *Young India*, August 25, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 195.
31. *Young India*, August 11, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 132.
32. In Matthew there seems to be some confusion regarding the use of *chit¿n* and *himation*. See the Lukan version has changed the order: "from him who takes away your outer garment (*himation*) do not withhold even your undergarment (*chit¿n*)" (6:29b).
33. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 104.
34. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 105.
35. Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus, the criminal to be crucified (Mark 15:21; Matt 27:32; Luke 23:26).
36. For a detailed discussion on the issue, see Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 151-53; Betz, *Sermons on the Mount*, 280-92; Wink, *Powers That Be*, 106-11.

37.Wink, *Powers That Be*, 108.

38. W. Wink, "Neither Passivity nor Violence: Jesus' Third Way (Matt. 5:38-42 par.)," in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New testament*, ed., W. M. Swartley; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1992, 103.

39.Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Vintage Books, 1966, 89.

40. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, London: Allen Lane, 1978, 32.

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Poverty and Violence

The Influence of Poverty on Destructive Behaviour

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Abstract

The author studies the connection between poverty and violence. There are two different kinds of correlation between the phenomena concerned. On the one hand poverty can be featured as specific kind of violence, so that violence causes poverty. On the other hand poverty can be understood as source of violence; in that way violence is an aftermath of misery and despair.If a really and comprehensively human culture including peace and commonwealth becomès true, this is a clear sign that the spirit of God himself is acting in the people – the spirit of a present God, the spirit of a God however who never forces anyone to follow his way against his own will. The author considers it important to point out the necessity of looking for good religious and theological answers to the problems of our torn world since mere economic answers appear to be part of the problem rather than part of a solution.

Keywords

Violence, terrorism, just war, religions, violence of poverty, spirituality, structural violence.

The theme I have chosen to deal with in this paper is the connection between poverty and violence. However, there are two different kinds of correlation between the phenomena concerned. On the one hand poverty can be featured as specific kind of violence, so that violence causes poverty. On the other hand poverty can be understood as source of violence; in that way violence is an aftermath of misery and despair.

The Violence of Poverty

The first approach reflects on the negative effect the lifestyle of a minor part of humankind has on vast areas of the world. This

influence is called structural violence according to the Norwegian founder of peace and conflict research Johan Galtung. The term *structural* emphasizes the phenomenon of the absence of single agents exercising force or doing explicit violence to someone else. But nevertheless the behaviour of a part of humankind, the mode of economic system practised, the kind of allocation and distribution of resources and wealth, the structure of political decision-making and so on, bring forth a situation in which many people are suppressed and not capable of living in health and dignity. At the moment more than 20% of the population of our planet suffer from absolute destitution. That means they do not have sufficient nutrition, lodging, clothing and medical care. At the same time more than 40% of the worldwide crop of grain is fed to animals in order to produce meat. John Paul II. - influenced by the thoughts of the theology of liberation - uses the term structural sin in this context. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* he writes that these structures are rooted in personal sin even if they are found very complex and anonymous. Particularly that means structural sin springs from "... the all-consuming desire for profit, and ..., the thirst for power, with the intention of imposing one's will upon others. ... Obviously, not only individuals fall victim to this double attitude of sin; nations and blocs can do so too. And this favours even more the introduction of the 'structures of sin' of which I have spoken. If certain forms of modern 'imperialism' were considered in the light of these moral criteria, we would see that hidden behind certain decisions, apparently inspired only by economics or politics, are real forms of idolatry: of money, ideology, class, technology." (37)

I think it is beyond doubt that this connection between violence and poverty does really exist in our world and that the phenomenon of globalization increases its explosiveness. Further, I suppose there will be no controversy about the ethical assessment of this fact. However, it is not easy to come to a consensus about solutions to this scandalous situation in practice because effective solutions could require sacrifices from the members of affluent societies. Such renunciation will require strong external pressure on agents

or powerful ethical convictions.

Poverty-Caused Violence

This topic is very important of course and challenging for the whole humankind but let me shift to the second conjunction between poverty and violence I have mentioned. This paper should be focussed on it because it will be the more controversial subject, I presume.

If we think of violence as effect of poverty it seems to be obvious that need and misery force people to help themselves by using means of the last resort. It is a widely-held assumption that violent actions are a sort of self-defence of people who try to save their lives by repulsing malnutrition and starvation. There are vital needs and legitimate interests which justify conflict. Struggles to gain meaningful identity, real security or economic and political rights deserve our sympathy. To end them quickly and unquestioningly would mean to confirm or even enforce situations of vicious injustice. (Cfr. Cook-Huffman, 45) Thus violence is justified or at least excused if it could be understood as a reaction of the least advantaged people to their situation. Even the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith admits the legitimacy of an armed struggle against a situation "... which is gravely damaging the fundamental rights of individuals and the common good ..." (*Libertatis Conscientia* 79; cfr. *Populorum Progressio* 31) although it has to be restricted to the *ultima ratio.*

Everybody will acknowledge extenuating circumstances in case of property crimes under specific conditions. A lot of theft and robbery in developing countries but also in socially remote areas of the western world like particular suburbs or ghettos, can be taken as immediate offspring of misery. Therefore, several sorts of violent behaviour appear to be self-defence against impoverishment.

Our estimation of violence is getting more difficult if people are hurt seriously or even killed. Is it possible to justify actions causing such consequences even if they are provoked by structural

violence? Traditional moral doctrine would answer this question by applying the principle of appropriate means. But not let us talk about the ethical judgement until we have analysed the interdependence of violence and poverty in greater depth.

The complete realm of such interdependence would be too extensive to be discussed within a paper like this. Thus, I will not reflect on conventional criminality any longer but focus my attention on terrorist activities from now on. That means to think about acts "... of violence against non-combatants with the objective of exacting revenge, intimidating, or otherwise influencing an audience." (Stern XX) This kind of violence has gained an increasing importance during the last few years and stimulated several debates. Further more, I will focus my remarks on terrorism of Islamic origin not only because it has been the most spectacular and perhaps the most cruel form of violence in the recent past all over the world but also since it is a challenging topic in theological contexts. So let me specify the subject of this paper: I will talk about poverty and the violence of religiously influenced terror from now on.

Besides, the terrorist kind of violence is frequently declared a result of poverty and misery even if it is evident that no one is able to improve the circumstances of his life by using the means of terror. A lot of comments on the attack against the twin-towers on September 11, 2001, depicted international terror as a nearly unavoidable response to the situation of the present world, which is characterised by immense inequality and injustice.

The British scholar Karen Armstrong for example wrote about the roots of Terror in *The Guardian* in September 2003: "Millennial or fundamentalist extremism has risen in nearly every cultural tradition where there are pronounced inequalities of wealth, power and status. The only way to create a safer world is to ensure that it is more just." And the economist Frances Stewart published an article in the *Financial Times* on March 19, 2004 titled "Terrorism will thrive while economic inequality continues between Arab states and the west." Similar statements are made by a lot of

scholars both in the western world and in Islamic countries as well as by politicians. They presume that the state being impoverished supports the tendency to look for comfort within fundamentalist religious movements and therefore strengthens the inclination to violent behaviour.

If this diagnosis is correct, the consistent solution to the problem of terrorism has to be the diminishing of the distance between rich and poor regions, countries, peoples, ethnic groups and so on. As power and status are unevenly distributed there is a widespread conviction that economic measures will be the most adequate instrument to close the gap. Here we are faced with a specific sort of the hypothesis that economic growth will guarantee peace, which is one of the most determinant ideas of modern western thinking. But is the diagnosis quite to the point?

The Agents of Terror

Unquestionably the gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider all over the world, both between nations as well as between groups within nations. The data of the World-watch-institute say that global economy has grown sevenfold since 1950. Meanwhile, the disparity in per capita gross domestic product between the 20 richest and 20 poorest nations has more than doubled between 1960 and 1995. Thus the wealth that has been attained during the past decades is appropriated by a few. But does this mean that the poorest of world-society use the emergency brake? A huge number of commentators argue for such an interpretation. They hold the following thesis to be convincing: If people - young people in particular - have lost all hope, if they get no chance to escape the dreary situation they exist in, we must not wonder about destructive outbreaks of anger and wrath.

Evidence, however, points in another direction. The very poorest of world-society are not the agents of terror. Where do the central figures of international terrorism come from? They don't come from Sub-Saharan Africa, where 232 Millions of people had less than one Dollar at their disposal a day in 2000, and where 11 of the 12 poorest nations are located. But they come from the Arabic

world where we have no increase in poverty. Who are the individuals who are becoming members of radical organisations and terrorists in the end? It could be that they are the underdogs within their nations, people with no access to education and no chance to improve their situation. But this assumption is also not correct. Take the example of Mohammed Atta, the head of the 9/11 hijackers: He studied engineering in Cairo and urban planning in Hamburg where he was sent by his father who wanted his son to become a doctor. This man not only descended from a well-situated Egyptian family but had the opportunity to become a respected member of western society as well. Or take the assassins who committed the bombing in Riad in May 2003. They were well off, well educated, protected by the structures of a potent welfare-state. Young male adults of the Saudi Arabian middle and upper class are the adherents of Osama Bin Laden. These guys are not isolated cases. The poorest do not use means of terror – they simply don't have the resources but the relatively affluent people do.

An Egyptian study from the 80s came to recognize, that the average Islamist who potentially becomes a violent fighter for his ideas is young (early twenties), of rural or small-town background, from the middle or lower middle class, with high achievement and motivation, upwardly mobile, with science or engineering education, and from a normally cohesive family. There are similar outcomes of a study concerning Hezbollah militants in Lebanon and similar observations on members of Jemaah Islamiah in Singapore too (Cfr. Krueger & Maleckova). Shaukat Qadir (former vice-president of the Islamabad Policy Research Institute) analyses the situation of the thousands of Madrasas in Pakistan, where mostly children of poor families are housed, fed, taught the Koran and sometimes also trained to kill. A part of these Madrasas is the breeding ground for violent Islamist groups. But the background of the leaders is, completely different from the background of the recruits, as the author notices (Qadir 340f). So that one can that say the underprivileged are rather abused to realize the ideas of affluent and educated people rather than articulating their own

despair and anger.

Even the situation in Palestine, which seemingly is totally different, affirms this impression. Public-opinion polls in the West-Bank and the Gaza-Strip has shown that support for violence against Israeli targets is higher among those with higher education and higher living standards. "The PCPSR [an independent centre for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah] study in 2001 showed also that support for armed attacks against Israeli targets is widespread across all Palestinian occupations and groups, but particularly strong among students (recall that respondents are age eighteen or older) and merchants and professionals. Notably, the unemployed are somewhat less likely to support armed attacks against Israeli targets. If poverty was indeed the wellspring of support for terrorism or politically motivated violence, one would have expected the unemployed to be more supportive of armed attacks than merchants and professionals, but public-opinion evidence points in the other direction" (Krueger & Maleckova). The results of other studies and polls could be cited here to prove that there is no direct and simple relation between poverty and terrorist violence. Rather the tendency to terrorist activities seems to increase in proportion to the rise in education and living-standard.

How can these astonishing facts be understood?

Nearness and Conflict

To approach a first answer to this question, the mimetic theory of René Girard may be helpful (Palaver 91-96; Girard 144f). The Franco-American scholar of literature and culture depicts man characterised by desire. Desire is the drive of our life. But the goals of desire are not determined. They have to be formed by models which are other individuals to whom we look up to somehow. Being the model of another one is ambivalent. Each of us likes to be admired and to find adherents. But these other ones are also a latent threat because we fear they could try to occupy our own place and our own position. Thus the message we send to them is ambiguous; this is called a situation of double-bind by psychologists. Our adherents shall follow us and imitate our way

but they shouldn't do this perfectly. So it is easier to deal with the situation of mimetic desire — as Girard calls the imitation of the goals of another subject — if there is a granted borderline between the model and his/her adherents that can not be crossed. (Kirwan 15) Such a boundary can be set on purpose or it can be the result of a given situation which is perceived as a kind of fate.

We may find the mechanisms of mimesis in the interactions of individuals as well as in the interactions of social classes, peoples, nations or civilisations. So if the distance between two collectives is vast, we will notice admiration and also a specific mode of mimesis but however the difference is usually accepted as a fact. The model-group feels secure and the admiring-group tries to manage its own pitiful existence as well as possible but tries not to usurp the place of the model. At the moment the gap between the two groups decreases, rivalry will increase.[1] A very poor man may accept that his neighbour is unbelievably rich. Even if there is envy in his eyes he will imagine no possibility to skip into the rich man's sphere. Even if he has dreams of being rich, he will not engage in changing the current constellation in fact. However, at the moment the poor is getting richer and the difference to his neighbour less insurmountable the remaining distance will focus the interest and energy of both neighbours. The rich one is going to protect it; the poorer one is going to overcome it. Finally the only barrier left between the positions of the two is the repulsive behaviour of the richer which necessarily is perceived a monstrosity by the poorer one. Thus his readiness to use violent means to gain what he is entitled to will increase. Since both sides in this rising conflict feel to be a victim a just solution can hardly be found.

Assuming this scenario to be true, we have to acknowledge that economic development in poorer countries or regions will not solve the problem of violence at once. On the contrary, it could be intensified at least as long as the positions of all nations and regions have become actually equal — quite an utopian goal. And especially the members of the wealthy western world have to admit that the fading away of global differences is not really in

their own interest for the most part. So that their behaviour – sometimes unconscious behaviour – and their actual politics in spite of all lip service to global justice are the main obstacles to its realization.

These thoughts may help to understand what's taking place, but a sufficient explanation of terrorist violence will require further considerations to be added to what I've said about conflict and possible violence between unequal groups. I am convinced that we have to focus our interest and attention on the spiritual dimension of the phenomenon. Religion is not only a hypocritical gloss covering the real motivation of Islamist terror. Thus I will argue that the people we are talking about do feel a justified uneasiness about the structures and dynamics of the modern western culture that is going to get global. Therefore, they try to install an alternative world-order shaped by religious tradition.

Fight for the Spiritual Dimension of Humans

In order to better explain what is meant by this, I refer to a thinker whose name is mentioned repeatedly in the context of radical Islamism and terror: Sayyid Qutb. Born in 1906 in Egypt, he was an official of the government and a relatively secularized Muslim. Living in the USA for two years in the late 40s, Qutb was shocked and repelled by the western lifestyle which to him was characterized by production, money and lust. Back in Egypt he increasingly became an orthodox Muslim and one of the most important thinkers of the Muslim-Brotherhood. This intellectual leadership was the reason for several imprisonments. In 1966 he was sentenced to death by President Nasser for subversion. His brother Muhammad who carried on his ideas became the teacher of Osama Bin Laden later on. Qutb's writings — among others a very extensive interpretation of the Koran — are held in high esteem in radical Islamist circles.

Reading one of the most famous and influential books of Sayyid Qutb titled *Milestones*[2], which was written 1964 in prison, one who is familiar with the documents of the *Catholic Social*

Doctrine will discover a lot of familiar ideas Qutb is moaning about the misguided development of the modern world. He is worried about the sanity and salvation of the human person. I quote the very first sentences of *"Milestones"*: "Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head - this being just a symptom and not the real disease - but because humanity is devoid of those vital values which are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress. Even the Western world realizes that Western civilization is unable to present any healthy values for the guidance of mankind. It knows that it does not possess anything which will satisfy its own conscience and justify its existence..." This deficiency of western as well as of eastern socialist societies causes a mutilation of real human dignity as the author argues. A human being is reduced to a rational animal driven by materialist desires. Both western and eastern societies are marked deficient in this way because of their materialist character. The differences between the two competing ideologies are not differences of the basic conception, the author notes. They only fight for predominance.

Very emphatically Qutb rejects each society ruled by mere human standards and manmade laws. That will necessarily result in systems of despotism and slavery characterized by division of colour, race and nation. In such system man is not only the slave of other men but also servant of his own animal desires. Thus Qutb writes: "In Islam, mere material inventions are not considered as civilization, as a jahili society can also have material prosperity. In many places in the Qur'an, God has described societies of this kind, which have attained material prosperity while remaining jahili." (Qutb, Chapter 8) *Jahillia* means the simple ignorance of Islam but also the persistent and stolid rejection of God's revelation which prevents real human development. Thus *jahili* societies are esteemed crude and backward.

Recapitulating, it can be said that the author of Milestones talks about the importance of Islam in the same way the Catholic Church talks about her own task saying she is "... a sign and a

safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person." (*Gaudium et Spes* 76)

This is the right point of my remarks to refer back to my first attempt to explain the causes of terrorist violence. It is just the dimension of transcendence which prevents mimetic desire from getting conflictive in a destructive way. Taboos and strong borderlines are necessary to separate agents competing for indivisible goods that have to be the exclusive property of a single person or group as already Thomas Hobbes had mentioned. Spiritual goods are of a different kind. In case of the prevailing pursuit of such goods it would be easier to overcome the tricky differences of wealth and status. People who don't consider worldly goods their final purpose are able to undo the fear of being exploited by the hungry, of being threatened by the miserable ones and being attracted by their neighbours. So it had to be noticed that a beneficial handling of desire requires the presence of a transcendent reality both in the individual human lives and in society. This conviction is already part of our Augustinian heritage.

I think a lot of people all over the world sense a lack of transcendence and spirituality in modern western societies. Especially the ones who are rooted in a traditional religious background are scared of this lack when they get in touch with societies of western style. One can say that they are not ready to accept a concept of a human being called *homo oeconomicus* and a concept of society that reduces community to market. If this hypothesis fits, we have to consider fundamentalist movements to be fighting against wealth rather than for wealth. Even if there may be some primitive resentment in their habit their justified concern shouldn't be ignored. (Cfr. Damir-Geilsdorf 63) At least it could not be convincing to reduce the conflict between the Muslim world and the west to an economic one. Qutb himself refuses this reduction as ruse of western ideology. The real conflict is between belief and unbelief. "The enemies of the Believers may wish to change this struggle into an economic or political or racial struggle, so that the Believers become confused concerning

the true nature of the struggle and the flame of belief in their hearts becomes extinguished. The Believers must not be deceived, and must understand that this is a trick. The enemy, by changing the nature of the struggle, intends to deprive them of their weapon of true victory, the victory which can take any form, be it the victory of the freedom of spirit as was case of the Believers in the story of the Maker of the Pit, or dominance in the world – as a consequence of the freedom of spirit – as happened in the case of the first generation of Muslims." (Qutb, Chapter 12)

Of course it is embarrassing to accept such a topic. To reduce economic injustice and inequality will be difficult but it does not require reconsidering the fundamental structures of modern western societies as long as growth can be maintained. A judgement assessing the modern world to be inhuman in some respect and insufficient in its entirety is however more challenging and will require much more painful transformations.

A Justified War?

But what can be said about violence after all this consideration? Could kidnapping, bombing and killing be justified by the grave faults of the worldwide prevailing social system? Sayyid Qutb would answer this question in the affirmative, I presume.

One will barely find open invitation to use violence in the book *Milestones* — in contrast to earlier written texts. But there is a chapter dealing with the term *jihad*. There it is said that preaching is not enough to free humankind from structures of slavery and from the rule of human over human. Other means will have to be applied too. Qutb emphasises that it is not allowed in Islam to force someone to believe in and adore the one God. But the social structures that prevent God's sovereignty from being accepted as the unique reality of human society have to be abolished and erased. Islam "... does not attack individuals nor does it force them to accept its beliefs; it attacks institutions and traditions to release human beings from their poisonous influences, which distort human nature and which curtail human freedom." (Qutb, Chapter 4) This

attitude, however, is not compatible with Christian revelation understood in the way of the *Catholic Social Teaching* at all. In the doctrine of the church the opinion is stressed that structures and the convictions and habits of the human individuals cannot be segregated. Whoever strives to change the world by merely changing structures, will fail. (Cfr. Reconciliatio et paenitentia 16) Thus Pope John Paul II. writes in his encyclical *Centesimus annus* (51): "... the first and most important task is accomplished within man's heart." To Qutb it seems to be possible to install the rule of God and his law regardless of whether it corresponds to the convictions of the people or not. Therefore his approach is more similar to the Marxist idea of a bloody revolution than to the Christian idea of a subtle spiritual revolution which changes institutions from the inside. In this respect, John Gray may be right to call Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist Organisations *modern*. (Gray 2004) To the British professor of European thought, *being modern* in this context means the condition of human agents trying to create a new world on their own. It is not so important whether this aim is pursued by rational means or by irrational means he feels.

Even if Qutb stresses that the sovereignty of God should come true, the subjects responsible for the realisation of this aim are humans. Hence, the movement of *jihad* paradoxically approximates to the harshly criticised structures of the modern world. Maybe the reason for this is a concept of religion that makes God absolutely transcendent: his law remains within the world but he himself is not a real agent of the drama of human history and salvation because he is too "high" above us. The Islamic tradition is not acquainted with the idea of incarnation. And for a Muslim it is also not imaginable that God's spirit is acting within a human community enabling it to deal with divine commitments in a creative way. Biblical faith, however, is aware that real conversion is not only demanded by God's law but is brought about by God alone, even if single humans or social structures may hamper or support it. Thus if a really and comprehensively human culture including peace and

commonwealth becomes true, this is a clear sign that the spirit of God himself is acting in the people – the spirit of a present God, the spirit of a God however who never forces anyone to follow his way against his own will (Cfr. Schwager & Niewiadomski, 64).

Though the topic of terrorist violence is very complex and I am not sure if I have provided a completely satisfactory or even the sole explanation of it in my paper, it seems important to me to point out the necessity of looking for good religious and theological answers to the problems of our torn world since mere economic answers appear to be part of the problem rather than part of a solution.

Notes

1. This concept is very similar to what S. Freud has called narcissism of minor differences.
2. The title of this books is *"Ma'alim fi'l-tareeq"* in Arabic language, which is also translated as "Sign-posts on the Road."

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Enmity and Political Identity:
Friend-Enemy-Patterns and Religion

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Abstract

Our current world seems to suggest that political identity, enmity and religion are malignantly linked. Carl Schmitt and Samuel P. Huntington are the most well known thinkers pointing in this direction. Such a view, however, simplifies dangerously the way religion is related to political identity. René Girard's mimetic theory shows that throughout history we can find very different relationships between religion and friend-enemy-patterns. Archaic religions were directly linked to friend-enemy patterns creating internal peace with the help of an outside enemy. The Biblical revelation has undermined this kind of political theology. Without the archaic sacred, however, conflicts and enmity have become even more aggressive. Enmity rooting in the pagan sacred provided a certain moderation of human conflicts seeing the enemy as good and bad at the same time. Our modern world, on the contrary, tends towards an absolute enmity seeking annihilation. This apocalyptic condition of our world forces us Christians to follow the Biblical demand to love our enemies and to renounce violence. By bearing witness to the Biblical revelation in its integrity Christian Churches form communities without the need of outside enemies. The Eucharist strengthens this kind of theological politics.

Keywords

Enmity, Eucharist, Friend-enemy-distinction, Girard René, S. P. Huntington, Identity, Politics, Religion, Carl Schmitt, Solidarity.

Our current age of terrorism and of wars against terrorism seems to suggest that political identity and religion are inseparably and malignantly linked. Carl Schmitt's *Concept of the Political* (1927) and Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1996) are the most well known theories suggesting this line of thinking.

Religion seems to be one of the few issues which can provide differences in a globalizing world becoming more and more homogenous. After introducing two closely connected theories the author analyzes them systematically.

After studying the key notions of enmity, politics and scapegoat mechanism, the author reflects on the theological and political significance of the Eucharist which demands us to work for peace and justice in the world.

1. Enmity and Politics

The end of the Cold War has made us more and more aware of how closely political identity and enmity are connected (cf. Ash 2001). Samuel Huntington's book *Clash of Civilization* tries to explain the reason why politics always has a close affinity to friend-enemy relations: "People use politics not just to advance their interests but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against." (Huntington 1996: 21) In Huntington's eyes, religion is not a counter force against this tendency of politics but just another version of it. He can only imagine religion as a form of organized enmity. According to him, all religions—regardless of their universalistic claims—differentiate between believers and unbelievers, between a superior in-group and an inferior out-group (Huntington 1996: 97).

Huntington's theory has close affinities to Carl Schmitt's political theory, which this infamous German law scholar developed during the first half of the 20th century. Schmitt's most important book focusing on the topic of this paper, which appeared for the first time as an article in 1927, is his *Concept of the Political*. In it we find the following definition focusing on political enmity: "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy." (Schmitt 1996: 26) In this book Schmitt sees the deeper roots of enmity in

differences and strangeness close to what decades later became known as Huntington's paradigm of a clash of civilizations.

Looking solely at the parallels between Schmitt and Huntington, however, would result in missing Schmitt's most important insight into the nature of political enmity. During World War II and later, Schmitt more and more emphasized the fact that it is the danger of civil wars inside a society that necessitates the political friend-enemy-distinction. In his apologetic postwar journal *Ex Captivitate Salus* the enemy is no longer the stranger but the brother: "The other turns out to be my brother, and the brother turns out to be my enemy. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Thus begins the history of mankind. Thus looks the father of all things. ... The enemy is our own question embodied." (Schmitt 1950: 89-90 quoted in Müller 2003: 55) To understand that the brother and not the stranger is more likely to become an enemy means to prioritize systematically civil wars over interstate wars.

2. The Political Friend-Enemy Distinction Roots in the Scapegoat Mechanism

Schmitt's thesis that to overcome civil wars inside a society one needs an outside enemy summarizes a typical pattern of political life going back to the beginnings of human civilization. It is a pattern one can find in many different cultures. In the Greek tradition we can refer to Aeschylus's tragedy *The Eumenides*, which describes the over-coming of civil war by the establishment of a political order. The revengeful and violent Erinyes are transformed into the gentle and fruitful Eumenides. It seems that violence has fully disappeared from the city. This, however, is only superficially true. Open violence, in the sense of revenge, has been transformed into a form of structural violence that helps to create peace inside the city, but can be used against foreign enemies and internal trouble-makers at any time. The pacified Eumenides promise that common love *and* unanimous hatred will overcome civil war: "I pray that discord, greedy for evil, may never clamor in this city, and may the dust not drink the black

blood of its people and through passion cause ruinous murder for vengeance to the destruction of the state. But may they return joy for joy in a spirit of common love, and may they hate with one mind; for this is the cure of many an evil in the world." (Aeschylus 1983: V. 977-987) Civil war has to be overcome by enmity to the outside world. Wars with foreign enemies should help to create peace inside the city. The goddess Athena recommends political friend-enemy-relations as an antidote to internal bloodshed. Friedrich Nietzsche clearly understood this dimension of ancient Greek politics: "I saw how all their institutions grew out of preventive measures taken to protect each other against their inner *explosives*. This tremendous inward tension then discharged itself in terrible and ruthless hostility to the outside world: the city-states tore each other to pieces so that the citizens of each might find peace from themselves." (Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols; What I Owe to the Ancients Nr. 3*)

But we can find the political friend-enemy-distinction not only in the Western tradition but also in the East. It seems to be a universal pattern which can be found in all cultures.In ancient India we can refer first of all to Kautilya's *Arthasastra*— a manual of statecraft that was held in high regard by Carl Schmitt (cf. Schmitt 1995: 105-106; Maschke 1994: 292). Though the *Arthasastra* does not directly link the overcoming of civil war to an outside enemy it is nevertheless a clear example that enmity is not based on strangeness and religious or cultural differences but on proximity and alikeness (cf. Girard 1987a: 85). Hostility is based on sharing a common border: "Any king, whose kingdom shares a common border with that of the conqueror is an antagonist." (Kautilya 6.2.14) The definition of the natural enemy underlines the importance of proximity and alikeness: "Among the kings with contiguous territories, a natural enemy is one who is of the same family or of equally high birth." (Kautilya 6.2.19) Whereas the neighbor is an enemy, the neighbor of the enemy is a friend: "A king whose territory has a common boundary with that of an antagonist ... is an ally." (Kautilya 6.2.15) The friend-enemy-

pattern connected to this "circle of states" or "circle of neighboring kings" is also mentioned in the *Law Code of Manu*, the most authoritative and the best-known legal text of ancient India. According to this code, the king "should recognize that his immediate neighbour is his enemy, as also anyone rendering assistance to the enemy; that his enemy's immediate neighbour is an ally." (Law Code of Manu 7.158)

René Girard's mimetic theory helps us to understand why we can find the political friend-enemy-distinction in more or less all cultures. The main reason for this can be found in the scapegoat mechanism in which human civilization originated. A crisis at the beginning of human civilization was overcome by the nonconscious and collective expulsion or killing of a single victim. The scapegoat mechanism creates "solidarity among those who can fight the same enemy *together*" (Girard 1991: 186; cf. 1987c: 26).

Girard's interpretation of Aeschylus's tragedy *The Eumenides* helps us to understand how the political friend-enemy-distinction is an offspring of the scapegoat mechanism (Girard 1987b: 146-153; cf. Palaver 1998: 38-45). What was originally laid upon the scapegoat—the common enemy inside the group—is now channeled outside the city. In rituals we can find the necessary link between the political pattern and the scapegoat mechanism. The political friend-enemy distinction builds upon the ritual channeling of internal violence towards the external world. Whereas in the scapegoat mechanism, a member of the group itself is killed. Rituals already tend to sacrifice foreigners. Political enmity prolongs the ritual focus on the foreigner and takes a friend-enemy relationship between two different groups as an always already given starting point (cf. Girard 1977: 249, 278-280)

3. Enmity and Religion

It is one of the predominant signs of our time to accuse religion in general to be responsible for an increase of violence, hatred and enmity. Carl Schmitt is an often mentioned example in this

respect (cf. Meier 1995; 1998). The German Egyptologist Jan Assmann, for instance, views Schmitt's "political theology of violence"—meaning the "theologizing of the distinction between friend and enemy"—as an offspring of monotheism: "God is the truth, the gods of the others are lies. This is the theological basis to distinguish friend from enemy. The political theology of violence has become dangerous only on this ground and in this semantic framework. Schmitt's political theology still belongs to this tradition of a disposition to violence stemming from a theology of revelation." (Assmann 2002: 263-264; cf. 2000)

Let us turn to Schmitt's political theology connected to his understanding of the political to find out if Meier and Assmann are right to interpret him as a representative of a political theology of violence rooted in the Biblical revelation. Schmitt refers indirectly to Gen 3:15—the Biblical passage emphasized by Meier—in his *Concept of the Political* where he quotes a speech by Oliver Cromwell against Spain which he sees as a perfect example of a form of enmity that is a "high point of politics": "'The Spaniard is your enemy,' his 'enmity is put into him by God.' He is 'the natural enemy, the providential enemy,' and he who considers him to be an 'accidental enemy' is 'not well acquainted with Scripture and the things of God,' who says: 'I will put enmity between your seed and her seed' (Gen. III: 15). With France one can make peace, not with Spain because it is a papist state, and the pope maintains peace only as long as he wishes." (Quoted in Schmitt 1996: 68) Does this quote prove that Schmitt's affirmation of the friend-enemy-distinction is rooted in his belief in the Biblical revelation? I think Meier's thesis is wrong. It is true that Schmitt is a political theologian. But his political theology is closer to a pagan or sacrificial version of Christianity than to the Biblical revelation itself.

In order to understand the deeper meaning of this characterization we have to focus more closely on the complex relationship between religion and enmity. Pagan enmity is not primarily aimed at the destruction of the adversary but is already

a form of moderation of human conflicts. Due to its origin in the scapegoat mechanism it participates in the "double transference, the aggressive transference followed by the reconciliatory transference" (Girard 1987a: 37) that transformed the original scapegoat into a god, a being responsible for the destructive crisis and its solution—evil and good—at the same time. Like the scapegoat, the enemy is sacred in the pagan world. He is seen as an evil and as a respectful person—a curse and a blessing—at the same time. The pagan sacred protects human beings from their own violence. To take revenge is often left to the gods and not a purely human activity. René Girard clearly describes how enmity changed its character with the emergence of our modern world: "The more socially 'efficient' scapegoating is, the more capable it is of generating a positive transfiguration of the scapegoat, as well as the negative transfiguration of fear and hostility. The positive transfiguration is still present in the feudal and even the national traditions of military warfare. The enemy is respected as well as intensely disliked. This positive aspect weakens more and more in the modern world, as civil and ideological conflicts tend to predominate. The class enemy of the modern revolutionary never becomes ritualized as a good, even sacred enemy" (Girard 1987c: 94). It is this difference between the sacred enemy of the old world and the enemy in the modern world which is no longer protected by the pagan sacred facing therefore annihilation that plays a central role in Schmitt's political theory.

The Biblical undermining of sacrificial culture has deprived the enemy of his sacred protection. He is now threatened by dangerous demonizations caused by heretical offsprings of the Biblical revelation. These heresies are a result of the Biblical uncovering of the scapegoat mechanism on the one hand and the rejection of the Biblical demand for the love of the enemies on the other. Modern scapegoaters are aiming at the annihilation of the enemy because they are no longer able to divinize their victim. Religious terrorists of today eagerly pursue the satanization of the

enemy (Juergensmeyer 2001: 171-186). The protective side of the old pagan sacred has completely disappeared.

Nietzsche described the modern type of enmity in his critique of the man of resentment. If we disregard the fact that he wrongly identified resentment with Judaism and Christianity—not understanding that "resentment is merely an illegitimate heir, certainly not the father of Judaeo-Christian Scripture" (Girard 1987b 108)—Nietzsche helps us to understand the specific modern version of enmity: "To be incapable of taking one's enemies, one's accidents, even one's misdeeds seriously for very long—that is the sign of strong, full natures ... Such a man shakes off with a single *shrug* many vermin that eat deep into others; here alone genuine 'love of one's enemies' is possible—supposing it to be possible at all on earth. ... In contrast to this, picture 'the enemy' as the man of *ressentiment* conceives him—and here precisely is his deed, his creation: he has conceived 'the evil enemy,' '*the Evil One*,' and this in fact is his basic concept, from which he then evolves, as an afterthought and pendant, a 'good one'—himself!" (Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*; First Essay: "Good and Evil," "Good and Bad"; Nr. 10)

Although the modern world has detached itself from pagan religion it is, however, not free of new religious temptations even increasing the level of human violence. Schmitt talks about an "age of masses with its pseudo-theological enemy-myths" (Schmitt 1950: 89) and about the terror of the "pseudo-religion of absolute humanity" (Schmitt 2002: 113). Less and less protected by the pagan sacred theologically motivated hatred has become more aggressive than ever before. Religious wars at the dawn of our modern world are an early example of that temptation. Current forms of religious terrorism are an even more dangerous exacerbation of it. In his book *Theory of the Partisan* from 1963 Schmitt reconstructs the modern shift from the real enemy to the absolute enemy, from the enemy to the foe. Whereas the enmity of the partisan of the 19th century was fundamentally limited, Lenin, "a professional revolutionary engaged in a global civil war, went

further and turned the real enemy into a foe" (Schmitt 2004: 76). Schmitt quotes Joan of Arc's answer to her inquisitors asking her whether she claimed that God hated the English to illustrate the defensive character of the partisan's limited type of enmity: "I do not know whether God loves or hates the English; I only know that they must be driven out of France" (Schmitt 2004: 76). Today we no longer hear an answer like that. Terrorism has become global and religiously motivated. A "member of Al Quaeda," for instance, "would answer that God is with him and Westerners should be exterminated (or converted)" (Klitsche de la Grange 2004: 173). And some religious rhetoric accompanying the war against terrorism tends towards an absolute enmity, too.

The traditional international law has distanced itself from religion in order to overcome the religious threat. Schmitt is part of this differentiation. In his postwar journal he writes: "Theologians tend to define the enemy as someone who has to be annihilated. But I am a jurist not a theologian" (Schmitt 1950: 89). At the same time, however, he realizes that to give up all connections with traditional religion will lead to an even more dangerous world deprived of all the protections provided by the pagan sacred.

It is due to this insight that he distinguishes holy wars from modern just wars because holy wars still "enshrine something from the primordial character of an ordeal" (Schmitt 1950: 58; cf. 1938: 2; 1991: 293-296; 2003: 58; Girard 1977: 299, 314-315) whereas just wars rely solely on human judgement. Traditional international law remained, according to Schmitt, connected to the tradition of holy wars despite its differentiation from theology. The authority of jurisprudence "has become secularized but not yet profanized" (Schmitt 1950: 72). In order to keep enmity moderate and tame Schmitt tried to distinguish politics and religion without losing all sacred protection. A note in his diary illustrates his complex position: "Humanization of war means above all a de-divinization, a reduction to a purely human relation renouncing all balances and reliefs, which result from transcendent forces and powers ... Based on pure humanity, on a pure *homo homini*

homo, the humanization of war will not last for long. Man rather becomes the being of all beings; he becomes God and animal, and the enemy has to be treated simply like an animal because he cannot be divinized." (Schmitt 1991, 270) Schmitt's critical reference to the formula *homo homini homo* is more than revealing. It refers to Francisco de Vitoria's repudiation of the Christian conquering and oppression of the Indians in Latin America. Schmitt accused de Vitoria of having dissolved all sacred differences between human beings leading towards universalism and its humanistic unleashing of war. De Vitoria, however, was not a humanitarian warmonger but belonged to a Christian tradition of desacralizing war leading back to Augustine (cf. Ruston 1993: 134-137). His position culminated in the statement that "difference of religion is not a cause of just war". He therefore opposed holy war, "the doctrine that right religion sanctions war against unbelievers and the confiscation of their property" (Ruston 1993: 136). De Vitoria represents the Biblical tradition that dissolved the archaic amalgamation of religion and war and was rightly criticizing his adversaries as leaning towards paganism. Schmitt's rejection of de Vitoria's position underlines once more that his political theology is not primarily representing the Biblical revelation but a pagan version of it. By clinging strongly to the old sacred protections of enmity he tries to keep as much paganism alive as it is possible in a Christian age.

4. The Theological Politics of the Eucharist

Schmitt's example makes clear that the relationship between religion and enmity is complex. The political theology underpinning his emphasis on the friend-enemy-distinction is not rooted in the Biblical revelation but is a futile attempt to restore the protective political patterns of the pagan sacred. The Biblical revelation has undermined the old sacred in a way that it is no longer possible to go back to these relatively peaceful patterns. At the same time, however, we should not overlook the fact that the Biblical revelation has made our world more dangerous. Without the protections of the old sacred we are on the brink of destroying the whole world.

This apocalyptic situation of our current world caused Schmitt to long for the old sacred. It is at same time the true reason that justifies to some degree Assmann's critique of monotheism. The Biblical revelation is truly dangerous. But it remains a complete misunderstanding to accuse monotheism of directly causing a political theology of violence.

Mimetic theory helps us to understand the positions of Schmitt and Assmann better and provides us at the same time with a view of the Biblical revelation that is much more appropriate. According to mimetic theory, the biblical message has slowly undermined all the sacrificial brakes against human violence and rivalry. Over a long period of time Christianity has led to a global crises—an apocalyptic state—with all its dangers of violence and bloodshed. Jesus referred to this world when he said that he has not "come to bring peace, but a sword" (Mt 10:34). As a first reaction one would think—close to Schmitt's political theology—that the old sacrificial order must be restored to prevent such an outbreak of violence. Girard, however, knows that a return to the old constraints is not possible without the creation of a most appalling tyranny (Girard 1978: 82; 1987a: 286; 1991: 282). Humanity is therefore forced to follow the way of the Sermon on the Mount if it does not want to disappear completely. "The definitive renunciation of violence ... will become for us the condition *sine qua non* for the survival of humanity it-self." (Girard 1987a: 137; cf. 258; 1994: 126) We are more and more forced to follow the way of Jesus who referred us to the nonviolence of his heavenly father who "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" (Mt 5:45). The nonviolent God calls us to give up violence and love our enemies.

Our current times can be explained as a partial adoption of the Biblical revelation leading precisely to the global crisis we have to deal with today: "If the revelation is to be used as a weapon of divisive power in mimetic rivalry it must be first divided. As long as it remains intact it will be a force for peace, and only if it is

fragmented can it be used in service of war. Broken into pieces it provides the opposing doubles with weapons that are vastly superior to what would be available in its absence." (Girard 1986: 116)

Christian Churches are called today to bear witness to the Biblical revelation in its integrity. Therefore the Biblical perspective has to become the starting point and not politics with its leaning towards divisions and distinctions. As long as we focus primarily on politics it is very difficult to avoid Schmitt's or Huntington's logic. Political theology is not able to break with it because it is bound to the enmity going along with ordinary politics. Instead of making theology an ally of politics rooted in paganism we should therefore try to create political bodies that rely on the Biblical revelation. Political theology has to give way to theological politics. The Church as a body politic is called to live a form of Christian solidarity no longer in need of an outside enemy. Pope John Paul II's understanding of this kind of solidarity in his encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* clearly addresses the problem of enmity: "In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself ... One's neighbor must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her" *(Sollicitudo rei socialis* No. 40). It is especially the eucharist which enables us to go beyond ordinary political friend-enemy-patterns. Whereas friend-enemy-distinctions stem from the scapegoat mechanism the Eucharist is a reversal of the pagan pattern fostering a theological politics that helps to overcome political enmity (Schwager 1999: 223-229). John Paul II, clearly underlines the political importance of the eucharist regarding our work for peace and justice: "The Lord unites us with himself through the Eucharist ... and he unites us with himself and with one another by a bond stronger than any natural union; and thus united, he sends us into the whole world to bear witness, through faith and works, to God's love, preparing the coming of his Kingdom and anticipating it, though in the obscurity of the present time." (*Sollicitudo rei socialis* No. 48)

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Is Divine Omnipotence (Non)-Violent?

Reflections from the Viewpoint of Dramatic Theology

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Abstract

Omnipotence is one of the classical divine attributes in Christian theology. Modernity, however, has questioned that tenet on several fronts because it seems incompatible with another of God's attributes – His goodness – and the violent atrocities of history.

I do not attempt to give a solution to the problem of theodicy. Yet, I reconsider the concept of divine omnipotence by looking at the drama of Jesus, which – for Christians – is the drama of salvation. Utilizing the method of a "dramatic theology", which supposes real interaction between the divine Lord of history and the human agents of history, I argue that a truly Christian view of divine omnipotence has to conceive of it as non-violent, and as co-operative with human agency. Thus it is also supervening: *haec potentia, quae semper maius facere possit*. This challenges us to transform our views of power – and thus also of divine omnipotence.

Keywords

Cross, drama of salvation, dramatic theology, image of God, judgment, omnipotence, sacrifice, soteriology, theodicy, violence-nonviolence.

Introduction

Christian tradition – a tradition certainly formed and developed in a predominantly European cultural horizon – counts omnipotence among the divine attributes. And there are good reasons for this view. However, the concept of a God who can do everything He wants to do, was also seen as problematic. Historical experiences of crimes against humanity – perpetrated by humanity – led to a

more urgent posing of the question of theodicy: If God is omnipotent and still permits these atrocities to occur, can He still be good? Should He not intervene – even violently, if necessary? On the other hand, the conception of a violent God has terrified generations of believers. Is there a theological guideline to decide the question and minimize the danger of falling prey to our own projections and fears? I will try to develop a Christian conception of divine omnipotence by utilizing the approach of Dramatic Theology as the desired guideline. This approach has been developed in Innsbruck, initiated and foundations laid by our late Dean Fr. Raymund Schwager SJ, but is now carried on by many of his students, including myself.

Dramatic Theology understands revelation not as linear but as unfolding in a dramatic, conflictive process that develops through several stages, or acts. Each act thereby shows a different perspective on the whole of salvation history, and we humans cannot attain a quasi-divine overview; however, by looking back from the end of the drama, we can distinguish the meanings of the acts preceding it and come to a more unified and integrated perspective. Dramatic theology also takes very seriously that humans are real agents in the drama of revelation and of salvation and God respects that by entering into a real dialogue with them.

For the Christian theologian the whole of that history is condensed in the drama of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It contains the drama of salvation history and represents it in a real-symbolic way. Therefore the end of the Jesus drama already allows us to discern the meaning of the whole drama of salvation history.

Looking at the Drama of Jesus' Life and Death

Schwager interprets Jesus' life from the beginning of his public ministry to the coming of the Spirit, as a drama consisting of five acts. Act One is constituted by Jesus' message of the kingdom of God, the *Basileia*. Act Two shows his discussions and arguments with the religiously powerful of his time, in which Jesus resorts to the language of conflict and uses parables of judgment. Act Three

tells the events of his trial and execution. Act Four shows what the resurrection means for Christ, the believers and the world. And finally Act Five is the situation that still exists today: between the coming of the Spirit and the second coming of Christ.

One of the results of Schwager's analysis is that this drama is a process of clarifying and darkening, veiling and unveiling the right image of God. That image is shown in the purest way in Jesus' message of the *Basileia*, in his words and deeds in the First Act.[1] However, his adversaries were not able to accept an all-forgiving God and therefore they had good reason to be Jesus' adversaries. They did not persecute him out of base motives, but because they were convinced that he really was of the devil, meaning that he was distorting God's image. Thus, putting Jesus to death was merely being consistent with their image of God. If the drama ended here, we would not know who was right about God. However, in raising Jesus, God decides in his favor. The resurrection shows that Jesus' view of God is the right one. In order to keep Jesus' ministry going, the Holy Spirit is sent and the new community, the Church, formed. However, this community bears with it the essentials of all five acts, so the Church is not free from false images of God or conflict, but it has come out of the process of discerning them from the true God, and thus is able, guided by the Sprit, to do so ever again.

So far, the short version of the drama. Now let us take a second look at it from different perspectives, focusing on our question about divine omnipotence and its relation to violence or non-violence.

Divine Omnipotence in the Drama of Salvation

Jesus' Teaching on God's Power

A first perspective would ask about what Jesus says about the power of his heavenly Father. It looks at Jesus as a human being and asks what he reveals in his words about God. It seems that Jesus presupposes and teaches something akin to the doctrine of divine omnipotence: In urging his listeners to trust in God's guidance

and protection, he tells them that nothing can happen to them without God's will, that every single hair is accounted for by God's providence (cf. Mt 10:30 par.). Also in accepting his own way of suffering, Jesus maintains his firm belief that the Father could spare him, if He wanted to: In rejecting the disciple's violent defence by the sword, he expresses his conviction that if he asked his Father, "He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels" (Mt 26:53). In his moving prayer in the Garden of Gethsemani, Jesus also expresses his trust in the Father's omnipotence: "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will" (Mk 14:36). So from a first perspective we can summarize: Jesus is convinced of the Father's unlimited power; nevertheless he accepts that the Father does not change things. Neither does he pose the question of theodicy in the modern sense. On the contrary, he trustingly submits to what he recognizes as the Father's will.

Yet there is what you could call a biblical version of the question of theodicy: It is Jesus' outcry on the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46). Of course, we know that this is the beginning of Psalm 22, which ends on a very positive note. Nevertheless, we can assume that the feelings of being forsaken, which the Psalm expresses, really are Jesus' feelings at the moment, as the rest of the Psalm also reflects his feelings and his faith.[2]

Jesus Living God's Power

A second perspective would take Christology into account. Christ here is not only seen as a human being; he is the son of God who always acts in unity with the Father. That means that not only his talk about God reveals who God is, but even more so his deeds, therefore also his behavior in his passion, death and resurrection. The Christian dogma of the incarnation does have fundamental revelatory significance: Whatever Jesus says or does and how he behaves in his suffering, reflect from an earthly perspective and situation, what the heavenly Father is like. What can we conclude from that?

In a first act we see Jesus partaking in the Father's omnipotence, curing the sick, raising the dead, forgiving sins. He even dares his followers to do the same: "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, [...] if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done." (Mt 21:21) So also, other humans could partake in God's divine power, if they had faith. At the same time, however, this reminds us that even Jesus' power of healing and exorcising found its limits in the lack of faith of his contemporaries. People in his home town of Nazareth had too little faith, and Mark summarizes: "Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief." (Mark 6:5f.) So, what seemed a power indifferent to the forces of nature, turns out to find its limitation in unbelief – or as we might say in human resistance.

Then – in the second act of the drama – we see a Jesus who identifies himself with the Son of Man, with a judge, and talks about powerful and violent ends for those who refuse his message. It seems that the divine power Jesus represents is not willing to allow this resistance of unbelief to stop its work, and it seems that it is about to break that resistance violently. There are many parables of judgment but I want to remind you specifically of the parable of the wicked vinedressers: To these a vineyard was rented by its owner, but when he sends his servants to collect his due, they are chased away or even killed. Finally he sends his beloved son, but the vinedressers murder him because he is the heir, so as to have everything for themselves. And now, eventually, even this gentle and patient Lord gets angry: "He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others" (Mark 12:9).

If this is a parable about Jesus' being killed by the religious establishment of Israel and the reaction of his heavenly Father to that, it does indeed talk of divine power and it does so in very violent terms. But does the parable correctly reflect the divine reaction to Jesus' killing?

Jesus' Death and God's Power

To judge that, we need to take into account Jesus' behaviour in his passion and the resurrection. Jesus' behavior is one of non-violence. I already mentioned that he stopped the disciple who drew his sword. It is surprising, however, that he did so not because, in the face of an overwhelming enemy, resistance was futile; he did so with the assurance that his heavenly Father could stop all that, if He wanted to, but he would not ask for it, because it happened according to the Father's will. So Jesus did not give his own powerlessness as a reason for abstaining from violent resistance, but the Father's all-powerfulness. The same applies to his prayer on the Mount of Olives. This leaves us with a very unpleasant possibility: Maybe this God is violent after all, but for some reason His violence is directed against His own son – an interpretation with a wide acceptance in the history of Christianity. However, Innsbruck Dramatic Theology does not adhere to this interpretation and I will argue for a different one soon.

Another important action by Jesus is his prayer for his persecutors on the cross (cf. Lk 23:34). In it he renounces all thoughts or feelings of hate and vindictiveness against his persecutors and asks the heavenly Father to do so as well. So here Jesus prays for an ending to his story that is very different from the ending of the parable of the wicked vinedressers. He does not want to be avenged by his Father, he asks for forgiveness for his killers. To see whether his prayer was answered, we have to look from yet another perspective: we have to view the drama with the eyes of Easter, looking back from the resurrection of Jesus and deciphering what it says about the Father's activity.

Jesus' Rising in God's Power

Inspired by the first letter of Peter, we interpret Easter as the Father's verdict against Jesus' persecutors. "When He [Jesus] was reviled, [He] did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Petr 2:23). His judgment is made known by the Risen One. And the message he brings to his disciples – who are

those disciples that denied and abandoned him in the hour of darkness – is: "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). The verdict of the heavenly Father is – again – forgiveness and peace, not revenge and punishment. And this verdict is not only applicable to the disciples, who – however weak they were, did not kill Jesus – but to all who convert to Jesus, as the disciples themselves prove quite soon, when they use the statement "you have taken [Jesus] by lawless hands, have crucified, and put [him] to death" (Acts 2:23) not as an accusation but as the introduction for the message of forgiveness and the call to conversion (cf. Acts 2:38).

Thus the Easter-verdict of the Father is a two-fold message: By raising Jesus from the dead He vindicates Jesus' view of Himself: He is a loving and caring God whose direct activity has only limits in human unbelief and resistance. Yet by sending the risen one to his fallen disciples with a renewed message of forgiveness the Father shows that indeed He is not willing to allow resistance and unbelief to stop His work of salvation, but He does not break that resistance violently. Rather, by following human sinners into their deepest self-isolation, as Jesus has done on the cross, He acts indirectly and opens up a new opportunity for conversion. Thus God overcomes the resistance against His kingdom, yet he does so non-violently: His power frees Jesus from the realms of death and restores him to life; but it does not retaliate against those who put him to death but opens up new hope to them (cf. Schwager 1999, 136). We could call this God's omnipotence, yet calling it God's supervening power would be more apt. It is supervening because it does not directly break the resistance it encounters but overcomes it by surprising developments on a higher level. Borrowing and adapting a phrase from St. Anselm of Canterbury, we could say: God's power is that power which is capable of the ever greater work (*haec potentia, quae semper maius facere possit*). This is synonymous with *omnipotence*, on the one hand; on the other hand it stresses that God's omnipotence is not exerted in a static, linear way, but that it responsively supervenes on acts of resistance against itself. Thus, this expression is more fitting to the dialogical character of salvation history.

We have now two problems remaining: Why would Jesus tell a parable like that of the wicked vinedressers, if the Father's verdict is different from that? And what does it to mean to say that the cross was God's will? If we cannot answer these, we don't have a consistent picture.

Damnation and God's Power

The first question can be answered by the function and meaning of the second act in the drama of Jesus' life. All the parables of judgment and of damnation belong to that act. It is conspicuous that this is the only act in which Jesus appears to talk about a violent and vindictive God – all other acts are distinguished by the image of a loving, benign and forgiving Father. Raymund Schwager's dramatic model therefore suggests that Jesus does not convey his own convictions about God in the second act; he rather mirrors his opponents' (i.e. sinners') image of God and shows them its ultimate consequence: hell. Jesus does not mean: My Father will kill the vinedressers; rather he warns: If God were as you conceive of Him, he would do this. By his own non-violent behaviour in his passion, he embodies the divine non-violent behaviour. By his prayer for forgiveness on the cross, he does not persuade a wrathful Father to be lenient, rather he reveals that God is forgiving firsthand.[3]

In this context it is interesting to note that Matthew has a somewhat different version of the parable of the wicked vinedressers: Contrary to Mark and Luke, in Matthew it is not Jesus but his listeners who announce that the owner will kill the evil tenants. Thus Matthew verbally expresses what our interpretation suggests. Also in other parables belonging to the second act, it is always the rules and reasoning of the condemned or punished themselves that are made the rules and reasoning of the Lord condemning them.[4] If they adhered to Jesus' advice and did not judge, they would not be judged (cf. Mat 7:1) and condemned. Thus Schwager can summarize:

"People should not fear judgment, despite their weakness, as long as they take notice of this one thing: 'Judge not, and you will

not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; release one another from debt, and your debt will also be forgiven' (Luke 6:37). Whenever people [...] remain trapped in the norms of payment and repayment, [...] they hand themselves over to a process of judgment, based on repayment and payment down to the last penny. As each of us is a debtor, no one can endure this process; the demand for repayment becomes ever greater and at the end of this escalating process can only be hell." (Schwager 1999, 67)

Seen in this light, the judgment parables all make sense because they warn people of a real danger: that they are preparing hell for each other and thus also for themselves if they do not change their view of God. These parables do not become obsolete by Schwager's interpretation; on the contrary they become very realistic and frightening indeed. Yet, it is not God who frightens, it is not God who condemns, it is human persons themselves that throw each other and themselves into hell, exactly if and when God does not intervene, and leaves them to their own devices.

Yet, God does intervene. But even here His intervention is not overpowering and violent – if it were, it would only corroborate the wrong image of God that sinners (we all) hold. God's intervention is Jesus' words of warning and his deed of salvation on the cross. So even the second act, which at first glance presented a violent God to us, does not do so on closer analysis: it is a perverted image of God that is violent. God, however, permits the consequences of that image to unfold. He even permitted these consequences to crush His beloved son in order to save us from them.

The Cross as the Will of the Father

This leads directly to our second question: Why or in what sense was Jesus' suffering the will of the Father? From what we have said so far, there appears a clear answer to that. Jesus' adversaries respond to his warnings by increasing their rejection and putting him to death. How is one to convey the message of a

benign and non-violent God in this situation? By having Him crush one's opponents? By climbing down from the cross? Hardly.

By suffering what they inflict upon oneself in loving forgiveness, by literally bearing their sin on the cross and by still forgiving them? This could be a way, if one could survive it, but that is not possible. And a dead victim cannot forgive.

However, what if this victim were raised from the dead by the non-violent heavenly Father and could bring the Father's and his own forgiveness to the world which treated him so badly? This would be a way out. In this reading, Jesus' suffering is not some value in itself, as if suffering were something God enjoyed or demanded in order to forgive. Suffering is merely the consequence of evil, sinful human actions. And Christ's suffering is salvific because he endured these consequences without hate, without wrath, without vindictiveness and without accusation – against the human persecutors or the divine Father – and this way opened up a renewed chance to turn around to God. He bore human sins, human violence, with love, with forgiveness and with hope and trust in the all-powerful giver of life. It was the will of the Father that Jesus endure this because it was THE way to save humanity the non-violent way.

Thus we can also reject the idea that Christ's salvation consists in taking upon himself the suffering that a vindictive God otherwise would have imposed on sinners. It is not God who wants suffering. It is sinners who cause suffering, and God indeed does permit it, even permits it to hit His son.

We are now in a position to rethink our notion of divine omnipotence and in rethinking it, we have to keep in mind that "the concept of power in its application to God needs to be criticized by means of the crucified one's nonviolence and powerlessness" (Schwager 1999, 205).

Rethinking Power and Omnipotence

One extreme measure of doing this would, of course, be to deny divine omnipotence. However, this would not only contradict

a long Christian tradition (which, of course, could turn out to be culturally prejudiced), it would also contradict the image of God that Jesus taught and lived and for which he died, according to our biblical analysis – and this goes to the core of Christianity.

Jesus' non-violent way of the cross was exactly founded on and made possible by his strong faith in God's supervening power. Only a powerful and mighty God can justify a trust that enables one to give up one's own life *for one's enemies.* "To sacrifice one's life for one's own group and in aggressive polarization of enemies, is a possibility that does not demand too much of human beings, as history and the so-called 'heroic' deeds of many combatants and warriors show. [...] Things completely change, though, when it is a matter of not striking back against an aggressor and risking one's own life nonviolently for others and even for the enemy. There is no spontaneous impulse to this kind of act, indeed the whole spontaneous will to live speaks against it, as human experience and Jesus' anxiety on the Mt. of Olives before his death show." (Schwager 2005, end of ch. 3 = Schwager 2004, 120)

The consistent message of Jesus' drama was that divine power is creative, it is life-giving, and in that it has no boundaries. At the same time, however, this power did not – or could not? – overcome human refusal in the form of unbelief or rejection. If we said "could not", we would really make God's power dependent on human actions, something that again runs counter to a long tradition. If we say "did not", we again stand before the problem of theodicy: can we call a God good and responsible who could intervene in the catastrophes His creatures bring about, yet does not? Is there a way out of this dilemma?

Not unless we change our conception of God's exercise of power and of His intervention. The drama of Jesus challenges us to change these notions. God indeed intervened: He sent His son, who clearly showed us the power of his divine Father as benign and life-giving. When this did not succeed, He resorted to warning us about the grave consequences of our exercise of power: a

world full of violence. For all have *been* victimized and therefore all can rightfully demand retribution; but also all *have* victimized others and therefore they will rightfully become targets of retribution. When this still did not succeed but led to violence against the warner, God's supervening power revealed itself in strengthening an innocent human being to endure persecution, torture, unjust conviction and death without hate, without feelings of revenge, but with trust and hope and forgiveness. This, in fact, seems to me to be the miracle before the miracle of the resurrection: Jesus could love his enemies while they hated him. And again this divine intervention is not violently overwhelming, yet its power of love overcomes human resistance by subverting it, by proving it wrong in an ultimate, irreversible way, as Schwager explains:

> Whoever offers his life when under the attack of enemies makes an implicit statement about the tendencies of those who slay him. They feel they are threatened and seize upon preventive violence. But the nonviolent one shows clearly by his conduct that he is certainly no enemy; indeed, his loving surrender of his life reveals that though being perceived as attacking those who persecute and kill him, he wills only the good for them. [...] For in attacking, the persecutors always risk their own lives as well, whereas the nonviolent, by not retaliating, protects the life of his enemies. So the free act of the nonviolent one is more in accord with the actual will to life of the violent than the latter in their ostensible freedom. This self-giving aims at separating in the perpetrators of violence their deeper intention from their aggressive impulses and at strengthening and redirecting the former.... In this way we can somewhat clarify how Jesus' surrender of his life redeems sinners. Through his loving nonviolence he came nearer to his enemies and to all sinners than they are to themselves (Schwager 2005, end of chp. 3 = Schwager 2004, 122f.)

Jesus' ability to do so is due to the divine power that we rightly call all-encompassing. This power also raised him from death to life and that way corroborated his view of God and also his view of God's supervening omnipotence.

One may question, whether I really escaped the dilemma. Could God intervene violently? Absolutely speaking, He could.

But from Jesus' definitive revelation we know that He does not exercise His power in a violent way. The result of our analysis of the Drama of Jesus is: God's omnipotence is exercised in a non-violent, supervening way. Its direct exercise is the giving of life. When confronted with active human resistance, it becomes indirect, what we called supervening, enabling the faithful to subvert that kind of resistance non-violently. It becomes therefore invisible to the normal human view.[5] If this was the case even when His son was murdered, this will be so under all circumstances, for theologically the killing of the son of God is the ultimate sin. If God intervened violently, He would contradict His own self-revelation.

Is it conceivable that God intervenes violently and in doing so shows himself as benign? When we are certain as to who the good guys are and who the bad, we tend to affirm that. Yet, part of Jesus' message was to show that all human persons are also bad guys, that violent divine intervention, if it occurred, would hit all. And when we consider that, we become unsure.

And yet, what about theodicy? At least what about those people that suffer and in their suffering start to doubt God's love and power, and start to despair because of God's apparent silence and non-intervention?

I think we cannot answer their existential question with theoretical treatises. This would be arrogant, even cynical. If it is posed existentially and not theoretically, it can only be answered existentially, and only by God's life-giving power. When Jesus cried out his cry of forsakenness on the cross, he – like the victims of all times – did not immediately receive an answer. But he was granted the strength to keep his faith and trust. The thought that after the resurrection Jesus would recall his loneliness on the cross and ask his Father "Now tell me, why had you forsaken me back then?" simply makes no sense. It makes no sense because the existential situation that prompted it has been overcome and healed, in a sense it has been dissolved. In a similar way all victims of

human history may hope that their desperation is overcome and existentially dissolved, although we have no theoretical answer for their question.

Notes

1. The message of the first act certainly is condensed and shown most graphically in the so called parable of the Prodigal Son, which is foremost a parable about the merciful Father (cf. Luke 15:11-32)
2. As in Jesus' way to the cross, the person praying in Psalm 22 sees God as giving him over to death ("You have brought Me to the dust of death" v. 15), yet he never loses trust in God and never sees God as his enemy but rather evil human beings ("The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet" v. 16.), while God remains for him the giver of his life and the one has who so far provided him with security in Whom he therefore trusts again.
3. This is also in accordance with the fact that Jesus depicts his Father already in the first act as merciful to his enemies: "Jesus' radical demand on people to love their adversaries arose out of his conviction that God himself treats his enemies – sinners – graciously". (Schwager 1999, 36 with reference to Matt 5:43-47).
4. Cf. The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, Mt 18:23-35 esp. Mt 18:32f.: "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?" (According to Gnilka 1988, 145f. and 145 footnote 10 10,000 talents are the hugest sum conceivable, the talent being the largest coin. One talent was worth between 6,000 and 10,000 denarii, while 1 denarius was a day's wages. 10,000 talents thus amount to between 60 million and 100 million days' wages. If you calculate that for a six-day work-week this would amount to between 192,307 and 320,512 years' salaries (!). 100 denarii accordingly amount to 100 days' wages) and the Parable of the Talents, Mt 25:14-30 esp. 25:24f.. "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not own, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid,and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'" For further supportive arguments of this interpretation cf. Schwager 1999, 53-118.

5. I think that is already indicated in the episode of Elija at Mount Horeb. As the prophet stands there on the mountain, the Lord passes by in a way totally unexpected: "And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave" (1 Kings 19:12f.).

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Religion in the Emerging World Order

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Abstract

Our world witnesses life-denying and destructive tendencies of violence. In the following pages the author examines some of the expressions of this violence and suggests some orientations of the course religions must follow in this world. This paper does not refer to any particular religion but to all religions of the world including the primal religions. Religions cannot solve the problems of the world by themselves. However, they can bring about an attitudinal change in their followers, and this can go a long way in the direction of dismantling prejudices and motivating people to live in peace and harmony. Realizing the present situation of violence in which religions are also attributed with having a leading role, they must take active initiatives to resolve conflicts, to have tolerance towards each other, leading to respect and collaboration. Every religion stands for overcoming egoism and reaching out to others. This probably is the greatest contribution that religions can make to the world, if they succeed in making their followers abide by these principles. Egoism engenders violence, hatred, revenge and torture. In all this, repentance for the past is obligatory for most religions. Every religion must imbibe a cosmic consciousness and unity. In summary, religions are the promoters of an authentic way of human life, and this is their initial vision as well.

Keywords:

Violence, destruction, religion, cosmic consciousness, world-order, NGOs, economy, environment.

The world that we live in is a mixture of blessings and woes. Our world has many life-giving signs to offer, probably the most noteworthy of them all being the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948. This in turn has influenced most nations and religions in the world. As far as the

Catholic Church is concerned, Pope John XXIII incorporated these rights in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963). This was followed by Vatican II and the Synod of 1971 that popularized the notion of justice in the world society with its statement: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of proclaiming the gospel."[1]

Our world witnesses also life-denying and destructive tendencies of violence in every sector of human life and nature, in various forms. In the following pages we shall examine some of the expressions of this violence and in the context of this we shall suggest some orientations of the course religions must follow in this world. This paper does not refer to any particular religion but to all religions of the world including the primal religions. However, I do not bring in the various ideologies of our times, so that the focus remains on the religions as such.

I. THE WORLD ORDER

1. Political

The world is going through a paradigm shift with regard to its politics, economy and society. As far as the political situation is concerned, the end of the last century brought about great upheavals, changing the face of many nations. We saw the crumbling of the Berlin wall and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union as well as the Eastern block. We have not only not recovered from the shock, but are still witnessing the aftermath of some of these developments, such as the case of the terrorist attack on the Russian school in Beslan following the Chechen conflict.

The fall of the iron curtain was followed by the reunification of Germany. But we do not have the vision of a new world. World politics is guided not for peace, but for security and balance of power, by containing crises and, as far as possible, by avoiding

wars. This we saw in the policies of Henry Kissinger, for whom there were no permanent friends or permanent foes, but only permanent interests.[2] Kissinger in fact opposed any peace initiative with Vietnam.

The persistent pursuit of the American policy of a mixture of diplomacy and force has left Americans without credibility. The latest instance of this is the invasion of Iraq, which was described by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan as illegal and unacceptable.

The catastrophe of the first World War and the formation of the League of Nations could have induced a new world order, with a better form of relations between governments, nations and societies, thus avoiding the terrific experience of another war. However, the ideology of 'political realism,' i.e., the domination of humans by humans, would become the official policy of nations like the US, with the philosophy of "national interest." This in turn justified the naked aggression against Chile, Grenada, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and so on. This power politics with national interest is pushing the world to a unipolar world order.

On the other hand, it is political power, formal and informal, national and international, that shapes human progress and moulds the international community. Politics matters for people everywhere. All want to be free to determine their destinies, express their opinions and participate in the decisions that shape their lives.

Certainly, there is a greater appreciation of democracy in the world today as more nations open themselves to expanding political freedoms. Today 140 of the world's nearly 200 countries hold multiparty elections.[3] It is also true that several countries like Zimbabwe that took steps to democratize in the 1980s have reversed to authoritarianism and some of them have become harbingers of extremism and violence. The ignominious **9/11,** the ongoing human tragedy in Kashmir, etc., are some of the

expressions of this violence. Growing militarization makes poor nations poorer. The world context, characterized by unjust political and economic structures, prevents people from developing as children of God towards a global human community.

2. The Economic Situation

It has been generally believed that the poor nations of the world are poor because they belong to 'traditional societies' with their own rhythm of life and customs that have contributed to their economic dependence. Though there could be some truth in this, it does not explain the reality fully. Their situation is due also to the exploitation by others through unjust systems such as colonialism, lopsided trade, etc. The rich nations are rich partly because of their efforts and also because of the long-term capital build up that the unjust socio-economic-political system permitted.

The poorest nations, afflicted by a combination of malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, high birthrates, unemployment, low income, etc., are elbowed out of the order. Poverty makes many voiceless both nationally and internationally. The poorest nations are unable to produce a surplus over consumption of any commodity. This is against the backdrop of an ever-increasing population that exerts pressure on the available resources in these countries.

We have another situation where the nation concerned may have succeeded in producing a surplus of some commodity over their own needs, but cannot trade this surplus for the things they need nor can they take advantage of the world markets for their produce.

The economic disparity worldwide is appalling. The economic growth in the recent past has not helped to reduce the economic inequality within and among nations. While the already rich nations have witnessed rapid economic growth, we come across slow growth in other regions such as Africa and Asia. The world's richest 1% of people receive as much income as the poorest 57%. The richest 10% of the US population has an income equal to that

of the poorest 43% of the world. The income of the richest 25 million Americans is equal to that of almost 2 billion people in the poorest nations. The income of the world's richest 5% is 114 times that of the poorest 5%.[4]

The terminology of "the third world" has become a ubiquitous reality since the 1970s. Though the term is generally understood as referring to those nations which are not part of the industrialized developed nations under the US leadership nor the Eastern Block led by the former Soviet Union, the specific reality that distinguishes them is their economic marginality. Economic marginalization has meant separation from, and subordination to, the dominant industrial economies that have developed, especially in Europe and North America. They are more known for their supply of primary products as opposed to the industrialized nations who supply the industrial output. Thus at bottom is the question of underdevelopment.

These nations owe their economic marginalization to their colonialist background that in itself was guided by control and exploitation. We must remember that Japan, China and Turkey were the only countries that escaped direct European control. Even China had to bear the brunt partially after the Opium War of 1889. Colonial powers ensured the destruction of local industry. When the British came to India, there were cheaper goods. However, the British introduced export restrictions on Indian goods, and as they gained political control they destroyed the local industry by banning the production of these goods. It is said they went to the extent of permanently maiming the hands of thousands of weavers. The net result was that between 1815 and 1832 cotton exports from India to England fell thirteen times.[5] The British policy not only destroyed Indian industry but also led to massive unemployment and poverty. Lord Bentinck, the British Governor General in India, reported in 1835 that "the misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of India."[6] The percentage of the non-agricultural population in India decreased from 45% in

1800 to 26% by 1940. Thus India, on the way to becoming an industrial diversified economy, was reduced to the status of an under-developed poor nation under the weight of colonialism, and this is true of most former colonies.

No doubt, these colonies are now independent, but to a large extent there is a perpetuation of interests. In place of the former white bosses now we have the local guardians of a system that exists primarily for their own interests, as was the case in the colonial days. The economic development of the masses in itself is not their priority. They are always scheming ways to hang on to power as the means of guarding all sorts of self-interest. This in turn breeds corruption of untold dimensions, which again is depriving the masses of the right to development.

Our past theory and practice of development has left millions of people in starvation and despair. Certain estimates from the World Bank project about 800 million barely surviving in the southern hemisphere, with incomes insufficient to secure the basic needs of life. Most of these poor, both in Asia and Africa are in the rural areas. Four nations of Asia - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia – contain about two thirds of the world's poor.

One of the common problems that the nations of the South face is ensuring fair and stable prices for the products that they export, mostly primary goods, in the form of basic commodities like food or minerals – tea, coffee, tobacco, jute, copper, zinc, iron ore, etc. They also must be assured of their share in the markets of the North. These will position them better to develop their own economies in a just and equitable manner and earn the revenue to import the capital and technology necessary for their development. For instance, Zambia enjoyed a certain amount of financial and economic well-being in the 1970s. However, the collapse of copper prices in the late 70s left the Zambian economy in shambles.

For the industry in the South, access to the northern markets of their products is an essential condition to flourish. The home market is limited or too poor to absorb the increase in production.

For the South, industry has to flourish to pay the rising wages and achieve higher living standards. The North objects to this saying that the Southern goods are produced cheaper, and hence the products in the North will suffer. Unless the South exports to the North it cannot pay to the North for the imports. Today there is a great trade imbalance between the North and the South, which can be solved only through a fair import-export. The policy of protectionism adopted by the North, sometimes by the South too, disturbs fair trade and endangers the jobs of the developing countries.

Another aspect of the lopsided economic situation is the unstable currency exchanges. One of the drawbacks with regard to the monetary system today is that national currencies are used as international reserves. The Brandt Report in 1980 had suggested the creation of an international currency to be used for the clearance of outstanding balances as well as the international reserves.

3. Impact of Globalization

Any attempt to come to terms with the contemporary world situation and the challenges it presents, has to deal with the phenomenon of globalization. It crystallizes diverse trends and features. It is a sign of hope for many, while it has brought disaster to others. Globalization offers the scope to share the benefits of technological development with all. However, today it has come to be primarily a globalization of the market and capital. In the present world this has become unavoidable. With the development of the technological and communication facilities, national economies are rapidly becoming global ones. Capital, technology and the market are overcoming all national barriers.

Globalization of the market affects the poor nations and the poor within nations most adversely. They are further pushed to the outer rims of society with little opportunity for participation as they have neither any goods to sell nor the purchasing capacity. The liberalization policies imposed upon the poorer nations with

the inherent demands of scrapping quantitative restrictions edge out local products of the poor from the market. This is inevitable due to the fascination for imported goods. On the other hand, imported goods are cheaper due to subsidies, mass production, availability of the latest technology, etc. The local products, unable to compete with the imported ones, are totally dislodged in the long run. The international big businesses with their hegemony take their place in the name of privatization. Local and foreign monopolies gradually swallow all local initiatives and enterprises.

Economically, we are witnessing five major monopolies:

A. Technology: The developed nations have the technology and try to maintain their hold over it. The poorer nations cannot get hold of the latest technology which, in turn prevents them from developing as well as makes them spend money to buy the products.

B. Financial control: With globalization and the lifting of the market controls, the finances of the developing countries have become subject to the control of the rich nations with the new multinational and transnational companies, with little accountability to the countries concerned. These financial agencies run the world according to their designs.

C. Natural resources: In the name of a free market the natural resources of the poorer nations are looted and plundered, with no regard for justice. We are witnessing how even traditional goods such as neem, bhasmati rice, etc., are coming under the patents of the richer nations.

D. Monopoly of weapons of mass destruction.

E. Cultural invasion through mass media and communication.

These have created a new hierarchy of lording over the distribution of wealth and the world order. Most nations are silent spectators with little power to change the system.

The success of a global entry into the global economy depends

to a great extent on what we do within the nations. There have to be immense efforts domestically in expanding basic education and improving health care for the citizens. Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate, points out how Japan, which was a poor nation at the end of the 19th century, made great strides moving towards universal literacy. It was the prelude to its economic progress.[7]

The basic imperative is to improve the lives and freedoms of the people in the country. It is interesting to ask who are the people who benefit from economic transactions. What is required is that no effort be spared to distribute fairly the benefits of the global economy rather than allowing them to be monopolized by a few. For a poor, developing nation to flourish in the global economy, we have to ensure comprehensive progress that will benefit every section of the population within the nation. For the people of a poor nation to enter the global market, there has to be education and micro-credits. Thus globalization can be made a kingdom blessing for the poor of the world.

4. Environmental Disaster

Environment has become part of the dominant discourse. It is a major theme not only in international politics but also in local development.

Our age is experiencing an unprecedently high rate of resource utilization. The ever-expanding industrial development demands the steady flow of resources. But most of these industries are located in the West/North, though the resources are mostly in the South. This has led not only to the depletion of the natural resources of the South, but it has become the dumping ground for all the industrial waste.

Resources like land, forest, water, etc., traditionally controlled and used collectively by the communities, have come under the control of the multinational companies (MNCs) and the transnational companies (TNCs) in the course of colonialism and neocolonialism, leading to acute conflicts among the diverse

interests. The politically weak and the socially disorganized peoples are the greatest losers in these conflicts of interests. They are outside the market system, the greatest factor of globalization, as we saw.

Modern science and technology play a leading role in the utilization of the natural resources in a massive way, contributing to the conflict over the same resources. Hence, there is a need to redesign the use of these resources so that it would ensure social equality and ecological sustainability. Ecological movement, thus, is vitally linked to natural resources and the peoples' right to survival, especially in countries like India, where these resources are already getting depleted, partly due to indiscriminate use of them for the survival needs of the mass of the population and partly because of the massive industrial use of them. The introduction of resource and energy intensive production technologies leading to the economic growth of a minority, leaving the vast majority helpless with regard to their survival, is the acute problem that we encounter. This has given rise to uneven economic development and environmental conflicts in India and elsewhere. Indian civilization had been sensitive to the natural ecosystem that was supported for years till the arrival of the indiscriminate exploitation of these resources under the colonial masters. Unfortunately this same tendency is continued even after independence.

As an example we could take the marine ecology. The waters of the seas and the marine resources were considered to be humankind's common possession. This worked well until the arrival of modern technology. Today irreparable damage is done to marine productivity by the indiscriminate use of technology. Not only are the marine biodiversity and marine productivity affected by the oft-occurring oil spills or by the chemicals carried into the oceans by the rivers, which one time were the sources of food for marine life, but also other interventions like deep-sea trawling and bottom-sea trawling, are all leading to the situation of non-renewable sea

resources. Mother sea is gradually incapacitated to provide for human needs. This affects also the traditional fisherfolk, whose livelihood was taken care of by the sea with sustainable fishing techniques.

In short, today we come across two types of conflicts over the use of the natural resources of land, water and forests[8]:

A. The diversion of resources from sustenance needs to the demands of the market generates conflicts between commercial interests, either national or international and people's survival.

B. The same diversion of resources from nature's economy of essential ecological process to the market economy of commodity transactions, gives rise to ecological conflicts.

Here we see how justice is interrelated with sustainability. The poor are marginalized as they are deprived of the traditionally available natural resources. Financial investments and technology are the two major factors in this process, and this in turn invites privatization as the government often does not have either of them. Naturally MNCs and TNCs, with technology and intense resource development, are invited, paving the way for the local resources increasingly moving out of control of the local communities and the national governments into the hands of international financial institutions controlled by the same MNCs and TNSs of the rich nations who provide the aid and the capital for the development.

5. Religious Context

Colonialism saw the period of the dominance of Western Christianity in the world. However, that scenario is fast disappearing. Today we see the rapid revival of traditional religions and cultures in every part of the world. This has often led to violent polarization between believers in different religions. Religions with a fundamentalistic sway are becoming a threat to the future of humanity. Analysts have pointed out how most of the modern wars are waged in the name of ethnicity and religion.

Most people are tending to set aside religion as a leading factor

to hold modern society together. Its role is increasingly finding itself at the periphery. At any rate it is not to any one particular religion that the world looks but to religions in the plural. Dogmatic differences and claims of exclusivism can fan religious conflicts. We are no longer living in a world situation where one could make claims such as "a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."[9] These claims are not unique to the Christians, rather, most religions tend to hold their own uniqueness. Hopes of bringing all peoples of the earth into one religion and claiming one's own religion to be the only valid religion are, undoubtedly, against the spirit of universal peace and harmony.

II. ROLE OF RELIGIONS

At the same time it has to be admitted that we cannot ignore the role of religions in the talk about peace, tolerance, democracy, etc. It would be unfortunate to leave aside religion altogether from these fields as religion is an integral part of most people, more so in Asia. In the general expectation of a new world order that is prevalent everywhere, in the midst of violence and war, injustice, hunger and untimely death, political interferences and invasions, religions, despite their past failures and frequent abandoning of their originary vision, can play a healing role. True, religions alone cannot solve the problems of the world, as they are far more complex. However, the role of religions along with other factors cannot be underestimated.

The problems of violence of any sort, hunger, starvation, sickness, exploitation, marginalization, etc., suggest the need for a new world order, a new worldview. On the other hand, all religions contain elements of peace and justice and profess that they are for human liberation. Just to quote a few examples from the scriptures of some religions:

"So the son of Pandu beheld the world with its myriad divisions standing together as one in the body of the god of gods" (*Bhagavad Gita* II.11).

"A man is not just if he carries a matter of violence; no, he who distinguishes both right and wrong, who is learned and leads others, not by violence but justly and righteously, and who is guarded by the Law (Dharma) and intelligent, is called just" (*Dharmapada* 19/256-257).

"If the gentleman forsakes benevolence, in what way can he make a name for himself? The gentleman never deserts benevolence, not even for as long as it takes to eat a meal. If he hurries and stumbles, one may be sure that it is in benevolence that he does so" (Analects 4:5).

"We created man. We know the promptings of his soul, and we are closer to him than the vein of his neck" (Quran 50: 5/119).

1. Respect for Human Dignity

We are witnessing a sort of global restlessness where the peoples of different nations of the globe are going through a process of consciousness awakening. They are becoming more and more aware of their dehumanized existence and are clamouring for their rightful place in the respective states and within the family of nations.

The above quotes show how religions subscribe to the dignity of every human being. This dignity demands that humans are not robbed of their opportunities and participation, that their rights are not discarded. Every human person, irrespective of race, profession, gender, age, physical or mental situation, religion, political view, etc., should be accorded an inalienable dignity. The leading social factor of our times is this regard for human dignity where all religions can collaborate. There can be no true peace and elimination of violence without justice and acceptance of the dignity of every human person.

Humans are not objects of commercialization or exploitation, but subjects of rights. This in turn demands that every human being, possessing reason and conscience, should behave in a genuinely human fashion, to do good to others and avoid inflicting

evil on others. Religions must make every effort to ensure that every human being, anywhere in the world, is treated humanly. Religions must popularize the golden rule: what you wish done to yourself do to others in every sphere of human life. This, as Hans Kung has argued, implies a culture of respect for all life and non-violence, a culture of solidarity and a just economic order; a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness, and above all a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.[10] Every religion must rise up and exhibit a global responsibility measuring up to the global problems and dangers.

The religions of the world must unite around the paradigm of humanity, the paradigm of the human cry for the "divine future" (Moltmann). Judged, at least from the Asian context, the need of the hour is not that religions must become prophets of a new God, but prophets of the human person. We in Asia do not lack a sense of the Transcendent. What we lack is a sense of the human person, the neighbour. Most of the world problems that we outlined earlier in fact, are, somehow, expressions of this lack of sensitivity for the human person.

Without the space for participation, and a culture of social justice, we cannot expect to have a control of emotions and to build a social order of peace and interrelatedness. Every religion, somehow, underlines the interrelatedness of human beings and the option for peace. True, one-sided interpretations of scriptures and the imagined or real threat to self-identity can drive religions away from these ideals, and they can become agents of dissipation and war. In the prevailing conditions of the world today religions must collaborate to weave a world of mutual understanding and relatedness leading to peace.

Human alienation from fellow humans is the significant problem of our times rather than human alienation from the divine. Rather, when the relationship at the horizontal level is taken care of, the vertical level will follow naturally. Religions are religions only when they exist for human well-being. Religions have not only to cater

to an otherworldly salvation, but must also give rise to a life-style that will lead to universal peace and justice. For this religions will have to become agents of transformation of the situations of death that exist in the world, into life-giving situations.

2. Bury Differences & Collaborate

Each religion must place the interests of humanity above its own interests. This presupposes that all religions give up any design of replacing other religions, without compromising the individual's right to follow the religion of his/her choice. Religions must look for what unites them, what they have in common rather than stressing the differences. It is laudable how Vatican II reminds Catholics that they have a common origin and a common destiny with the followers of other religions (*Nostra Aetate* 1).

Another point to be emphasized is that many religions have common roots. Whatever might have been the past relationship among these religions, today's world context calls for the collaboration of these religions. Religious groups like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, etc., have to learn to appreciate one another, realizing their common threads. They have to collaborate for a better world which is the ideal pursuit of all religions. All these should pave the way for mutual trust and the removal of prejudices and suspicions among religions.

Ours is an age of knowledge. In this age the acquisition and application of knowledge is the most important source of life and progress. In this context religions must take as a sign of the times the challenge to gain more knowledge about other religions and to collaborate with them. The followers of each religion in any part of the world must be open to gain more knowledge, not only of other religions, but also of what fellow religionists of one's own religion in the rest of the world are thinking about other religions. This will enable them to overcome the temptations of narrow mindedness and extreme conservatism in the face of other religions.

Religious knowledge must no longer be the monopoly of religious leaders alone, but ordinary people must be able to have a deeper understanding of other religions along with one's own religion. This, in turn, will encourage greater cooperation among the followers of different religions. There can be no survival of religions without the collaboration of all believers. Our world is threatened by a clash of religious civilizations. In this context we have to realize that there can be no peace in the world without peace among religions. "There will be no peace between civilizations without a peace between religions. And there will be no peace between religions without a dialogue between the religions," observes Hans Küng.[11] Part of this dialogue demands also that each religion re-examine its mission of converting others into itself. Though each religion has the right to be practised, and thus to be present in any place, every religion must refrain from advocating itself as the only valid religion and trying to convert all into itself with the claim that only it can serve as the vehicle of salvation. Religions must recognize that each religion has its own inner beauty, though all can learn from each other and be enriched by others. Hence, religions must try to complement each other and work to live in harmony. True, the individual should also have the right to follow the religion of his/her choice based on the experience derived from the life of the followers of the respective religions.

3. Towards a Just World-Order

Today we come across frequent talk about the need for a pluricentric world as opposed to a unipolar world. This presupposes increased pluralism in the world. This implies also collaboration in the global civil society. Not only must religions collaborate among themselves, but they must also advocate pluralism in the international systems and mechanisms leading to increased participation by the less privileged nations of the world. There are anomalous situations, for instance, in the World Trade Organization, where every member country has a seat and a vote.

But the actual decision-making is heavily determined by the largest and richest countries. Similarly, the different UN bodies too are gravitating towards the powerful countries in their decision making. In all such cases religions should play an intercessory role to influence nations to have a just and participative world order.

Our earth has enough resources to feed all. Yet the current world order enables nations with less percentage in population to consume the lion's share of the resources leaving others in poverty and inhuman conditions. If this is to be changed, there has to be a change in the very order of the world by transferring food, technology, tools, resources, etc., to the poor nations. But the reality is that the past colonial world continues to take away the resources from the poor countries to support its own industrial production. To rectify these distortions, religions, and more so Christianity, can exert their influence on these nations, also through the United Nations.

As the renowned Brandt Report has pointed out: "The world is now a fragile and interlocking system, whether for its people, its ecology, or its resources. Many individual societies have settled their inner conflicts by accommodation, to protect the weak and to promote the principles of justice, becoming stronger as a result. The world too can become stronger by becoming a just and humane society. If it fails in this, it will move towards its own destruction."[12] If religions cannot help the many who are poor, they can neither save the few who are rich. Religions must not only advocate aid, but must lobby for fair trade and that the nations of the North refrain from policies that make life more difficult for the people in the South.

George Thompson, a former regional commissioner of the European Economic Community, remarked how for an industrial worker in Hamburg to subsidize a Bavarian farmer was a fairly acceptable proposition, but that for an individual worker in Hamburg to subsidize a farmer in Africa required an immense imaginative leap.[13] In this regard religions today can help their

adherents to be more sensitive to the more unfortunate people elsewhere. The guiding principle is not so much charity as justice. In order to conquer poverty and hunger and to create a more just and effective international economic system, the Brant Report advocates fundamental structural changes in the market in which "the developing countries are suppliers - of commodities, of manufacturers and of labour and in which they are customers – for capital and technology. Such changes are also required in the mechanisms and institutions which generate and distribute international finance, investment and liquidity."[14] In this, religions are motivated not solely in a transition from poverty to well-being but also of a greater human dignity, security, justice and equity.

The markets of the globalized world will not take care of the basic needs of the poor, primary health care and education. In this religions will be able to offer their help to the government. Through this, equal opportunities will be created. This will not happen by trickle down theories. Equal opportunities are to be given. Religions have a duty to create social consciousness among the non-poor. The poor are poor because they are denied the fruit of their labour and the product of their creativity. They lack the political power to challenge the prevailing practices of economic and social exploitation. We need power shifts. Contemporary analyses and investigations of the power groups that sustain poverty situations can be supplied by religions.

As opposed to a competitive and marginalizing globalization, we need cooperative and mutually inter-dependent globalization. This would lead to rectify inequality and exclusion. Cooperative globalization can stimulate the notion of global citizenship.[15] While the world's largest corporations account for 25% of the global economy, they employ only one-twentieth of one percent of the world's population.[16] In this context what we need are micro enterprises that can take place at the margin of the market economy, providing an income for an increasing number of people in the South. This requires micro-credits. Once again religions

must interpret the signs of the times in this concern for a just household, a just economy.

Part of creating a new world order is the impact of religions over globalization. In fact, globalization has brought a new perspective to religions. Hitherto self-contained and more or less homogeneous religious space has become opened up leading to increased interaction with others and causing more porous religious boundaries. Globalization must spur religions to seek the true *oikoumene*, the unity of humankind and of the whole inhabited earth with diversity. This vision of an ecumenical community must promote participation, equity, accountability and mutual interdependence. The challenge of globalization for religions is to see that globalization enhances the possibility of having fullness of life for all.

4. Religions as Non-Governmental Organizations

We are witnessing the phenomenon of a globalization from below through the efforts of the numerous Non-Governmental Organizations, with their protests and positive steps. In this scenario religions can assume more and more the role of NGOs and CSOs (Civil Society Organizations), without sacrificing their specific service to their adherents. They can provide an alternative forum and they can lobby and critique, confront and reflect on the world situation and problems.

Religions can work towards a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of the global society, with growing interconnectedness in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres. Thus they can usher in a global civil society, the space where people and transnational entities debate and negotiate the rules of their relationships and pursue accountability for those rules.[17] Religions are social and historical expressions of the human search to relate to the Transcendent and are associated with the socio-economic and political power relations. Hence it is difficult to make a sharp dichotomy between the religious and the secular.

In modern times Mahatma Gandhi offers us an example of combining religion with political action.

5. Violence and Religions

In a world in which armed conflicts claim two lives every minute, violence has become something normal and endemic and not an aberration anymore yet except for some isolated reactions we persistently ignore the whole question. Violence has so become almost the face of the earth that we do not notice it any more though manifest in numerous ways such as the violence against the poor, women, children, the unborn, nature, the powerless, and so on. Undernourishment, starvation, unemployment, dehumanizing situations, are all the varied faces of violence. The Latin American Bishops' Conference, Medellin 1978 qualified Latin America as the continent of violence.[18] I am inclined to think most of Africa and Asia and several parts of Europe also merit the sobriquet. What can religions do in the face of such all-pervading violence? It is not a question of pacifism but of enabling all to face issues squarely with honest and straightforward questions and actions. Non-violent action, as Martin Luther King described, is a crisis force whose aim is to bring a community to confront issues that it would rather avoid.[19]

Admitting that the existing religious and cultural plurality is fragile with a high potential for conflict, religions must make all out efforts aimed at shaping positive relationships between themselves. There has to be a culture of dialogue between religions. Religions cannot remain spectators of violence, far less perpetrators of it. They have to take active measures to overcome it. Religions have to speak out against all unjust and oppressive structures and violations of human rights in any form. Religions have to get actively involved with the victims and the perpetrators of violence, affirming a spirituality of non-violence and reconciliation. Each religion must cooperate with others in the resistance against the exploitation of religion in the interests of power struggles. Konrad Raiser suggests that, as opposed to the theory of just war, today religions must advocate a "just peace."[20]

Thus religions must become instruments to create a world without violence and must spare no energy to build up a culture of peace. This is the challenge to religions in the new century. In this the structures of religions have an immense responsibility. Not infrequently, the followers of different religions are open to peace among religions and to accepting each other. However, these efforts are not sufficiently encouraged or supported by the official structures in the name of upholding certain traditionally held positions. This in turn becomes an obstacle to peace among religions, and thus to peace in the world.

Concluding Remarks

Religions can work towards a common ethic in the line of "The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions"[21] that can form the basis for effecting an awareness about the lopsided economy, the disastrous environmental situation, the dangers to world peace, the need for the respect for every human person and the partnership between men and women. All religions must realize how "the world is in agony ... peace eludes us ... the planet is being destroyed ... neighbours live in fear ... women and men are estranged from each other ... children die."[22]

All religions must condemn poverty as well do everything possible to get it eliminated from the face of the earth, and work towards global solidarity and relatedness. Religions have to work for a better world order where the dignity of every human person is accepted and human rights are defended. In that world order freedom, justice, peace and ecological equilibrium become non-negotiable. Thus, religions can offer a vision to live in peace and justice with each other and with the earth.

Religions cannot solve the problems of the world by themselves. However, they can bring about an attitudinal change in their followers, and this can go a long way in the direction of dismantling prejudices and motivating people to live in peace and harmony. Realizing the present situation of violence in which religions are also attributed with having a leading role, they must take active

initiatives to resolve conflicts, to have tolerance towards each other leading to respect and collaboration. Every religion stands for overcoming egoism and reaching out to others. This probably is the greatest contribution that religions can make to the world, if they succeed in making their followers abide by these principles. Egoism engenders violence, hatred, revenge and torture. In all this, repentance for the past is obligatory for most religions. Religions must become channels of a new vision that in no way tolerate violence. We need a transformation from violence to peace, from hatred to love, from selfishness to other centredness, from hoarding to sharing, and from seeking prestige to serving. The world cannot be changed unless individuals are changed and individuals can be changed when religions go through a self-transformation in their vision. Every religion must imbibe a cosmic consciousness and unity. In summary, religions are the promoters of an authentic way of human life, and this is their initial vision as well.

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The Creative Role of Religion in the Emergence of a Sustainable World-Order

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Introduction

"The world stands in need of liberation." So goes a popular song. In this article, I want to show that our contemporary society is basically violent (far more than needed and can be tolerated). Violence on this scale, left to itself, threatens to destroy all life on the precious planet. Thus the present world-order is not sustainable.. I argue that religious impulses can prevent a catastrophic annihilation of human race and lead to a "re-birthing of creation" or a new world-order. Though religions have failed many a times, I shall argue that religions have that enabling potential.

I begin the article by asserting that violence to some extent is inevitable. But the danger confronting us today is that ours has become an inherently violent society. This is followed by some theoretical considerations based on classical authors like Arnold Toynbee and a contemporary scholars like Martin Rees and Nick Bostrom. Then I study some of the positive contributions of religion and trace signs of hope for the emergence of a new and viable world-order.

Since this paper considers major fields of human life, I am constrained to be selective in the choice of arguments. Keeping in mind the main thrust of the paper, I have been forced to leave out many nuanced articulations of the arguments.

1. Normal Violence is inevitable to some extent

A dispassionate look at nature reminds us that to some extent

violence is necessary and even healthy. As discerned by Charles Darwin, nature seems to favour "the survival of the fittest." Competition for food and living space is part of life. Killing for food and fighting for mates are part of the ecological circle which enables nature to continue the cycle of birth, growth, death and decay. We see in nature that death of one leads to the birth of another.[1]

So biologists see the emergence and progressive evolution of life as a result of the "struggle for survival" that is inherent in nature. Some of the contemporary scholars go to the extent of postulating that life is the quest of the "selfish genes" to perpetuate itself![2] Other respected scholars like Sigmund Freud and Lorenz Konrad maintain that there is an instinctual drive towards violence and death in every living being (Grossman 2004).[3] Seen from this perspective, limited violence and death is a natural process for individuals, for society and even for the species.

Even then, right from the beginning of the human race, there have been human attempts to counter even such natural violence. Jainism with its meticulous observance of *ahimsa* is a typical case. Vegetarianism, which is becoming popular today, is also a conscious attempt to reduce the quantum of violence and foster respect and reverence for life.

On the whole we may generalize and say that limited violence is necessary for ecological balance and the survival of life on the planet. This may be traced from the way life organizes and extends itself.

2. The Danger Today: Inherently Violent Society

This type of a relationship continued even after the emergence of the human beings. But with the introduction of agriculture, the equation changed drastically. As demonstrated by Daniel Quinn[4] the introduction of agriculture and the possibility of preventing others from accessing the food, humans have become an exception to the normal laws of life. Humans stand out of the law of life and

use violence (against nature and against themselves) as an inherent weapon against life.

Inherent Violence

There are three aspects that agricultural humans did that are never done in the rest of the (animal) community and these are all fundamental to the present civilisational system.

First, they exterminated their competitors, which is something that never happens in nature. In nature, animals will defend their territories and their kills, and they invade their competitors' territories and pre-empt their kills. If competitors hunted each other down just to make them dead, then there would be no competitors. There would be simply one species at each level of competition: The Strongest. But that is how the world today is!

Second, they systematically destroyed the food of the competitors (animals) to make room for their own. But the rule in the natural community is to take what you need and leave the rest alone.

Third, they deny their opponents access to food. But in the natural community the rule is: "You may deny your competitors access to what you are eating, but you may not deny them access to food in general." This trend has continued in today's scientific advancement and economic capitalism and we are experiencing the full flowering of such an attitude to life.

Such a world view has led to:

- An abundance and material prosperity for an elite few.
- Mass Hunger and Poverty for the majority.
- Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) with which the elite can control the rest.

The abundant luxury of a few, coupled with unbridled technological progress[5] has been miraculous. Human comfort, convenience and longevity of unimaginable magnitude has dawned on us. If we remember that Wright Brothers invented the airplane

just 100 years ago, we know that the revolution in transportation is of incredible magnitude. Similarly, when we realize that computers came to the scene about 20 years ago, that internet about 10 years and mobile phone about 5 years ago, we can imagine the rapidity and entrepreneurship inherent in these innovations. So we are right in asking: What would the next decade bring us? Marvellous innovations are imminent, especially in the field of Biotechnology and Nanotechnology.[6]

At the same time, it is evident that such enormous material and technological benefits have not touched the quality of life of the majority of people in the world. This has led to large scale hunger and deprivation, giving rise to violence of different sorts. "The spiral of violence" spoken of by Archbishop Helder Camera has grown out of the fertile grounds of poverty and exploitation. Terrorism, which is a recent phenomenon is also the result of this tragic scenario. We just have not evolved a moral consciousness in consonance with our technological growth, that could enable all humans to live in modest abundance and prosperity.[7]

Along with the increase in destitution and exploitation, production of weapons of mass destruction has been on the increase. Other possible causes leading to the destruction of the human race are alarmingly escalating. Some of them may be enumerated: Breaking out of a nuclear War, Nuclear Contamination, Terrorist Violence, Chemical Pollution, Environmental Disaster, World War III, Lack of Population/Over-Population, Violence and Revolution, Genetic Manipulation (of humans), Chemical/Biological Warfare, Escape of New Virus, Bacteria from Laboratories, Mass Lethargy and Indifference, Seeking of Immediate Gratification, Philosophical indifference.[8]

Therefore, violence has become an intrinsic part of our life at the social, cultural and even religious levels. Ignoring the problem (we live as if the issue of violence is not serious enough) is not going to be helpful. The mass genocides in countries like Sudan, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the state of Gujarat can be seen from this perspective.

As humans, we refuse to see the side-effects ("collateral damages") of technological advancements. We refuse to look at the presence of the abject poverty and inhuman suffering of the millions of humans around us. What we like to forget is the fact these very technological marvels threatens to devour all of us. Unlimited technological progress, unbridled by our moral consciousness, seems to be leading us to our own self-annihilation. We prefer to remain oblivious of this situation.

To sum up: Humans have been consistently killing other species for their own apparent betterment. Humans have been consistently killing their own species for the lopsided betterment of a few. Unlike in the past, when they could never have destroyed the whole humanity, today we have the technological know-how and the actual possibility of total self-destruction.

Case of Meiwes

In this context an untypical case serves as illustration of the situation of our present society. Armin Meiwes, a middle-aged computer technician in Germany, killed and ate Bernd Juergen Brandes after posting an advertisement on the internet asking for a willing victim in 2001. Meiwes, who was jailed in January for killing and eating the flesh of a willing victim, is already the focus of a rock song and a film script. He has now signed over the media rights of his case to a production company in the city of Hamburg (to the Hamburg-based production firm Stampfwerk). Stampf said he had negotiated for nine months with Meiwes and his attorney Harald Ermel before winning their agreement to give Stampfwerk "the exclusive rights to the journalistic treatment of the case". The hard rock band Rammstein has written a song about Meiwes called "Mein Teil", or "My Part".[9]

Without being judgemental, it may be noted that both the parties involved in this episode are well-educated people. They earned enough and lived comfortable lives. But there was something in both of them that led to his inhuman, barbaric act which is hardly imaginable. What is worse is, I believe, a society, which indirectly

encourages such bizarre cases! In this incident, it is obvious that death and cannibalism pays! Do such malicious deaths really pay? Are we as a society capable of dealing with such scenario?

3. Violent Death of Today's Civilization or that of Humanity

After having studied the violent scenario in very general terms, I wish to explore some theoretical possibilities and apply them to our society. For this purpose I take first a classical author, Arnold Toynbee and his followers. This is followed briefly by the study of some contemporary authors including the Oxford scholar Nick Bostrom.

Arnold Toynbee

Arnold Joseph Toynbee (April 14, 1889 - October 22, 1975) was a British historian whose ten-volume classical analysis of the rise and fall of civilizations, *A Study of History*, 1934 - 1961 (also known as *History of the World*) was very popular in its time. The theory elaborated in *A Study of History* was that of challenge-response as applied to a *civilization*, taken as a unit. In the *Study of History*, an investigation into the growth, development, and decay of civilizations, the problems of history, are considered in terms of cultural groups rather than nationalities. When a civilization responds to challenges, it grows. When it fails to respond to a challenge, it enters its period of decline.

The classic treatise is a comparative study of 26 civilizations in world history, analyzing their genesis, growth and disintegration. For Toynbee, a "civilization is a movement and not a condition, a voyage and not a harbour."[10] According to Toynbee's hypothesis, the failure of a civilization to survive was the result of its "inability to respond to moral and religious challenges, rather than to physical or environmental challenges." The main thesis of the work is that the well-being of a civilization depends on its ability to respond successfully to challenges, human and environmental. Of the 26 civilizations studied, according to Toynbee, only one—Western

Latin Christendom—is currently alive, and perhaps even this is in decline.[11] He has had considerable influence on modern attitudes toward history, religion, and international affairs.

He has been criticized for arbitrary generalizations, factual errors, and overemphasizing the regenerative force of religion. Toynbee helped to write and edit *A Survey of International Affairs* and produced works on a multitude of historical topics. His theory was criticized in that it emphasizes religion over other aspects in the big picture of civilizations. This is similar to the present day theory of *Clash of Civilizations* put forward by Samuel Huntington. Toynbee has influenced Oswald Spengler, although Toynbee saw his own views as more scientific and empirical than Spengler's.

He is emphatic that "civilizations die from suicide, not by murder." So it is primarily the inner dynamics and contradictions that are responsible for the demise of a civilisation. It is insightful to note that Toynbee claims that "Civilizations in decline are consistently characterised by a tendency towards standardization and uniformity" (Toynbee 2005) Regarding our own contemporary civilization, Toynbee asserts that "We have been God-like in our planned breeding of our domesticated plants and animals, but we have been rabbit-like in our unplanned breeding of ourselves."[12] Further he laments the fact that we have not been able to fill our leisure with productive and creative enterprises. "To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization" (Huntington 2005)

After analyzing the situation of our contemporary culture, Toynbee concludes: "The human race's prospects of survival were considerably better when we were defenceless against tigers than they are today when we have become defenceless against ourselves." At the same time he gives us some hope. "I do not believe that civilizations have to die because civilization is not an organism. It is a product of wills." Again the responsibility for the continuation or the demise of civilisation is laid on us. "As human beings, we are endowed with freedom of choice, and we cannot

shuffle off our responsibility upon the shoulders of God or nature. We must shoulder it ourselves. It is our responsibility."[13] Are we capable of shouldering this responsibility?

Oswald Spengler and Samuel Huntington

Oswald Spengler (May 29, 1880 - May 8, 1936) was a German philosopher and mathematician. His work *The Decline of the West* argues that the development of civilizations follows a recognizable cyclical pattern. He was influenced by Toynbee and Georg Henrik von Wright in his views about our society. Spengler was a pivotal influence on Francis Parker Yockey, who wrote *Imperium* as a sequel to *The Decline of the West.* Yockey called Spengler "The Philosopher of the Twentieth Century."[14] *The Decline of the West* [15] is a two-volume work, the first volume of which was published in the summer of 1918. Spengler revised this volume in 1922 and published the second volume, subtitled *Perspectives of World History* in 1923. The book includes the idea of Islam and Greeks being Magian[16] and the Western civilization being Faustian, and according to theories we are now living in the winter time of the Faustian civilization (Spengler 2004).

Samuel Phillips Huntington (born April 18, 1927) is a political scientist known for his analysis of the relationship between the military and the civil government, his investigation of *coup d'etats*, and his thesis that the central political actors of the 21st century will be civilizations rather than nation-states. In 1993, Huntington ignited a major debate in international relations with the publication in the journal *Foreign Affairs* of an extremely influential and often-cited article entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?" Huntington later expanded that article into a book, published in 1996, entitled *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.*

The article and the book articulate his theory of a multi-civilizational world headed for conflict. In his writings, he is critical of both Western and non-Western behavior, accusing both of at times of being hypocritical and civilization-centric. He also warns that Western nations may lose their predominance if they fail to recognize the nature of this brewing tension. He asserts modestly:

"It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future." At the same time he is self-critical of the Western civiliztion: "The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do."

Critics call *Clash of Civilizations* a covert way to legitimize aggression by the US-led West against the Third World, in order to keep the latter "in check", that is, preventing their economic development. The latest book by Huntington, *Who Are We: The Challenges to America's National Identity*, was released in May 2004. The subject is the meaning of American national identity and the possible threat posed to it by large-scale Latino immigration, which Huntington warns could "divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages". Like *The Clash of Civilizations*, this book has also stirred controversy, and some have accused Huntington of xenophobia.

In spite of these criticisms, it is evident that these authors have drawn our attention to the possible collapse of our civilization mainly due to inner contradictions.

Contemporary Scholars

Following the lead given by these classical authors, some eminent contemporary authors like Sir Martin Rees predicts the end for humanity! Sir Martin Rees, Britain's Royal Astronomer, has calculated that in the last century, we have increased our chances of an apocalypse from 20% to 50%. Rees' recent book *Our Final Hour*, is full of dire predictions about our future In the same vein, Ray Kurzweil[17] gave 50% of probability for humanity

surviving the next 100 years. Again, Bill Joy, Cofounder and Chief Scientist of Sun Microsystems, wrote a famous article: "Why the future doesn't need us" (Joy, 2004).[18]

Similary, Nick Bostrom and Rees wonder if philosophy alone can predict humanity's fate. Specifically, both Bostrom and Rees have contemplated the Doomsday Argument as elucidated by Brandon Carter and John Leslie. In a nutshell, this argument suggests that we shouldn't assume that our current place in the world is special, and that in all likelihood we are closer to the end than the beginning. Doomsday Argument is based on theoretical and probabilistic calculations. Nick Bostrom concludes his analysis of the Doomsday argument: "So although the Doomsday argument contains an interesting idea, it needs to be combined with additional assumptions and principles (some of which remain to be worked out) before it can be applied to the real world. In all likelihood, even when all details are filled in, there will be scope for differing opinions about our future. Nonetheless, a better understanding of observational selection effects will rule out certain kinds of hypotheses and impose surprising constraints on any coherent theorizing about the future of our species and about the distribution of observers in the universe" (Bostrom 2004).[19]

Given the fact that violence has become an integral and irresistible part of our human society the question that we can legitimately ask is: With the collapse of our civilization or world-order, will the whole of human race perish?[20] Do we really and realistically stand a chance? How can we determine our collective future?[21] Who determines our common destiny?

4. Towards a New World Order: The Positive Contributions of Religion

In spite of the bleak scenario, painted above, I have faith in the goodness of humanity and the nobility of individual hearts. This is what makes me hopeful. This is the source of our collective religious wisdom and common mystical experience.

What the Christians call "The Kingdom of God," the Hindus name "Ramarajya" or the Marxian "Classless Society," I believe are the deepest expression of the collective human utopia: a archetype in Jungian terms. Therein lies the values of equality, fraternity, liberty and the vision for the fullness of life, love, consciousness (Sat-cit-ananda). The fullness of life that every religion proclaims (John 10:10) is the souce from which wells up the hope for humanity. If Jesus is the Ultimate Eschaton it is an inaugurated eschatology that we as Christians live. Therefore, the perennial religious Dream for a New Jerusalem, a new earth and new heavens is the motivating force in ushering in a new humanity. I do believe that only within the framework of such religious visions and values can a new world spring forth! In such a world, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent— its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord" (Is 65: 25).

There have been heated debates on the role religion plays in aggravating violence. Here, I overlook this negative aspect of religion in order to focus on what religion and religious groups do to counter violent tendencies and to create a human society that is viable, holistic and integrated, where respect for others and life fosters a world of peace and joy.

I also believe that the only agent that can meaningfully propel and guide the progress of technology is religion. Therefore religious insights and visions alone can usher in a new world free of such brutal violence. Only such religious values can create a society of joy, peace and prosperity. Some of the salient religious or mystical insights that could enable the creation of such a new world order are:

1. No Other Gods:[22] Only genuine mysticism can free us from our instinctual drive for worshipping other Gods. We tend to create gods that suit us, gods in our own likeness. We are inclined to fashion gods with our own hands or intellect that fit our own expectations and fancies. But the true God tells us that He/She

cannot be manipulated by our physical, emotional or intellectual powers. Only when we can bow down before the Ultimate (Other) can we abandon ourselves and in the process foster forgiveness, fondness, creativity.

Further, religious vision frees us from the need to be a master. It pleads for self-mastery (mastery over ego) rather than mastery over matter (technology), people (authoritarianism) and even life (genetics).

2. Repent and Change Your Hearts: Every religion pleads for a change of heart or perspective. We cannot keep ourselves at the centre of the universe. Going against **hubris** inherent in the human heart (Tower of Babel), religions urge us to live a life of self-abandonment, where life is cherished, accepting our limitations gracefully. Further, religions help us to realise that we are not responsible fully for the mess we are in, and that we are not the sole master in the universe. There is another power, who is equally responsible for the running of the universe. When we can change our hearts and turn ourselves to others (and to God), we are in a better position to bring about the Kingdom of God.

3. Forgive without Forgetting: Only religions can inspire us to forgive those who have done harm intentionally. Without such unselfishness forgiveness, the spiral of violence can never end. Common sense may dictate forgiveness for pragmatic purpose. A forgiveness that stems from genuine sense of the dependency on an Ultimate can be healing and bring about reconciliation and freedom from violence.

4. Loving the Enemies: the religious imperative to love the enemies and do good to those who are against us cannot be explained rationally. But such a sense of genuine concern provides us with an authentic space for reconciliation and freedom from violence.

5. Sin and Conversion: Genuine religions enable us to acknowledging evil designs and our own sinfulness without becoming paralyzed. The presence of evil in today's world and in

our own hearts cannot be denied. Religions help us to understand injustice and feel with the victims without becoming cynical. They help us to experience pain without being bitter. Religious vision provides us with both the inner resource and the external commitment for bringing about a radical U-turn, so that we can change our way of life. "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Is. 2:4).

6. Anticipating the (Glorious) Future in the Present: Religious insights also urge us to understand the past meaningfully; to acknowledge the present gratefully and to anticipate the future gracefully. Realizing that the past, the present and the future belong together, such a holistic vision provides us with the energy to commit ourselves to a sustainable future, learning from past mistakes and drawing from present experience of joy, love and hope. Such a dynamic hope for the future makes the present life enabling and self-fulfilling.

7. God, the Ultimate Hope: Only religious impulse can provide us with Values larger than myself. A religious vision inspires us to commit ourselves to causes that are all-encompassing, knowing that God is the ultimate hope for all that exists. Such an experience of the Ultimate provides us with a sense of openness, spirit of compassion, readiness for commitment! This enables us to live for others even in (through) my own death! When I do not need to fear my own death, then everything is possible for me! That provides me with living hope.

8. The final fulfilment (for LIFE): "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." (Joel 2: 28) Religion evokes in us the assurance that the dreams of the innocent, the ideals of the youth and the hopes of the old do matter. That ultimately nothing is in vain. That the utopian vision leads us to a fulfilment that encompasses the whole reality. That the weakness, duplicity and frailty of the present will be subsumed into a living future that is

the fulfilment of life. Traditional religions that have emphasized the need for saving individual souls can easily adapt themselves to preserving and fostering life, which is threatened now, both from within and without.

9. Being at Home in this Universe: Being at home in the Universe: In spite of the apparent contradictions and anxiety we feel in this world, religion gives us the certitude that everything is good (Gen 1) and that we can feel at home in this universe. This feeling of at-homeness stems from our deepest rootedness in the universe and our fellow-living beings. Being at home, we can safely reach out to all in need. "Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan, I will now rise up," says the Lord; "I will place them in the safety for which they long." Without negating a future eschatological vision, this sense of belongings urges us to transform this world with deepest commitment and fullest hope in the present.

10. Abandonment to God: Finally religious insights enable us to abandon ourselves in the hands of God, after having tried our best. It is this spirit of genuine self-surrender and abandonment that makes one struggle hard to change the living situation and at the same time open to surprises. Such an attitude of active acceptance and self-surrender helps us to find ways of coping with violence creatively.

5. Conclusion: Signs of hope

There is so much of basic goodness in human hearts. In spite of human greed and wickedness, people are generous and gracious with regards to their time, talent and wealth. Even the calamity of Tsunami has shown this. The general sense of disillusionment with the present violent world order has caused the emergence of many alternative movements in ecology, economics, spirituality and life-style. So we can legitimately move from a Doom's Day Apocalypse to religious Eschatology of Hope. That is the collective dream and archetypal hope of the human race.

In spite of the violence evident in our society, the positive signs are overwhelming. Some of these are: Wealth of nature

(Abundance in reality), Creativity in life (possibility for change), Spontaneity of spirit (human creativity) and Surprise in life (openness to the new). A Nelson Mandela who came out of the prison without any trace of bitterness, a Mahatma Gandhi who dedicated his life totally to God, a Mother Teresa who offered herself lovingly in the service of the poor and an Albert Einstein a scientist and radical mystic, offers us with living signs of hope for today's world. More than any of these, it is the ordinary people, the simple people on the margins who have nurtured a sense of fondness for life and trusted in God who provides us with the ultimate guarantee that violence can be transformed to love in the ultimate crucible of suffering. So Mathew Arnold is not completely right, when he wrote:

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born.[23]

Religion is that midwife which enables the re-birthing of a new world-order, a new humanity. The perennial religious values and mystical insights provide us with hope to transcend the violent world-order and create a new one with joy, freedom and life. Such a world will be rooted in faith, open to the other and related to each other. In short, it would be sustainable. In this creative enterprise other human ventures like science and politics will be partners in collaboration.

Notes

1. This is true both of individuals and of species. It has been suggested that if the powerful family of dinosaurs had not become extinct, human race would not have evolved
2. Richard Dawkins has popularized this notion in his classic Selfish Genes.
3. Freud has characterized this "drive towards death" as "thanathos."
4. See Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael*, Bantam Books.
5. In an editorial entitled "Fax of the matter Vienna", TOI, 25th Sept, 2004, an experiment conducted in Vienna is described, in which

material bodies can be faxed (or transmitted as electric signals). That is technology going beyond any conceivable achievements!

6. "Converging Technologies for Improving Human Performance: Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Information Technology and Cognitive Science" accessed athttp://www.wtec.org/ ConvergingTechnologies/
7. The significant question to be asked is: Can technological problems be solved by better technology? My answer is no. technological problems may be partially solved by higher technology, which at the same time creates newer problems.
8. It may be noted that some of these reasons are of philosophical/ religious nature too. The list given is selective and partial. None can make an exhaustive list of the human made dangers facing humanity. Most often such calamities happen with an element of unpredictability. For more detailed description see: Hanson, Robin 1998 Critiquing the Doomsday Argument 27Aug98 http:// hanson.gmu.edu/nodoom.html.
9. Rammstein 2005 See "Mein Teil" accessed at: http://www.virgin.net/ music/singlereviews/rammstein_meinteil.html
10. The quotes are from Toynbee Arnold 2004: accessed at: http:// chatna.com/author/toynbee.htm
11. All the above quotes are from the internet. Some other informative quotes of Arnold Toynbee are: "Compassion is the desire that moves the individual self to widen the scope of its self-concern to embrace the whole of the universal self." Again he says, "History is a vision of God's creation on the move." And "The equation of religion with belief is rather recent." About achieving one's goal, he remarks insightfully, "It is a paradoxical but profoundly true and important principle of life that the most likely way to reach a goal is to be aiming not at that goal itself but at some more ambitious goal beyond it."
12. Quotes are from internet. He also affirms: "There is a kind of intellectual provincialism in the dogma that 'life is just one damned thing after another.' Human affairs do not become intelligible until they are seen as a whole."
13. He pleads against apathy and for enthusiasm in facing the human situation. It is interesting to see how he traces the origin of enthusiasm: "Apathy can be overcome by enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: first, an ideal, which takes the imagination by storm, and second, a definite intelligible

plan for carrying that ideal into practice."

14. See both websites http://oswald_spengler.exsudo.com/ andhttp:/ www.serebella.com/encyclopedia/article-Oswald_Spengler.html accessed on December 2004.
15. *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* in German. Original 1919.
16. See the article John Landon, "World History And The Eonic Effect:Civilization, Darwinism, and Theories of Evolution," http:// eonix.8m.com/1st/chapthree_2.htm, accessed on November 2004.
17. The inventor of the first reading machine for the blind is a prominent personality in computer and artificial intelligence studies.
18. It appeared in the *Wired Magazine*. The author of course is sympathetic to the human concerns and is criticizing the way the computer industry is taking over human functions.
19. See his website for further details: According to him the past consists of doomed humans, while the present is a serious play and the future belongs to the transhumans.
20. Will there be one world or no world at all? (Eine Welt oder keine Welt).
21. See my article, "Towards a Spirituality for Life," *Jnanadeepa* 7/2 Jan 2004, 44-57.
22. It may be noted that I am inspired by my Christian religious convictions to formulate the theses, though I wish to apply them to all and no religious traditions.
23. The quote continues:

    With nowhere yet to rest my head,
    Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
    Their faith, my tears, the world deride—
    I come to shed them at their side (Taken from internet).

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Chapter ten deals with pastoral planning, catechetical method and methodological implications. While clarifying the concept of method, this chapter presents the methodological itinerary of catechesis. Raising the question about the methods to be used in today's catechesis, this chapter proposes a list of choices and maintains that there is no single approach for everyone or every place.

Chapter eleven pinpoints the role and the competence of the catechists and highlights the importance of their formation. With regard to the competence, the triple dimension of being, knowing and knowing-how is highlighted. As regards formation, the pastoral care of catechists and the pedagogy of formation are proposed.

The title along with content of the book is very relevant to our times in the context of catechetical ministry. Since the book is an Indian Publication intended to a large extent as handbook for a practical use in catechetical ministry in India, when it makes reference to multi-faith context in chapter one, the Indian multi-religious context could have been mentioned explicitly in order to show concrete contextual cultural significance.

Though chapter four highlights the link between catechesis and inculturation a concrete reference to inculturating catechesis in the Indian cultural context would have made the contribution of this book more valuable. Precisely because this book is an Indian publication in the field of Catechetics, it cannot ignore the Indian cultural context and its implications especially in the post-conciliar era.

It is commendable that chapter four analyses the Christian faith experience with reference to the biblical experience whose convergence with human experience gives rise to faith experience. Since the bible plays an indispensable role in catechesis, a separate chapter on catechesis and the bible would have been very much appreciated just as chapter nine on catechesis and liturgy brings out the close relationship between both.

The concept of transformation which is implicit in the title of the book could have been explicitly elaborated in the book in order to present catechetical formation as transformation. Finally we can say that the entire book is a very valuable contribution to catechetical ministry. *Lorenzo Fernando*

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Towards a Communicative Theology

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Abstract:

The following article is made up of two parts. In the first part Teresa Peter works on the comparison between the Indian approach of "Cross-Cultural Theology as Encounter", as developed by Francis D'Sa, using the approach of the "Communicative Theology". The second part by Matthias Scharer gives an introduction to the main elements of the "Communicative Theology". Communicative-theological processes are found at the interface of theological research on the one hand and of the practice of faith and religion on the other hand. This practice provokes a theological reflection again in return and this reflection is nourished by the actual practices and experiences. In the field of this interplay of theological reflection and communicative practice of faith and religion the perspective of a hermeneutics of difference can be considered as a productive challenge for an intercultural and interreligious dialogue, which gives special theological attention also to conflictive encounter-experiences.

Keywords:

Communicative-theology, practical theology, conflict-resolution, cross-cultural theology, encounter, transformation, *communicatio communion.*

The following article on Communicative Theology is made up of two parts, one written by Matthias Scharer, the other by Teresa Peter. In the first part Teresa Peter works on the comparison between the Indian approach of "Cross-Cultural Theology as Encounter", as it has been developed by Francis D'Sa, and the approach of the "Communicative Theology". The second part by Matthias Scharer gives an introduction to the main elements of the "Communicative Theology".

I. IN COMMUNICATION WITH A THEOLOGY AS CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER (by Teresa Peter)

In the course of my studies of theology I got the chance to spend one year and a half in India. Most of that time I spent in Pune at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, where I came to know several Indian theology and philosophy professors and Indian theologians-to-be. After some time I started wondering if an inter-religious dialogue, about which I heard so much there in India, would perhaps not only be needed between different religions, but maybe a similar dialogical process would be helpful between Austrian and Indian theologians as well – that means some sort of an intra-religious and cross-cultural dialogue. But how can such a dialogue be possible and fruitful? In India as well as in Austria I came to know a theological approach, which focuses on the phenomena of encounter, communication, dialogue and relatedness.

In India Dr. Francis D'Sa, former professor of JDV, has developed a theological approach called "Cross-Cultural Theology as Encounter". Knowing the difficulties of such an enterprise he writes: "The process of theologizing cross-culturally is neither simple nor straight-forward. It involves a thorough re-vision of our presuppositions ... about being in the world and understanding of the world, about religion and our relation with Reality" (Francis D'Sa, Unpublished Script, Pune 2001, 78).

In Innsbruck, under quite different conditions and circumstances Prof. Matthias Scharer has been working – in cooperation with the systematic theologians Prof. Bernd Jochen Hilberath of Tübingen and Prof. Bradford Hinze of Milwaukee – on a "Communicative Theology" or in other words – as I personally prefer it – on the awareness of theologizing communicatively, on a theology which is done communicatively.

I am trying now to start a conversation between the Cross-Cultural Theology and the Communicative Theologies. Is there more in common than just a few expressions? And how are we able to deal with those ideas, which we do not share?

For this comparison the leading questions are the following:

§ Who are they, referring to the Cross-Cultural Theology? Who are we, referring to the Communicative Theology?

§ Can we encounter each other, communicate with each other? Can a Theology as Cross-cultural encounter and a Communicative Theology encounter each other, communicate with each other, meet and understand each other, learn form each other, complement each other and deal with the differences, which appear?

§ How can we encounter each other, communicate with each other? What is the basis of our encountering and communicating? How can this encounter, this communication, take place in order to do justice to one's own claims and postulates?

§ What changes, what is being transformed? What becomes clearer, deeper in our own approach by meeting the other, by being confronted with questions, doubts and unfamiliar convictions of the other?

I am trying to enter into a process of theologizing cross-culturally, theologizing communicatively by reflecting on these two theological approaches and by sharing my reflections with you, the reader. Of course, this short comparison can only be a first step in this direction of theologizing in the described manner, particularly because the responses of the *opponents* are missing due to this form of communication.

1. Who Are We? Who Are They?

"They" here refer to those persons, who are working cross-culturally. According to Francis D'Sa it is necessary for a cross-cultural enterprise "... to understand others as they understand themselves and as they want to be understood in order that they may understand us as we understand ourselves and as we want to be understood" (Francis D'Sa, Unpublished Script, Pune 2001, 2). For such an understanding it is – as a first step – essential to become aware of one's own presuppositions. Let me therefore

have a look at the conditions under which these two theological approaches originated, in order to deepen the awareness of the horizon of understanding, of the mythos – as D'Sa would say – of ourselves and of the other.

The Cross-Cultural Theology is situated in India, in a multi-cultural and multi-religious context with all its advantages and difficulties, tensions, conflicts and enrichments, where Christians are a minority and where the fact of being surrounded by other traditions and other faiths cannot be overlooked. Having this in mind, Cross-Cultural Theology is "... the search for a meeting-point in which each tradition can find through interaction with other traditions its centripetal identity, on the one hand, and its centrifugal identity, on the other. In other words, the search is for a common meeting-point where a tradition not only does not lose its identity but on the contrary is enabled to discover it more fully. The aim of the enterprise is to work for freedom, justice and harmony with all traditions. Freedom, justice and harmony constitute peace which is the goal of such theology." (Francis D'Sa, Unpublished Script, Pune 2001, 3/4).

On the other hand Communicative Theology was born so to say in Austria or perhaps between Austria and Germany. One of the main aspects, which influenced the development of this approach was the growing awareness of a deep gap, an "ugly ditch" between academic, reflected theology on the one hand and life-experience on the other. In this line theology looks abstract, useless for practical questions and existential experiences and incapable to be in contact with ordinary people. Communicative Theology tries to work on this dilemma without losing sight neither of the academic theology nor of the actual human experiences and questions.

2. Can They Encounter Each Other? Can They Communicate?

Can a Theology as Cross-Cultural Encounter and as Communicative Theology encounter each other? Can they

communicate with each other? In order to approach this question I will have a look at some of the main terms, which are used by the Cross-Cultural and by the Communicative Theology and at the way, in which these terms are used.

For Cross-Cultural Theology "understanding" is one of the basic terms and phenomena, which have to be reflected. Understanding cannot be equated with knowing or information. Information can just serve as pre-understanding and even a face-to-face get-together or a discussion (which exclusively stays on the level of agreeing and disagreeing) cannot reach, what is meant by "understanding" or "meeting." Francis D'sa writes: "It is fundamental to distinguish information from understanding. In today's world understanding is equated with collecting information and mastering skills of procedure. Real understanding is ontological, that is, it is at the level of be-ing. Our understanding is not to be separated from be-ing. Understanding is more than an act of the intellect; it is the act of one's whole being. To understand is to respond to the dis-closure of reality." (Francis D'Sa, Unpublished Script, Pune 2001, 12). Therefore dialogue is considered to be a way of being, and not exclusively an intellectual affair.

The background of D'Sa's understanding of understanding is the distinction between two different models of approaching the world: the so called "Seeing-Model" and the "Speaking-Model". In the "Speaking-Model", which is rejected by Cross-Cultural Theology in case, it is taken as a model for understanding and not only for one aspect of knowing, a subject studies an object, the other, who is not connected in any way to the studying subject. Two consequences follow from this model: The first one is an objectification of the other, which means that the subjectivity of the other is overseen and as a consequence the subjective perspective of the other is not taken seriously in the theological processes. The second one is the subjectification of the truth of the other, which means to perceive just those aspects of the other, which can be implemented in one's own world-view or to turn the unfamiliar other in such a way, that he/she and his/her convictions

are no longer unfamiliar and disturbing. For D'Sa it is the "Seeing-Model", which is relevant. In this model the I as well as the other are considered subjects, who are situated within one world, within a common space. This common space is the experience of "being-in-the-world" and the I cannot turn the other into an object, but can just focus on the other always in awareness of being within a common space. Following this approach, understanding cannot be reduced to one perspective. Understanding, meeting and also discourse and dialogue imply more than one perspective. As understanding at the level of being leads to change and transformation, it also implies open-endedness.

Some of these points look quite familiar and interesting to the Communicative Theology. So the distinction between communication and information – and the sensitisation for the consequences in case this distinction is neglected – is an important point in Communicative Theology as well. Considering the "Speaking"- and "Seeing"-model there can also be discovered some common elements, even when the differences are not denied. In Communicative Theology we speak of an involvement of the whole person with all dimensions of life into the process of theologizing, which means besides other dimensions also the subjectivity of each person. Therefore we are working in Innsbruck on a research-methodology, which does justice to this point of taking the subjectivity of the other seriously.

3. How Is Encounter, Communication Possible?

How can we "encounter" each other, "communicate" with each other? Perhaps the most striking aspect of these two theological approaches is the attention, which is given to the *process of theologizing*. It is not only the outcome of a theological process which counts, but it is also the way it is done. And the outcome itself is different depending on the way in which it is done. Cross-Cultural as well as Communicative Theology are special ways of theologizing and so they state, that the theological work has to be done cross-culturally or communicatively in our days. According

to these ways of theologizing new insights, new questions and doubts arise due to the cross-cultural or the communicative perspective and the outcome cannot be predicted. This process remains open-ended, can never be definitely closed, as new situations of encounter and communication will always have fair effects on our understanding of ourselves and others. Communicative Theology, which is done on a cross-cultural conference of Indian and Austrian theologians looks different than when Austrian theologians, are discussing about Communicative Theology among themselves and even there it depends on the actual situation and on the actual participants of the theological process. This leads to the following questions: What does it mean to theologize cross-culturally, communicatively? What is the basis of communication and of encounter according to Cross-cultural or to the Communicative Theology?

Francis D'Sa's reflections are based on his view of reality, which is considered to be a common space for all humans. Reality is said to be three-fold, trinitarian, constituted by three dimensions: the Cosmic, the Divine and the Human and is named the "cosmo-the-andric reality", a term, which he takes over from Raimundo Panikkar. Francis D'Sa writes: "... the Cosmic dimension refers to the spatio-material world of temporality, the Human dimension refers to the experience of an 'I' and a 'You' and the Divine dimension is the inexhaustible character, the open-endedness of the Human and the Cosmic." (Francis D'Sa, Unpublished Script, Pune 2001, 34). This Divine dimension can also be called the Depth-dimension of all. Reality is considered to be our common space, the fundament for the possibility of our encounter. Following this line, D'Sa sees in religion a hermeneutic of reality, the "search of the Human for the Divine in the Cosmic" (Francis D'Sa, Unpublished Script, Pune 2001, 34). This hermeneutic might be quite different, as different religions are focussing upon different dimensions. For example the focus of the Christian tradition lies – according to D'Sa – on the Human dimension, whereas some Hindu traditions are focussing more on the Cosmic dimension, but

nevertheless all dimensions are present in all traditions, as all three dimensions constitute reality. Therefore it is by the encounter with others that one tradition or one person might discover reality more fully or realize one's own hermeneutic more precisely.

Let me have a short look now at the way communicative theologizing takes place. In order to understand and describe the process of communicating, the Communicative Theology adapts the model of the "Theme-centered-Interaction" according to Ruth Cohn. Ruth Cohn was a Jewish lady and was herself not a theologian, but a pedagogue and a psychologist. Ruth Cohn in following approach of this Communicative Theology is departing from actual group experiences and is concerned about the question: How an atmosphere can be created in which fruitful and authentic interaction and communication becomes more likely, in order to avoid or reduce violence and destruction. In order to reach this goal, theologizing communicatively means to try to keep a "dynamic balance" between four aspects of life: the I referring to the world of the individual, of the subject; the We referring to the actual group or community setting; the It referring to the thematic topic and the globe or context. More details about this approach will be given by Matthias Scharer in the second part of this article.

Surely at this point the two approaches are quite different. While D'Sa, inspired by Panikkar, gives a fundamental – as he himself stresses not metaphysical but phenomenological – view of reality, which is the source and the aim of theologizing cross-culturally, Communicative Theology gets its ideas from the observation of actual group and communication processes. Still these two models shall not be separated completely. If Communicative Theology is trying to make an authentic process of understanding and confrontation possible and if Panikkar's view of reality has some truth in it, then the three dimensions of reality will be actualized in each process of theologizing communicatively. Theologizing cross-culturally or communicatively does not mean to deny one's own positions, beliefs or convictions, but it means to take the other – person or tradition – so seriously, that I try to

make the effort to understand himself/herself, as he/she wants to be understood, which is not at all easy. It does not mean the fusion of our horizons, so that in the end we are seeing the world in the same way, but it means the touching of our horizons, in order to understand our own horizon in a deeper and wider way. Due to the encounter or communication with the other – person or tradition or both – I can discover aspects of my own world-view, which would remain hidden otherwise. Therefore, real meeting, real understanding and real communicating implies change and transformation.

4. What has been Transformed? What Changes?

Let me see then for me personally, what has been changed or is still in the process of changing and forming as a result of a few encounter experiences with the Cross-Cultural Theology and with Communicative Theology? It is the challenge of perceiving reality as a cosmotheandric reality and mystery being our common space, which constitutes interconnectedness and relatedness. It is the idea of religion being a hermeneutic of reality, which has consequences for theological thinking, speaking and acting. And perhaps for me one of the most inspiring and astonishing aspects of the Cross-Cultural Theology as Encounter is the close connection between spirituality and reflected, academic theology. It seems to me that this way of theologizing includes spiritual awareness in a very natural way and considers the practice of such awareness essential for theological work.

According to my perception, Communicative Theology works and reflects more on actual communication processes and gives more attention to the problematic aspects of communication like differences in convictions and beliefs, conflicts and destructive emotions. The question concerning the priority of stressing, emphasising either a common space or dividing differences, might be answered differently. It may be that consequently the importance of such a question will be estimated differently as

well. Still beyond these differences Cross-Cultural Theology as well as Communicative Theology share a common concern and draw our attention to the process of theologizing.

II. SOME FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIVE THEOLOGY (by Matthias Scharer)

1. Communicative Theology (CT) – A Specific Style or Form of Theological Reflection?

Regarding the expression "CT" I agree with Teresa Peter in the first part of this article, that it would be perhaps more appropriate to speak of an "... awareness of theologizing communicatively, [of]... a theology, which is done communicatively" than to use the noun "Communicative Theology". For the time being, I will use this expression. The American theologian Robert L. Kinast would understand our way of theologizing as a specific "style of theological reflection", which was developed on the basis of the theology of the Second Vatican Council.

The reality of theology, which theological reflection seeks to disclose, is the presence of God in people's experience, a presence that invites them to encounter God where they are and to participate in the divine life which is offered to them there. For this reason the form that theological reflection takes is coextensive with people's experience. It does not treat their experience as a theological or spiritual void nor does it use their experience merely to illustrate and apply theological principles. With theological reflection, theology is in service to experience, not the other way around. (Robert l. Kinast, *What are they saying about theological reflection?* Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2000, 3)

According to R. L. Kinast it is a "threefold movement", which the different styles of theological reflection have in common. Starting point for theologizing in a particular style of theological reflection is the actual context, the actual life-experience, then as

a second step of this movement these experiences come in touch with the Christian tradition and as a third step a transformation of one's life is taking place. (See Kinast, 1) It was after the Second Vatican Council, that this common form has generated "various styles of theological reflection" (Kinast, 3). Kinast distinguishes between five different styles, for example the Feminist Style or the Inculturation Style of theological reflection, just to mention two of them.

2. Relation between Form and Content

Using the term "style" for a specific concept of theology like CT leads us immediately to the question of the relation between form and content in theology, which is according to Kinast just another way of expressing the "interplay of substance and style" (Kinast, 4). The way, in which form and content are related to each other and the question, if form and content are related at all, can be seen as essential theological questions themselves. The relation between content and form does also affect the discourse on violence and religion and the shape of all sorts of academic theological activities.

At first, questions concerning the form or style of a theological process might not look like essential theological questions, they look more like didactic, sociological or political questions, which might touch the theological sphere in some way but which are not situated in the center of theology. Why to reflect on the way, in which we are working on an academic theological conference for example? Why to give special attention to the way in which faith communication takes place in the church? In what way can an awareness on the process of theologizing be relevant for the theological outcome and in what way is such an awareness connected to the phenomena of violence and conflicts?

In order to reflect "the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted" (GS1), it is necessary, that sociological or economic analysis takes

place. Most probably, so far, most of the theologians would agree. But can these human experiences be even more relevant to theologians? Can these experiences be taken seriously as "loci theologici"? This is exactly, what I am trying to do in the process of theologizing communicatively. In the following I will present some basic ideas and outlines of this approach.

3. How to Gain Knowledge in the Area of CT?

"Communicative Theology is a way of theologizing which starts with and is done through a living process of communication." (Matthias Scharer, Bernd Jochen Hilberath, *Kommunikative Theologie. Eine Grundlegung,* Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, ²2003, 15). Taking this seriously, it is obvious that it is quite difficult to explain CT without participating in a living process. At the moment, one of the main research fields for gaining experiences of CT is a master course for postgraduates, which is held at the Theological Faculty of the University of Innsbruck. During a period of five semesters a group consisting of 18 persons, who are working in leadership positions in the church, is introduced to CT and animated to connect the actual group experiences, the everyday life and work experiences, with biblical, systematic, anthropological and practical-theological reflections. Praying, celebrating, eating and drinking together are not seen as accidental or secondary phenomena in this style of theologizing. These so called ordinary group experiences are considered essential parts of the process of theologizing itself, as important as the living discourses on different topics. These selected topics we are dealing with in the group-sessions, originate in the meeting, in the confrontation of group-processes, life experiences and the Gospel and church tradition. In our master course, which is entirely conducted in this style of theologizing, "world-church-experiences" are integrated as an important aspect. If we are really serious in trying to theologize in a communicative way, it will be impossible and irresponsible to ignore the global situation of the church.

Therefore the participants of the course visit small groups in different countries, in order to come in touch with unfamiliar ecclesiastical situations and problems. During September 2004 for example one small group of the present master course has visited several places and institutions in India. In the same way, other groups are visiting South Africa, Kenya or Taiwan. What do these experiences mean in the field of research? Is it not a great risk to use the term "communication" for a specific kind of theologizing?

4. The Ambiguous and (at the same time) Indispensable Discourse about Communication

In fact, Teresa has already shown in her discourse with a Theology as Cross-Cultural Encounter how ambiguous the term communication is and how far away we are from Francis D'Sa's meaning of understanding as a deep acceptance of one another as spirit-gifted subjects. We are living in a knowledge- and communication-based society. Globalization is based on communication. But what is the understanding of communication in the context of globalization? It is very poor actually, it means: Communication = the supply of information.

Information opens up an access to power and also to inclusion or exclusion of people and even peoples. Who has the information (today mainly through the Internet) is "in", who can't get it because she/he is too poor to have a computer, is "out". The inclusion and exclusion of people from information is connected to questions of power, violence and even survival. Whoever is excluded suffers from poverty, lack of knowledge and connections or even is threatened by death.

This can be recognized as an indication for the combat which is taking place between the isolating "gods" (tin gods) of the market cooperating with the media on the one hand, and the relation-bestowing Christian God on the other hand. Let us have a look at the contrasting Church Tradition concerning this point.

5. An Alternative Approach to Society Inspired by Church Tradition and Early Christianity

In our days not only the market but also the church seems to remain in a dangerous unawareness of the consequences of non-reflected adoption of communication skills. The Second Vatican Council glorifies the modern possibilities of communication without reflecting on their impact on exclusion phenomena in the postmodern economic situation. The enormously important point that we are touching here is the following: The problematic effects and consequences, which are connected to modern means of communication, will also affect faith communication if those means are used there. Those methods, means and media are not neutral, but by using particular media in a particular way, a message itself is transported already and might even object the intended content. Let me give an example: If we are using in our teaching, in our dealing with students, a tight curriculum, allowing only the possibilities of agreement or non-agreement or accepting only answers like in a multiple-choice-exam, then already through the adoption of these means of communication a theological content will be transported and a contradiction will be generated to the idea of a human being as it is given in the Gospel. For some people in the Roman Catholic Church it seems to be fascinating to communicate the World Catechism via Internet. But do they know what they are doing by doing it in this way?

From the Church Tradition and especially from early Christianity we can learn that a relation-based form of communication, which considers human beings as dialogical and relational beings, is more adequate to human life than means of communication which ignore this aspect of humanity altogether. Nevertheless, the risk, hidden in the idea of a relation-based communication, is the tendency to overemphasize harmony and to skip or ignore conflict situations. Such an attitude also has enormous consequences for communication, because people remain unknown to themselves and to others (including God) when only the harmonious sides of

life are accepted and dignified. Therefore, at the end of this outline I am going to touch on the importance of a hermeneutic of difference in CT. But before coming to that point, I would like to draw the attention to some basic aspects of a Christian view of communication.

6. Traditional Aspects of Communication

When we are looking – in the process of theologizing communicatively – on our own or people's communicative experiences we are doing it not from a neutral point of view. We are getting our theological orientation from the Israelite experiences of God in the context of the experiences with Jesus of Nazareth and with the Spirit of God, who is active in the community and in creation. In his self-revelation, God reveals himself "for us" as a communicative being as such.

If revelation and belief are a way of relating to the *communicatio* and *communio* with God as a communicative event, in which the personal aspect takes precedence over the informational aspect, every theology will be a communicative event concerned with the trinitarian, communicative God and with the experience of the communicating people of God and of the communication of all people. If the Trinitarian God "...does not just *have* a love relationship with us", but "... *is* loving relationality" (Richard R. Gillardetz, *Transforming our days: Spirituality, Community, and Liturgy in a Technological Culture,* New York: Crossroad Publishing Company 2000, 54) – or in the words of the Greek Orthodox bishop and theologian John Zizioulas if we accept God as "Being as Communion" (John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion, Studies in personhood and the Church*, Crestwood NY 1985), this logic cannot remain any longer just in the theoretical field, it has to have consequences on the way in which we are theologizing.

I agree with Richard R. Gaillardetz position that if "...in God's very essence God is loving relationality, Being-as-Communion, so

too we are invited to discover ourselves in the life of communion" (Gillardetz, 56). One consequence, which follows from this conviction, is a dignifying attention given to all persons "...as creatures possessing an infinite worth and dignity" (Gillardetz, 56). Another consequence can be a special attention given to group-processes. In actual group processes we can try to create an atmosphere, which makes an authentic exchange more likely, but we can never force such an authentic exchange. If it is going to happen or not in the end seems to touch the mystery, which is named "grace" in theology.

7. Anthropological approach – Theme-Centered-Interaction (TCI)

In order to give these thoughts a shape, we have to look for an anthropological concept or style of communication in which some of these aspects are realized. In the Communicative Theology we are adapting the so called Theme-centered-Interaction, which has been founded by Ruth C. Cohn after the Second World War in the United States.

7.1. Ruth C. Cohn

Who is Ruth C. Cohn? Ruth C(harlotte) Cohn is a Jewish lady, who was born in Germany in 1912 and is still alive. Her parents wanted her to become an economist but she was more interested in a career as a writer. Ruth Cohn came in touch with psychoanalysis through the mother of her first boy-friend, as that lady was working as a psychoanalyst. During the Second World War she had to emigrate to Switzerland, where she studied psychoanalysis, and later on to the United States. There she came into contact with the humanistic psychology and with pedagogy. Fritz Perls, founder of Gestalt-psychology, was one of her first friends in the USA. During the students' riots of 1968 in Germany and France, R. C. Cohn was asked to conduct workshops for students and professors, in order to enable them to communicate without using violence. In 1971 R. Cohn was honored "Psychologist

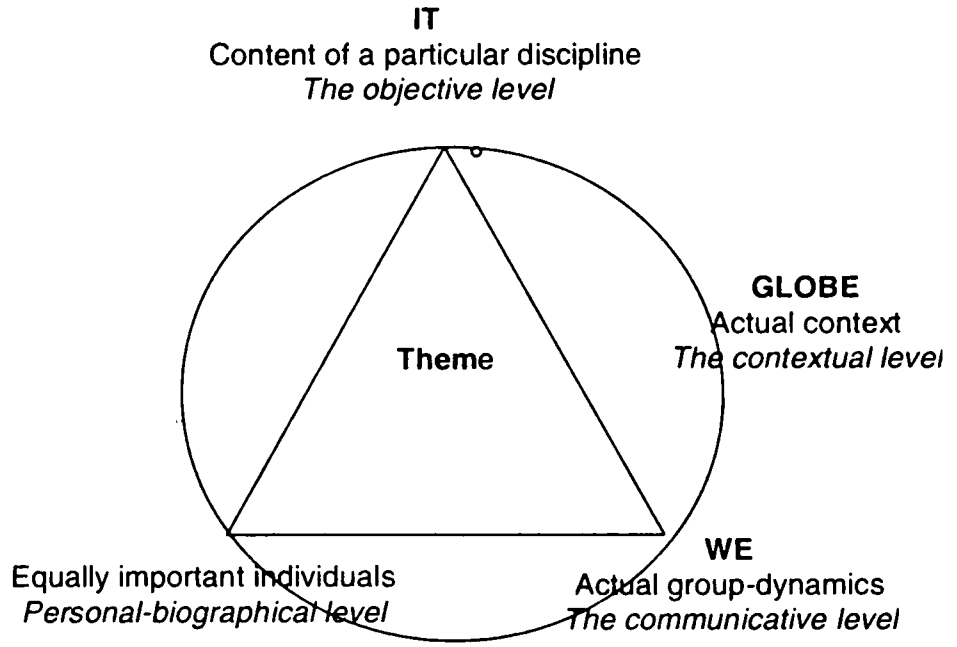
of the Year Award" by the New York Society for Clinical Psychology. At first Ruth Cohn did not want to return to Europe, especially to Germany, but in 1974 she did nevertheless, and now she is living in Switzerland. The University of Hamburg awarded the honorary doctor to her. Ruth Cohn's work rests upon a humanistic idea of her mankind, which is based on biblical fundaments.

7.2. Levels of TCI

According to the concept of TCI there are four different levels, which are present in each communication process. These four levels are the following:

√ each individual – equally important – person (I),
√ the group dynamics in the actual group (WE),
√ the content, on which the group is actually working (IT),
√ the context, the globe, in which the process is happening (GLOBE).

Ruth Cohn states that all these levels are equally important and that sufficient attention has to be given to all of them, in order to enter into a living process of communication.



The theme originates in a dynamic balance of all four levels and is finally fixed in an adequate verbalization, which enables the group to stick to a particular focus for a particular time period. Methods and media which are used in a particular communication process have to be adapted to the theme of the process.

7.3. The normative system of TCI

TCI is based on the three following axioms:

- Every human being is autonomous and interdependent at the same time.
- Reverence has to be paid to all living things their development.
- Freedom and free decisions are limited by inner and outer boundaries, still an extension of those boundaries is possible.

As the two main postulates Ruth Cohn defines the following:

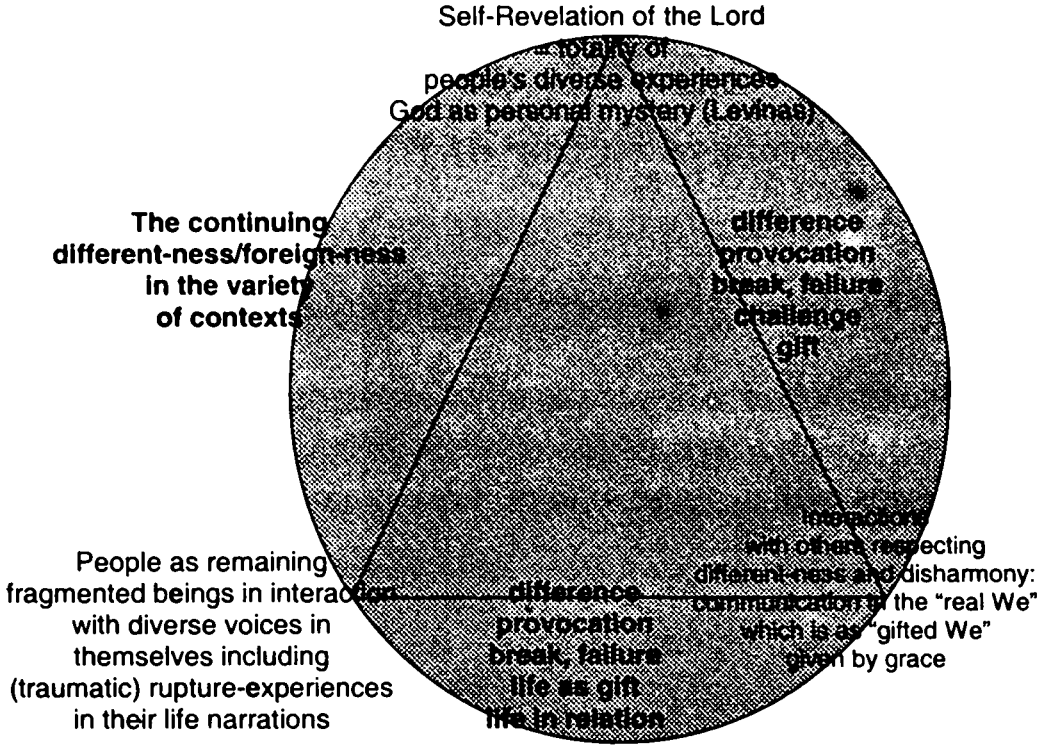
- Be your own chairperson.
- Disturbances and passionate involvements take precedence.

By maintaining these axioms and postulates, a particular style of conducting a group conduction and group work will be aimed at, which gives special attention to a participative style of conduction in groups and communication processes.

8. Hermeneutics of Difference

When we are speaking about a Communicative Theology initiating theological processes in the style of TCI we have to insist on a Hermeneutics of Difference and on the acceptance of difference. Difference is a metaphor for the variety of challenges, provocations and failures, which are shaping the relations between different people, but also between human beings and God. A Hermeneutics of Difference insists on an idea of God as a mystery like E. Levinas maintained. This approach stresses the idea of a human being as an ever remaining fragmented subject, who can never know everything about himself/herself or others. Accepting different-ness and foreign-ness, on all levels of self-communication and communication with others, including our prayers, does not deny the different failures of oneself and others, but opens up for

life as God's gift. The above illustration will then be complemented in the following way.



Communicative-theological processes are found at the interface of theological research on the one hand and of the practice of faith and religion on the other hand. This practice provokes a theological reflection again in return and this reflection is nourished by the actual practices and experiences. In the field of this interplay of theological reflection and communicative practice of faith and religion, the perspective of a hermeneutics of difference can be considered as a productive challenge for an intercultural and interreligious dialogue, which gives special theological attention also to conflictive encounter-experiences.

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A Spirituality for Our Times

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Abstract:

The author articulates a spirituality relevant for our contemporary times and Indian context. To be spiritual is to be open and responsive to reality both in its negative and positive dimensions. Openness to reality consists in awareness of their presence and of their corrosive and brutalizing effects on the human heart and on social life. Relevant and adequate response to such negative realities would mean letting their awareness warn and shame us, and urge us to find and eliminate their causes and occasions, and challenge us to be different by cultivating their opposites, what would make one more reasonable, free, honest, generous and gentle. The Spirit is ever beckoning to us to be open to realities in us and around us; to let reality stir us, disturb us, challenge us, and move us to joy, to sorrow, to anger, to action. The Spirit is urging us to hear the song and the cry of reality, human and cosmic, personal and social. She is signalling to us to respond relevantly and adequately, to respond in the way She Herself does: that is, eliminating the negative, wiping away the tears, binding up the wounds, lifting up the lowly; ending greed, hatred and violence, and fostering the gentle, the beautiful and the loving — all for the common good, the welfare of all humankind, and for the greater praise and glory of God, the glory of God being the Human fully alive, whole and happy, flowering and fruitful.

Keywords

Spirituality, poor, spirit, contextual spirituality, prophetic spirituality, sharing wealth, man of God

1. Spirituality

1.1. To be spiritual is to be open and responsive to reality. Reality could be negative or positive. By negative reality is meant dispositions, desires, situations, traditions, structures, policies,

relationships, events, and decisions, actions which are dehumanising, oppressive, enslaving, divisive, conflictual, unsocial and self-worshiping. They are wont to make one depraved, reactionary, destructive, violent and sad. Openness to those consists in awareness of their presence and of their corrosive and brutalizing effects on the human heart and on social life. Relevant and adequate response to such negative realities would mean letting their awareness warn and shame us, and urge us to find and eliminate their causes and occasions, and challenge us to be different by cultivating their opposites, what would make one more reasonable, free, honest, generous and gentle.

When reality is positive, when one's experiences and situations are liberating and integrating, promotive of creativity, solidarity and hope, response to it will consist in welcoming it with its challenges, promises and possibilities, in letting it enrich one ever more and render one's heart and life increasingly sensitive to what is beautiful or pathetic, and courageous to pursue what contributes to freedom, solidarity and the common good.

1.2. Reality could be personal, familial, socio-political, cosmic and Transcendent — Divine. Personal reality may include one's own self: one's abilities and limitations, tendencies and gifts, achievements and failings, endeavours, hopes, joys, and sorrows as well as the depths of one's heart and conscience. Social reality consists of the web of relationships and interactions between persons and groups which weave the community in which we live. Included in social reality are the values, ideals, artistic creations, knowledge, traditions, achievements, myths, legends, and prejudices, challenges and opportunities as well as socio-political and economic events, policies, movements and crises, with all their promises, threats and demands.

By cosmic reality is meant what we call nature, the environment with its physical grandeur and evolutionary mystery, its rich variety and fascinating beauty, its endless surprises and wonders, its occasional angry outbursts, and its unceasing gifts with which it

lovingly supports and nurtures our life, healing, restoring, reproducing and renewing it.

The Transcendent is the unique reality we call God, the ultimate Ground and Source, Horizon and Goal of the cosmos and of our human history. It is that from which everything comes and on which everything radically depends, and to which everything points and tends, and which is the intimate meaning of all else. Ethics with its injunctions and prohibitions, and religions with their belief systems, institutions, devotions and rituals belong primarily to the sphere of the Transcendent; they have therefore to do with all the other ranges of life, relationships, decisions and activities.

Spirituality consists in being open and responsive to reality at all these levels, in all these dimensions. It is obvious that the attitude of openness and responsiveness to what is negative, oppressive, and dehumanising will differ from response to what is positive, life-affirming and liberating. The tint and throb, the depth and expanse of spirituality too will differ accordingly.

2. The Spirit

2.1. It is obvious that 'Spirituality' has to do with 'spirit'. But what is the spirit in question? Many tend, spontaneously or philosophically, to identify the spirit with the human psyche or soul, the immaterial component of the human person. But we know that the soul can be selfish, cruel, deceitful and jealous,. Such a reality, according to Paul, is flesh, not spirit, though it is immaterial; and the flesh is hostile to God, does not submit to God's law, and cannot please God (Rom 7:14-24; 8:5-8; 1 Cor 3:1-4; Gal 5:17-21). But God liberates and saves us from carnal servitude and from decline and disintegration by giving us His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ. With the Spirit of God dwelling in us, we are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. And with that, the power of Jesus' Resurrection becomes active in us, defeating and destroying the power of sin and death. Thus vivified and led by the Spirit, we become God's children, and heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8: 9-17). "If (then) we live in the Spirit, we also follow the

Spirit". Living in the Spirit, we reject the works of the flesh such as impurity, idolatry, hatred, dissensions. And as God's children we bear the fruits of the Spirit which are "love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:13-26). To be spiritual, then, is to be carried by the Spirit and be profoundly transformed by her. The human heart, a humane community and gentle relationships are Her chosen abode and temple (I Cor 6:19).

2.2. It is from the Holy Spirit that all spirituality derives and is named. All creation comes from God through the Eternal Word in the Holy Sprit, and is, therefore, radically holy and spiritual. Spiritual is all that the Spirit fashions, gives, guides, inspires, approves, vivifies, pervades and transforms. Paying attention to nature and respectfully watching its fascinating shapes and movements, and listening to its songs and silences could be an encounter with the Spirit and a heart-warming, uplifting spiritual experience. All creation is numinous, is a divine beckoning, a signalling to approach, to listen, to dialogue and receive a blessing.

A hymn, echoing this truth, exhorts us to listen to the Spirit, to

"listen to His constant speaking,..
to His inspiration, .. . to His invitation."
For, "He's in the thunder, in the whisper of the breeze...
In the might of the whirlwind...
in the laughter of children...
In the cries of the suffering,
in their moaning and their pain
He speaks thru your companions,
thru the friend and the foe.
Therefore give ear to the Spirit
Wherever He may blow."
(*With Joyful Lips*, St Paul's, 1989).

Such communion with the Spirit in the medium of natural phenomena is an aspect of Eco-Spirituality. But today Eco-Spirituality must get beyond this contemplative stage, and take to organized criticism of, and struggle against, environmental abuses

like polluting and poisoning of the earth, the air and water with chemical effluents, dangerous gases and deadly radiations, as well as against consumerist over-use of earth's resources, which is a deadly crime against the poor and a fatal betrayal of future generations.

2.3. One could have the Spirit and follow Her lead without being formally aware of Her presence and influence. One could be genuinely spiritual without expressing it in religious language. In fact, spirituality is not to be identified with religious rituals and pious practices. In one of Jesus' short stories there is a Samaritan who is a deeply spiritual person, a saintly man, whom Jesus proposes to us as a model. "Go and do likewise" is how Jesus concludes the story. The man's exemplary spirituality consists in his spontaneous openness and concerned response to an unexpected reality: a man stricken, wounded and abandoned half-dead on the roadside. His spirituality is his compassion and self-sacrificing service to a fellow human being in distress No specifically religious creeds, pieties or rituals are apparent. But there are two 'religious' figures in the story: a priest and a Levite. These see the stricken man and pass by on the opposite side. Maybe, they are in a hurry to get to the temple on time for prayer and sacrifice. But Jesus does not propose them as models for his followers. They are models neither of religion nor of spirituality. Devoid of love, their religion is dead. The story makes clear who one's neighbour is, and how to become a neighbour, and what genuine spirituality consists in (Lk 10:25-37).

2.4. The same perspective and an identical message is conveyed in another parable:

The one about the final evaluation of human history. The Son of Man welcomes into the Kingdom a great mass of people because they have been compassionate and kind to the hungry, the thirsty, the naked and the homeless, to the sick and the imprisoned. Another mass of people is excluded from the blessed life because they have been self-centred and never cared for the needy, never loved their suffering sisters and brothers. Whatever

the people did or neglected to do to the least and the lowliest of their sisters or brothers, was in truth done or refused to Jesus Himself. Note that in this judgement scene too no questions are raised about creeds, rituals and pieties. The decisive factor is love outgoing in compassionate service. What matters is being open and responsive to suffering people (Mt 25:31 -46).

2.5. The position Jesus takes here is consistent with the rest of His teaching and His saving praxis. It is also consonant with the tradition of Hebrew prophets. More than once, in fact, Jesus approvingly cites Hosea's prophetic word declaring that what God wants and expects is mercy, not sacrifice (Hos. 6:6; Mt 9:13; 12:7).

3. The Prophetic Outlook

3.1. Hosea is not the only one, nor the first in Israel's history to take such a radical view of human relations to God, and to displace sacrifice from the central place it has traditionally been occupying. Samuel, the last of the Judges and a prophet, is perhaps the first to tell Israel and King Saul that "obedience is better than sacrifice", and that God delights in our submission to his commands rather than in the fat of rams (1 Sam 13:21-22). The rebuke was occasioned by Saul and his soldiers keeping alive the best sheep and oxen of defeated Amalek in order to sacrifice them to God while God had ordered the conquest of Amalek to be followed by the killing of everyone and everything. Had Saul spared some of the people of Amalek instead of a. great part of their animal wealth, would the prophetic reaction be different?

3.2. However that might be, Biblical tradition continued to place justice and love above sacrifice. The Lord says through Isaiah:

What care I for the number of your sacrifices?
I have had enough of whole-burnt rams and fat of fatlings.
In the blood of calves, rams and goats I find no pleasure...
Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes;
Cease doing evil, learn to do good.
Make justice your aim: redress the wronged.
Hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow (Isa 1:11-17).

This view gains popularity and becomes a proverb:

To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to God than sacrifice (Prov 21:3).

To those who complain that God does not take note of their fasts and self inflicted pain, the Lord's answer is:

Lo, on your fast day you drive all your labourers
Yes, your fast ends in quarrelling and fighting,
Striking with wicked claw.
Is this the manner of fasting I wish... that a man bows his head
Like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes?
This rather is the fasting I wish;
Releasing those bound unjustly...
Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke;
Sharing your bread with the hungry,
Sheltering the oppressed and the homeless,
Clothing the naked when you see them
And not turning your back on your own...
Then your light shall break forth like the sun
And your wound shall quickly be healed...(Isa 58:3-8).

Israel's God-sent guides are tracing for them the spiritual path they ought to walk. Now it is Jeremiah's turn to speak. Through him too God expresses His loathing for sacrifices detached from heeding His words and keeping His laws:

Of what use to me is incense that comes from Sheba
or sweet cane from far-off lands?
Your holocausts find no favour with mc.
Your sacrifices please me not (Jer. 6.20).

Through Amos too, and in powerful words, the Lord reveals the heart of spiritual life. What is said moreover is relevant to all times:

I hate, I spurn your feasts,
I take no pleasure1 in your solemnities;

Your cereal offerings I will not accept,
Nor consider your stall-fed peace offerings
But if you would offer me holocausts
Then let justice surge like water,
And goodness like an unfailing stream (Am. 5.21-24).

3.3. Here we have a consistent vision and an insistent voice. Prophet after prophet defines spirituality in terms of obedience, justice and love rather than of legal provisions or ritual observances. The Holy Spirit is the Centre and the Horizon of our life and openness and response to Her in terms of justice mercy and solidarity constitute spirituality.

4. The Man of the Spirit

4.1. Jesus makes this spirituality his own. After forbidding anger, insult and violence, He instructs us to give to love and reconciliation priority, over sacrifice and ritual

Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Mt. 5.23-24).

Twice, as we have seen, does Jesus quote Hosea 6.6 as an adequate expression of His own stand? Both occasions are significant. One is when the Pharisees object to his befriending of, and eating with tax collectors and others whom upper classes despised as sinners. Jesus reminds the Pharisees that they need to go and learn the basis of authenticity in life and religion. They must go and learn the mercy of which Hosea 6.6.and Mt. 12.1-8 speaks.

4.2. Jesus praxis is in complete accord with this teaching. Or, rather, His teaching is but a translation into word of the reality of His life. For Him openness and obedience to the Father's will comes first and is decisive. And the Father's will is humankind's wholeness and happiness. God's will is mercy, love, compassion, solidarity and sharing of goods and of the knowledge of God among

God's beloved children, God's dear family on earth. Jesus therefore can never be cold or indifferent in the face of human suffering. Numerous healings and exorcisms bear witness to His concern and compassion. He served afflicted people, even over-ruling Sabbath laws and risking the murderous wrath of authorities (Mk 1:14-3:6: hi 5; 9). The blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the maimed, the leperous, the fever-stricken, the deformed, the paralysed and victims of haemorrhage were restored to health and happiness throughout the land. On seeing a widow in tears, accompanying the bier of her only son, Jesus "was moved with pity for her, and said to her: "Do not weep" Then he touched the coffin and commanded the young man to arise. The youth sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother (1k 7:11-17). Jesus raises up Jairus' dead daughter from her "sleep" and, as the child walked around after days or weeks of illness, He directed her mother to give the child something to eat. Such is Jesus' tenderness, surpassing a mother's (Mk 5: 21-43). At the tomb of Lazarus of Bethany, 'When Jesus saw (Mary) weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled... and Jesus wept" (Jn 11:33-34).

5.3. Limitless is the compassion of the Lord Jesus. When the apostles rejoin Him after a mission to the villages, the Master's first thought is about the quiet and rest they need. "Come away by yourselves," He suggests, "to a deserted place and rest awhile." But a crowd gathers frustrating this plan. When Jesus "saw the vast crowd, His heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd." So He taught them many things. When it was already late, His disciples intervened, suggesting that the crowd be dismissed so that they could go to the villages nearby and buy food for themselves. Jesus' reply, quite characteristic of Him, was that His disciples should not shirk hospitality but should themselves feed the crowd. But as the little food the disciples had with them would not suffice, Jesus multiplies the food they had till the last person in the crowd was satisfied (Mk 6:30-44). On another occasion, "when there again was a great crowd without anything to eat Jesus summoned His disciples

and said, My heart is moved with pity for the crowd because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they might collapse on the way, and some of them have come a long distance." Once again, therefore, Jesus multiplies the few loaves they had at hand (Mk 8:1-c9; Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39; Lk 9: 10-17; Jn 6: 1-13).

Jesus' is a spirituality of shore-less compassion. It is not only our physical ills and needs that move His Heart to intervene creatively, but the wounds and filth of our mangled hearts too prompt Him to act on our behalf. Once, He was the guest of a Pharisee. As they ate at table, a woman comes in, falls at Jesus' feet weeping, washing them with her tears, wiping them with her hair, kissing them reverently and anointing them with fragrant ointment. The host was disappointed that Jesus accepted the woman's services instead of ordering her out for she was a harlot. Jesus read the man's thoughts and challenged him by contrasting his meager hospitality with the woman's abundant respect and love. What the woman did pointed to the greater pardon she had experienced and her deep conversion. The repentance and return of a sinner is worth celebrating. For, people matter (Lk 7:36-50; cf. Lk 15; Mt 9:10-13; 18:12-14).

5. The Spiritual Man

5.1. The whole being of Jesus with his entire life is deeply rooted in, and permeated by, the Holy Spirit. His very conception was effected by the Spirit's overshadowing of Mary, His Mother (Lk 1:35-38). At His presentation in the temple, Spirit-led people like Simeon and Anna joined in, bearing witness to His Messianic identity (Lk 2:25-38). The wisdom in which the boy Jesus grew as He advanced in years is probably a reference to the influence on Him of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 2.40-50). But it was at His baptism in the Jordan that He experienced a soul-shaking on-coming of the Spirit (Lk 3:21), From that moment on, Jesus' heart and life were governed, guided and shaped by God's Holy Spirit. "At once the Spirit drove Him out into the desert and He remained in the

desert for forty days" (Mk 1:12-13), Jesus took time to reflect on His Jordan experience, to pray over the mission given Him, to discern the path He should follow and the friends He should choose. But finally, "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit... He came to Nazareth... and went... into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read" (Lk 4:14-17), and this is what He read from the Isaiah scroll:

> *"'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*
> *because He has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.*
> *He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives,*
> *and recovery of sight to the blind,*
> *to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord"* (Lk 4:18-19; Isa 61:1-2; 58;6; cf., Lev 25:10-12)

Such is Jesus' manifesto, His mission programme, and His spirituality. He is open to, touched by and concerned with the life and experience of the impoverished, the imprisoned, the blindfolded, and the downtrodden. He is here sent by God and equipped by the Spirit to end people's victimisation, to defend their rights, and to lead a struggle for a more humane social order and for "economics as if people mattered" (cf., Mt 5-7; 11. 25-30; Mk 10:17-31; Lk 1:51-53; 6:20-42; Jn 13).

5.2. All His life, Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit, listened to Her voice, and followed Her Guidance. So He always did God's will, did what was pleasing to God, and cared deeply for the welfare, the wholeness and the happiness of all God's children. He urged all to be born from above, to be reborn of the Spirit, to be taught by Her and led by Her into all truth (Lk 10:21; Jn 3:2-8; 14:15-17, 21 15:26-27; 16:7-15).

Jesus himself is a great reservoir of the Spirit. From His Heart the Spirit flows like rivers of living water, of which all may drink who thirst for eternal life. "...whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (In 4:7-1 5). "On the

last day...of the feast (of Tabernacles), Jesus stood up and exclaimed, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture says: 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him. He said this with reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive" (Jn 7:37-39). This precisely is what happened on Calvary soon after Jesus died on the cross. "... a soldier thrust his lance into (Jesus') side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eye witness has testified and his testimony is true" (hi 19: 34-35). After His resurrection Jesus shares His Spirit under a different symbol. On the evening of the first Easter Sunday, Jesus appeared to His disciples, wished them peace, made them heirs to His own God-given mission, and then, "he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit!" (Jn. 20:19-22). Finally, just before His ascension, Jesus directs his followers not to leave Jerusalem, "but to wait for the promise of the Father," which is their "baptism with the Holy Spirit" (Ac 1:4-5). The promise was fulfilled on Pentecost Day when the Holy Spirit filled Jesus' followers, coming suddenly "with a noise like a strong driving wind" and appearing to them like "tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them," and enabling them to speak in different tongues (Ac 2:14).

The community of Jesus, therefore, starts its pilgrimage through history as a spiritual reality: Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, responsive to the Spirit's inspirations and to Her interest in human well-being, growth, solidarity, creativity, and mutual love and service. The church has experience of the Spirit in Her gifts of tongues and other charisms, as well as the new life style the believers devised and realized, of economic community and sharing in an egalitarian fraternity (Ac 2~1-2I, 42-47; 4:32-37). The Spirit guides Philip to evangelize an Ethiopian (Ac S:26"39). Once, as Peter was introducing Jesus to a gentile family "the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word," to the astonishment of 'the circumcised believers' (Ac 10:44-48). Once, when prophets and teachers were together in the church at Antioch, the Holy Spirit

asked that two of them, namely Saul and Barnabas, be set apart for the work to which 1 (the Spirit) have celled them... So, sent forth by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia..." (Ac 13:1 -4). In all such cases we gain some insight into the spirituality of the early church as it let itself be taught and led by the Spirit, as it remained sensitive to the Spirit's concerns and collaborated with Her for the liberation and wholeness of peoples.

5.3. Jesus, then, was a deeply spiritual man, entirely open to the Holy Spirit, joyfully co-operating with Her purposes; sharing Her compassion and continuing Her loving care for the afflicted in particular, giving hope to the desperate, and recognition and honour to the despised; gifting health and wholeness to the sick and the deformed; restoring freedom and dignity to the enslaved and the oppressed; siding with the poor and the powerless in their struggles to regain their rights and to put an end to inhumanity and injustice of every sort; exposing savagery and violence camouflaged as patriotism; and naming exploitation that comes disguised as advancement. Jesus directed people's gaze to the Reign of God that was breaking in with His presence and services and to the beauty of life in the peace, love and solidarity of the Reign.

6. Today

6.1. Spirituality for today consists in openness and commitment to the Reign/Kingdom of God which Jesus embodied in His Person, served all His life, and announced in His ministry. He directed us to pray for it to break in: "Father, your Kingdom come!" God's Reign means a new life and a new world, different from the one shaped by Caesars and Presidents ancient and modern; different from this broken and blood-stained world of ours. To be spiritual is to dream of a new world of justice and peace, love and life, equality and solidarity. To be spiritual today is to stand with the millions of women and men in the World Social Forum, and affirm that another world is possible, and to strive together for its realization.

6.2. The new world will be envisaged, designed and built around people: with children, women and men as its centre and meaning. The securing and fostering of human welfare, dignity, freedom, creativity and solidarity will be the goal and purpose of the new social relations we weave, of all new political processes, all economic dealings and cultural developments. In so doing we are but following the path God has himself traced for us. For "God so loved the world that He gave His only son" for its salvation (Jn2: 16-17; Ps 8). For us humans and for our salvation God's Son descended from heaven and became human, like us in everything except sinning (Jn 1:14; Heb 2:14-IS; 4:15; Phil 2:5-11). "The Sabbath was made for human well-being, and not humans for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:23-27). Religion too is for people, as are also social structures and economic organization and practice. The only valid and worthwhile economics is "economics as if people mattered" (E.F. Schumacher, 1973). A spirituality that follows God, places the Human at the centre of concern. The Human is the decisive value, governing all else.

6.3. An essential factor in today's spirituality will be the weaving and cherishing of a vision of world solidarity, recognizing the equality, dignity and rights of all persons, groups and nations, irrespective of geography, race, colour, culture, gender, age, or status. Recover the world-view and spirituality underlying India's ancient insight which holds that the wide world 'is a dear little family" (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*). The same truth and spirituality is affirmed in the Gospel prayer, the 'Our Father,' a programme of openness and obedience to God; of love for neighbours and sharing of resources; and of mutual forgiveness and acceptance. Humankind indeed is one family, in the presence of the one Father of us all, living in one home and sharing a common table, namely the earth and its resources; each one breathing in what the others breathe out; and walking the same pilgrim way together towards our common destiny. Ours to strive to realize and live the global solidarity and love throbbing within the Our Father.

6.4. The sharing just mentioned of the earth and its resources calls for fresh emphasis. For we have tended quietly to overlook the repeated insistence of God's Word on wealth-sharing as befits God's beloved family. In the opening chapters of Genesis, God gifts the earth with all its wealth and wonder to the first humans. representatives of the whole of humanity, and not to Sir so and so. The title of their descendants to an equitable share of the gift stands, and must be honoured always and everywhere (Gen 1; 26-30; 2: 8-9,15-17). Through Moses, God ordered Israel to have a relaxation of debts every seven-year period: "Every creditor shall relax his claim on what he has loaned his neighbour, he must not press his neighbour."... Nay more!... "there should be no one of you in need," (Dt.15:1-4), that is, see to it that there are no poor among you, that no member of the family is denied his/her share at the earth-table the Lord has so richly laid. That is why Yahweh who does justice is always on the side of the oppressed (PS 103:6). That is why Jesus tells the rich to distribute their wealth to the poor (Mk.10:17-30), and congratulates a rich person, Zacchaeus, who took Jesus seriously and became free and whole (Lk 19:1.10). Paul appreciates and praises the generous wealth-sharing by the churches of Macedonia, and exhorts the church at Corinth (and elsewhere) to become joyful givers (1 Cor 8 and 9), "so that there may be equality" (1Cor 8:13-15) and that thanksgiving may abound (1Cor 9:7-12). Luke bears witness to the early church's adoption of a communitarian life-style with economic equality and balance which Paul as we have seen commends. This manner of common life was realized and lived in the context and in the spirit of the Eucharist. (Acts.2:42-47; 4:32-37; 1Cor.1:17-22). Scholars tell us that this beautiful social experiment lasted in the Christian communities around the Mediterranean for some three centuries and that it began to weaken and get submerged only when the Cross was force-married to the sword and the church succumbed to imperial mores and power-structures and to the feudal lord-serf traditions. It is time now for us to wake up, listen afresh to God's Word and to respond to God's radical challenges, and to work together to build a human world of equality, equity, justice,

and love; and evolve a spirituality of global family hood and table-fellowship, overcoming the rich-poor divide which is an insult to both reason and faith.

6.5. The gaps and the gulfs between the rich and the poor in every nation and among the nations of the world are becoming wider and deeper. An intricate system of exploitation, perfected through a few centuries of imperialist-colonial domination and deceit, has been set up on a global scale to entrap the many and benefit a few: a system which places profit and power above people and their life, and which has a history of accumulating capital through slave trade, slave labour and armed conquests. To be spiritual today is to hear the cry of the poor as God does, take their side in analyzing and denouncing the subhuman system, and work with all sensitive people to replace the system with one that honors people's rights, and accords with the social character of human existence, a distant but telling reflection of the Triune Divine Community.

6.6. The Human is bound up with the cosmic. Our life, growth and endeavours are interwoven with nature and its processes. An important and inspiring aspect of spirituality consists, therefore, in being open to the beauty and wonder around us. To the spiritual eye, nature is God's love-gift, a sacrament of God's presence and self-giving. To the spiritual person, nature is numinous, a divine beckoning and signalling to us, something God is saying to us which we can understand if we listen with our hearts. There is a whole tradition of Eco-spirituality in world-religions and world-poetry. "Silence, my soul, these trees are prayers," sang Tagore. (Stray Birds) "The heavens declare the glory of God" sang the psalmist (Ps 19; 29; 93; 96; 148). Trees, flowers, birds, harvests, rivers, floods, foxes, are present in Jesus' teaching as conveyors of his message (cf. Mt 7:9-11, 18-19,22; 8:20; 13:18-34; 18:10-13; 21:18-22; Jn 4:7-15; 6: 32-35: 7:37-39). Some aspects of His personal Mystery are represented by nature's phenomena: Jesus is seed that falls and dies only to sprout and rise (Jn 12:24). He is a Vine with us for branches; and He is the world's Light dispelling

darkness (Jn. 15; 12: 24; 8.14). Today, however, we have to get beyond this contemplative and poetic eco-spirituality. For, an irresponsible, selfish and greedy lifestyle is fast polluting, poisoning, over-using and destroying the eco-system. Eco-spirituality, therefore, today, takes a stand to combat this crime, and organises people to reject consumerism and its lying propaganda, to adopt simple lifestyles, to use things with mental maturity and responsibility to the community, to the earth, to future generations and to the Creator, ensuring that no plant or animal species is lost for ever, and that nobody tomorrow is deprived of the blessing we know and enjoy.

6.7. We live in an era of incredible violence, massacres, bloodshed and destruction. The last century witnessed two world wars; two major revolutions; the anti-Semitic holocaust which consumed some six million innocent victims, the unprovoked systematic destruction of Vietnam, land and people, with bombs, orange yellow defoliants, and generous bullets; the criminal dropping of nuclear bombs on two Japanese cities, killing two hundred thousand or more in a second, and mortally infecting many more for life; the regimes of military dictators and expert assassins and torturers of Latin America, trained and upheld by powerful governments in return for economic privileges; and the sufferings inflicted by apartheid regimes on native populations, especially in Africa. And this century, though so young, has its own history of bloody conflicts and lies as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechniya and the Congo. We are also aware of the large resources, billions of dollars, spent each week on manufacturing and stock-piling weapons of mass destruction while millions of people suffer for lack of resources to meet basic needs of food, shelter, medicine and elementary education. Spirituality in such a situation will consist in rejecting and resisting every form of violence and war, and in recognizing these as disastrous vestiges of ancient savagery surreptitiously feeding on advanced human science and technology. Violent conflicts are signs and exhibitions of mental under-development, the inability of disagreeing parties to sit down and

talk things over, to reason together, to listen to each other, to argue points as honest and mature men and women, and move towards solutions acceptable and honorable to all concerned. To be spiritual today is to go on striving to replace, in our hearts and in the community of peoples, the jungle-culture of instinctive fury and bloody claws and teeth with the culture of humane reasonableness, gentleness and sincere co-operation for the common good.

7. Conclusion

Spirituality is named after the Spirit of God, The Spirit is ever beckoning to us to be open to realities in us and around us; to let reality stir us, disturb us, challenge us, and move us to joy, to sorrow, to anger, to action. The Spirit is urging us to hear the song and the cry of reality, human and cosmic, personal and social. She is signalling to us to respond relevantly and adequately, to respond in the way She Herself does: that is, eliminating the negative, wiping away the tears, binding up the wounds, lifting up the lowly; ending greed, hatred and violence, and fostering the gentle, the beautiful and the loving — all for the common good, the welfare of all humankind, and for the greater praise and glory of God, the glory of God being the Human, fully alive, whole and happy, flowering and fruitful.

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The Spirituality of a Diocesan Priest

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Abstract

A diocesan priest has often been considered inferior to a religious priest. The Second Vatican Council neglected the diocesan priest to a large extent. In this article the author pays attention first to those means that are more characteristic or more appropriate to the specific spirituality of a diocesan priest, and then takes up some common spiritual means to holiness which have a particular application to diocesan priests. Finally, the author mentions certain aspects of Indian spirituality that would help diocesan priests in India to be more inculturated. The diocesan priest is truly called to the challenging, even heroic, task of bridging the two poles of the sacred and the secular, of prayer and work, grace and effort. He resolves this polarity by becoming a contemplative in action, by surrendering himself to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and at the same time spending himself in selfless pastoral service of the people entrusted to him. His is a secular spirituality that does not keep the two poles juxtaposed in a happy balance, but that rather brings about a total compenetration of the two poles, so that prayer and action become but two aspects of the same total dedication and service. He does this by configuring himself to Christ who also united together the two poles of the sacred and the secular, the divine and the human.

Keywords

Secular spirituality, incardination, inculturation, Indian spirituality, evangelical counsels.

I. Introduction

For many centuries it has been customary to speak of the specific charism or spirituality of different religious

congregations, but the reference to a specific spirituality for diocesan priests is a rather recent phenomenon. There is of course a spirituality of the priesthood common to all priests, but it is not uncommon for people to wonder whether there is a spirituality that is specific to a diocesan priest (D'Souza 1994: 738). In fact, a diocesan priest has often been considered inferior to a religious priest (Ponnore 1998: 1-2). In this context it is worth noting that, even though the Second Vatican Council opted to use the term "diocesan" instead of "secular" – which in the eyes of many had a pejorative meaning – it neglected the diocesan priest to a large extent. Except for *Optatam Totius*, which basically deals with the training of diocesan candidates to the priesthood, Vatican II has no document exclusively dealing with the diocesan priest. While it makes just a few cursory remarks on the diocesan priesthood in a couple of places, it has whole documents on the bishops, the religious and the laity. Moreover the post-Vatican synodal and post-synodal documents too pay scant attention to the diocesan priesthood as such, even if they deal with the ministerial priesthood in general, i.e., with both religious and diocesan priesthood. Diocesan priests thus appear to be a neglected lot in the official Church documents (Ponnore 2001: 523-524).

In this article we shall pay attention first to those means that are more characteristic or more appropriate to the specific spirituality of a diocesan priest, and then we shall take up some common spiritual means to holiness which have a particular application to diocesan priests. Finally, we shall briefly mention certain aspects of Indian spirituality that would help diocesan priests in India to be more inculturated.

II. Incardination: The Specific Characteristic of Diocesan Priests

The Pastoral Guide for Diocesan Priests in Churches Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (henceforth abbreviated as *Pastoral Guide*) says, "The priest becomes specifically *diocesan* by his incardination in a diocese,

in which he remains united to the bishop by a new title and is placed in a special way at the service of the particular *communion* which is the diocese. As a diocesan priest, he is called to build up communion between the members of the local community, and also to enlarge it through the evangelization of those who are still outside" (3). Furthermore it asserts, "Diocesan priests find their specific spirituality by living this reality [the special call of ministerial priests to sanctity] in pastoral charity, in communion with their bishop as successor of the apostles, forming a priestly family in the 'presbyterium', at the permanent service of the local Church through incardination, and available for the mission of universal salvation" (19). Incardination is not a mere juridical or organizational need, but implies spiritual attitudes and actions which spell out the specific spirituality and pastoral mission of the diocesan priest in the socio-cultural context of his particular diocese (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 31). The various aspects of the spirituality of the diocesan priest hinge on this specific characteristic of the diocesan priest's incardination in a particular church, in which the universal Church is concretely present. The diocesan priest's incardination in a particular diocese involves a relationship with the bishop of the diocese, with the presbyterium and with the people of the diocese.

(a) Relation with the Bishop

The diocesan priest is in communion with his bishop since he is the pastor of the particular church in which the diocesan priest is incardinated. Loyal attachment to, and generous cooperation with, his bishop helps the diocesan priest to grow in sanctity (*Lumen Gentium*, 41). His relationship with his bishop is hierarchical[1] as well as spiritual. Accepting in his bishop the authority of Christ the Supreme Pastor, he cooperates with him in a spirit of obedience, respect and love. This relationship between the priests and their bishop is based on faith and is strengthened through respect for each other's roles and through mutual trust, and friendly and brotherly love (*Pastoral Guide*, 5). It is only through communion with his bishop that the diocesan

priest can meaningfully exercise his priestly ministry in his diocese. Although all priests, whether diocesan or religious, are associated through their ordination and ministry with the bishops (*Lumen Gentium*, 28), the diocesan priests have a special relationship with their bishop, cooperating with him in the building up of the particular community in which they are incardinated. They collaborate with him more than the religious do, and they have a greater solidarity with the diocese and the diocesan structures. This relationship between the diocesan priests and their bishop develops a deeper faith, hope and love in both of them (Ponnore 1998: 258-259).

(b) Relation with the Presbyterium

Sharing in the one common ordination and mission, all priests are united with the one brotherhood of the presbyterium. This should result in mutual support that is holistic – spiritual, material, personal and pastoral – and in loving collaboration in the Lord's vineyard (*Lumen Gentium*, 28). Living in a community of caring and loving priests can be a great help to one's spiritual and psychological growth, through mutual encouragement, friendly advice, brotherly love and understanding forgiveness. Priests' Associations too can be very beneficial to the member priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 8). A diocesan priest is of course particularly united with the priests of his own diocese. In addition to being mutually helpful, this brotherly love among priests is a powerful witness of Christian love to the people in the diocese (Ponnore 1998: 260).

While the importance of community life even for diocesan priests is highlighted in more recent Church documents, it should be pointed out that it is nevertheless not an absolute requirement, but a strong recommendation (*Pastoral Guide*, 26). Religious, on the other hand, are expected to live in communities. Even when religious are staying alone due to circumstances, they are generally assigned to a community, which they visit from time to time. The diocesan priest cannot and should not be a loner, but

he must be able to live alone, to stand on his own feet and not be so dependent on a community[2], for there are times and places when a diocesan priest may be quite isolated from his fellow priests. It needs to be emphasized that the primary community of the diocesan priest is the people he is serving.

(c) Relationship with the People

Although he may live in a community of priests, and this is even recommended as a very good thing, his case is not like that of religious, who belong to a community of members who share the same goals, charism, etc. In addition to this community, the religious may work with, say, the larger community of a parish. But for the diocesan priest, his parish or diocese is his real and primary community. Some religious may work in a parish or for a diocese, but this relationship is temporary and accidental, while in the case of the diocesan priests the relationship is essential and permanent.[3] Religious may at times find themselves torn between the demands and requirements of their own communities and that of the parish or diocese, but not so the diocesan priest, who is essentially linked with the diocese in which he is incardinated.

It is this essential characteristic of the diocesan priest, viz., his incardination in a particular diocese, that colours and shapes the specific spirituality of the diocesan priest. We shall now briefly present the contours of this spirituality.

III. Secular Spirituality

The spirituality of the diocesan priest is a secular[4] one, a spirituality of involvement in the world. On the other hand, the spirituality of the religious is somewhat inward-looking; it emphasizes the sacred, the holy: there is a sense of separation from the world, even in the case of apostolic religious institutes, and even when one is involved in the work of liberation and justice. But the diocesan priest's life emphasizes the secular aspect. In a way, it could be said that when St. Ignatius founded the Jesuits, he was making religious life diocesan in some ways.

This secular spirituality implies a number of attitudes and qualities. Firstly, the diocesan priest must be totally available to the people. Unlike the religious, he is not bound by rules and regulations or community obligations. Even religious belonging to active congregations may have certain restrictions on their availability, since they also have obligations towards their own communities, but not so the diocesan priest. This, I think, is one of the hallmarks of a diocesan priest. He must be ready to make adjustments in the times of his prayer, rest and personal interests for the sake of his people. In this he follows Jesus who made time even for little children (Mk 10.13-16), and was readily available to people – who were like sheep without a shepherd – even though he had not had time to eat and had retired to rest and even when it was getting very late (Mk 6. 31-44). In fact, when his relatives heard that in his zeal to attend to the needs of people he did not have time even to have a meal, they came to take charge of him, convinced he was out of his mind (Mk 3. 20-21)!

However, the diocesan priest cannot allow things to come to such a state that he has to regularly sacrifice prayer for the sake of work. "Pastoral tasks may at times modify the order, the time, and even the manner of exercises of piety, but they should never eliminate prayer." (*Pastoral Guide*, 24). The diocesan priest must learn how to be Martha and Mary at the same time, how to be a contemplative in action, where prayer and action go hand in hand. His prayer should energize his works and his works should give power and joy to his prayer. The prayer of the diocesan priest has to be apostolic. This means that, besides occasionally retiring into solitude to pray, just as Jesus did, he must conduct services *for* the people and *with* the people, and with their cooperation and participation. He must get used to praying with the people, and to find God in all persons, events and activities. He needs to develop the ability to find God, not *in spite of* the world, but *through* the world. In fact he grows in spirituality through his ministry, which does not take him away from Christ but rather brings him in intimate union with him (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 14). In this context, it is worth noting that the Vatican II Decree

On the Ministry and Life of Priests (in Latin, *De Prebyterorum Ministerio et Vita*), i.e., the document *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, was earlier entitled the other way around, viz., *On Priestly Life and Ministry* (in Latin, *De Vita et Ministerio sacerdotali*). In the final title the order was changed, giving prime importance to the ministerial function of the priest, rather than his life and status, thus bringing out the idea that it is his ministry that shapes the priest's spiritual life (Lécuyer 1969: 195; Wulf 1969: 210, 214).

Inculturation is another aspect of this secular spirituality. Following the principle of the Incarnation, he will immerse himself in the life and culture of his diocese, adopting, adapting – when modification is necessary – and, especially, assimilating into his prayer, thought, language and way of life the positive cultural elements of his diocese. At the same time, of course, he should also follow the principle of the Paschal Mystery – the Death and Resurrection of Christ, which leads to newness of life –, transforming those aspects of the culture (e.g., racism, the caste system or male chauvinism) which are in need of redemption. Again, here too, inculturation is to be expected more from the diocesan priest than the religious for, as the *Pastoral Guide* asserts, "The primary subject of inculturation is the local Churches". It should also be noted that inculturation is an ongoing process, involving "the continuous integration of the Christian experience in a culture, which is never stable or closed" (*Pastoral Guide*, 11).

Moreover this secular spirituality requires involvement in the lives of the people. The diocesan priest's secular involvement has to be much more than that of the religious. He should pay particular attention to the families, since they are the cells of society (*Pastoral Guide*, 15), exercise pastoral care for the sick and the aged (*Pastoral Guide*, 16) and be a friend and guide to the youth (*Pastoral Guide*, 12). In accordance with the needs of the times, the prophetic dimension has to be stressed. A preferential option for the poor, conscientization, working for liberation and prudently fighting for justice (*Pastoral Guide*, 9)

are really more proper to the diocesan priest than to the religious. These are in fact intrinsic to the spirituality of a diocesan priest.

Since he does not live a cloistered life but constantly interacts with people, it is very important for the diocesan priest to keep abreast of developments in theology and other disciplines so that he can respond appropriately and wisely to the challenges of the times and the pressing problems of his people.

Precisely because of this outward-looking attitude, which is so characteristic of a diocesan priest, he cannot be ghetto-minded, thinking about and being involved in only the affairs of his own Catholic flock. He has to be open to the other churches and to other religions, in fact open also to atheists and different ideologies. His secularity must have this universal outlook. In the context of India, it is not only necessary to study, but also to experience, to some extent, the non-Christian religions and engage in dialogue with them, so that we may be mutually enriched.

As a pastor the diocesan priest is always with the people, and hence he would spend a good part of his life preaching the word of God and administering the sacraments. Through this he strengthens the faith and nourishes the spiritual life of the people. Here again it is vital for the diocesan priest to be up-to-date not only in theory but also in practice. He should be in constant contact with Scripture in his prayer, reading, study and preaching (*Pastoral Guide*, 23). In the context of the sacraments, the Eucharist is, and should be, at the centre of the diocesan priest's life and of the community entrusted to him. He has to find ways and means of building up the people into a community and helping them to grow to maturity through the Eucharist. Precisely because of the pastoral emphasis, the diocesan priest should have a deep sense of liturgy. He should be a real animator of the liturgical life of the people. He must be able to link life with the liturgy, make it more inculturated, significant and meaningful for the people, and encourage their active participation (*Pastoral Guide*, 8).

In his interactions with people, the diocesan priest must keep away from casteism or any other form of discrimination, treating

everyone equally, and yet having the courage to defend the weak and the oppressed. He should also involve the people as partners, exercising participative leadership through parish councils and other means. While being involved in the lives of the people, he must also cultivate true detachment. In addition, in a very special way he needs to develop real discernment, remaining tuned to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and reading the signs of the times. Cooperating with God's grace, he should endeavour to foster this secular spirituality in his thinking, his prayer, his attitudes, his entire lifestyle, so that he becomes a true contemplative in action.

IV. Particular Application of some Common Spiritual Means

In the above section, we treated aspects of spirituality which are more typical of, or appropriate to, the diocesan priest. However, this does not mean that all of them pertain exclusively to the diocesan priest. There is always a certain overlapping between different kinds of spirituality. We shall now take up certain common spiritual means, but which have a particular application in the spiritual life of a diocesan priest.

As a Christian and a priest, the diocesan priest shares in the spirituality of baptized Christians and that of ministerial priests in general. Like them he too is called to a life of holiness and uses various means which are common to Christians and to priests in general. Such for instance are prayer, the sacraments, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, the evangelical counsels, etc. Some of these means, however, have a more specific application in the life of a diocesan priest (Ponnore 1998: 236-238).

(1) Pastoral Charity

The spirituality of every priest consists mainly in living out the pastoral love of Christ (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 13) . In the case of the diocesan priest, this pastoral charity is specifically exercised in the concrete context of his diocese. Christ's pastoral

charity consists in his self-gift, dedicating himself to others in service even unto the Cross. As the Good Shepherd (Jn 10.11, 14), he lives out this pastoral love for his flock. He is moved to compassion for the crowds that were like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9.35-36) He knows them personally, calling each by name (Jn 10.3), and goes in search of those who have strayed away from the flock (Mt 18.12-14) He gives himself to his Church as the Bridegroom to his Bride. In his spiritual life the priest is called to live out this self-gift of Christ's pastoral charity, loving his people as spouse and mother. His people are his primary interest, even to the extent of giving his life for his flock. The Church is the Bride of Christ, hence it is obvious that "only in loving and serving Christ the Head and Spouse will charity become a source, criterion, measure and impetus for the priest's love and service to the Church, the Body and Spouse of Christ" (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 23). This pastoral charity is the unifying principle that integrates the priest's interior life, his outward actions and his apostolic ministry, and enables him to bring harmony and peace in the socio-cultural context of a broken and fragmented world (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 21-23). If every priest is called to reflect in his life and ministry the pastoral love of Christ in the ecclesial and socio-cultural context, this is especially so in the case of the diocesan priest who, through his incardination in a particular diocese, is in more direct and intimate contact with the people of that diocese.

This pastoral charity, especially in the context of the diocesan priest's particular church, has three aspects. (a) A Christological dimension: Maintaining an intimate union with Christ, he should strive to be a good shepherd, serving his flock, caring for his people with spousal and maternal love, and searching for the sheep that have strayed from the flock. (b) An ecclesial aspect: His union with Christ leads him to an ecclesial communion, i.e., a communion with his bishop, his brother priests and with the people whom he serves. This ecclesial communion should also lead him to communion with Christians of other denominations in a spirit of ecumenism, with people of other faiths and even atheists in a

spirit of dialogue, and indeed with the cosmos to bring about an ecological balance in our world. (c) A pastoral dimension: He must learn to be compassionate to those who are suffering, sharing their anxieties and problems, helping them to fight injustice and liberating them from the shackles of poverty and oppression. By leading his people to God and building them up into a community, he himself enters into deeper union with God and his people (Ponnore 1998: 248-285).

(2) The Evangelical Counsels

The diocesan priest does not practise the evangelical counsels in the same way as religious. Religious undertake the practice of the evangelical counsels as vows, but this is not so in the case of the diocesan priests. Of course, it is sometimes light-heartedly said that religious take the vows, while diocesan priests keep them!

In living the evangelical counsel of poverty, the diocesan priest may surely possess things and does not need the permission of superiors to dispose of them. But he is still called, like all priests, to witness to poverty through a simple lifestyle that avoids superfluous things, paying attention to the prophetic dimension of poverty, and in a spirit of solidarity with the poor (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 30). In fact, precisely because he is a diocesan priest, he must live in greater solidarity with the poor than even the religious. Particularly in the context of poor countries like India, he is expected to live a simple and fairly frugal life. He cannot build the community, if the people do not experience him as one of them.

Similarly, the diocesan priest does not practise obedience to his bishop in the same way as religious to their superiors. Religious are subject to their superiors more radically and universally: their obedience also includes the personal sphere. Unlike religious, diocesan priests are subject in personal matters to their bishop only to a certain extent, e.g., in connection with their public behaviour or for going on leave. The diocesan priest's obedience is in the realm of the apostolate. Yet, it can happen

that, from the human point of view, the obedience to his bishop in the case of a diocesan priest may turn out to be more difficult if the bishop is not understanding enough, for a diocesan priest has to deal with his bishop more or less permanently, whereas in the case of religious, their superiors change much more frequently (Ponnore 1998: 248).

It should be pointed out that the practice of celibacy is not obligatory on diocesan priests belonging to some Eastern Churches. In fact, obligatory celibacy for all priests of the three rites in India blurs the distinction between religious and diocesan priests. While emphasizing the importance and prophetic value of priestly celibacy, a proposal of the 1990 Synod of Bishops recognizes the discipline of some of the Oriental Churches as well as the exceptional cases of married priests who have converted to Catholicism from non-Catholic Christian denominations (Cited in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 29).[5]

Although this article does not concern itself with the formation and ongoing formation of diocesan priests, both of which are of prime importance, I would like to draw attention to a few items in this connection. One is that, although there are various formators who exercise different responsibilities, it is the seminarian himself who is the subject and agent of his own formation (*Priestly Formation*, 10.1). Secondly, seminaries should arrange adequate programmes and experiments that bring the seminarians in touch with people, with their joys and sorrows and their day-to-day life. Thirdly, in its guidelines on seminary formation, issued on April 25, 1987, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples explicitly states, "To promote the spirituality proper to the diocesan priest, it is fitting that the formators be chosen from among the diocesan clergy" (*Some Guidelines on Formation in Major Seminaries*, 4). Fourthly, in spite of several Church Documents insisting on the ongoing formation for all priests, very few take the trouble of updating themselves. If professionals like lawyers and doctors do not keep themselves abreast of new legislation and its interpretation and the latest developments in medicine, they will soon lose their

clients and patients. On the other hand, there are many who have been priests for several years, but have never read a book on theology or other relevant material ever since their ordination! I do not know whether this speaks volumes of the patience and understanding of the laity or of their indifference. With these few remarks, let us now move to Indian spirituality for the diocesan priest in India.

V. Indian Spirituality for the Diocesan Priest in India

It is striking that, while the Indian religions have brought forth a whole galaxy of spiritual luminaries, Christianity in India has hardly produced any saints. Why is this so? There are several causes for this, but I think one reason is not only that our theology, but also our prayer and spirituality are not Indian. The West continues to produce spiritual giants like Teilhard de Chardin, Charles de Foucauld, Chiara Lubich, etc., but Christianity in India does not yet have an Indian soul. Even the formators and spiritual directors in seminaries often do not know and do not practise enough of Indian spirituality. But if priests, whether diocesan or religious, have to make a real difference it is high time that we not only develop but, more importantly, practise Indian Christian spiritualities.

India is a cradle of many religions, each of which has different spiritualities. In fact, even within each religion there are various spiritualities, so we cannot speak of one Indian spirituality. Without going into an exhaustive and detailed treatment, we shall mention certain aspects of Indian spiritualities which would be particularly helpful to the diocesan priest.

Deep religious experience (*anubhava*) is especially important in the context of our Indian tradition. In India *gurus* are recognized by popular acclaim: people witness their holiness and spontaneously go to them for guidance. In Christianity, on the other hand, spiritual leaders and guides are often appointed. However, those who are thus appointed may not necessarily be persons who have experienced God deeply (Sheth 1999: 84). The

Christian laity too want to see their priests as men of God. Since diocesan priests interact constantly and closely with the laity, a deep religious experience is a *sine qua non* for them to be effective pastors. Again, in the Indian context of the necessity of a *guru*, it is essential for even senior priests to seek the guidance of experienced and holy spiritual directors.

In the Indian tradition there is a deep sense of the sacredness of time and place, even if it is not always practised. The celebration of the sacred mysteries should be marked by devotion and unction. Busy and time-pressed though he may be, the priest should not go through them as a chore to be hurriedly done with. On the other hand, since he is not a mere cultic priest, the early Vedic path of ritual action (*karma-mārga*), where ritualism was the be-all and end-all, is surely not the road for the diocesan priest to follow. On the other hand, there is much in the Indian rituals of sacrifice (*yajña*) and ritual worship (*pūjā*) that can be judiciously integrated into our liturgical services so as to make them more inculturated and put us in deeper communion with nature (Sheth 1998, Pt II: 764-768).

The Upaniṣads advocated the *jñana-mārga*, the path of knowledge, which led to renunciation, to fleeing from the world. But the *Bhagavad-gītā* discouraged renunciation of action and retirement into the forest (3.4, 3.8) and advised not to give up action, but engage in action, without however selfishly desiring the fruits for one self (2.47, 18.6). One must be *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Furthermore, it advocates working for the welfare of the world (*loka-saṅgraha*), without being attached to it (3.26). The *Gītā* calls this means of selfless action *karma-yoga*. It is this kind of secular spirituality, which requires both deep involvement in the life of his people and real detachment that is proper to the diocesan priest.

The *Gītā* gives preference to a third road, that of loving devotion, which it calls *bhakti-yoga*. Combining *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*, it urges people to lovingly offer all their actions to God (9.27), who is their only refuge (18.66) and loves them dearly

(18.65). While it criticized *jñāna-mārga*'s renunciation of the world, it appreciated its spirit of interiorization and meditation, and thus brought about a certain synthesis between the three ways of *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti yogas*, while giving the highest place to *bhakti* (Sheth 1998, Pt I: 687-688). This synthetic approach of the *Gītā* is eminently appropriate for the diocesan priest, who is expected to be a contemplative in action. While giving importance to loving devotion and selfless action, he should not neglect quiet meditation and inner silence.

The pastoral love of the priest is rooted in God's love for him and his love for God and manifests itself in his love for his people. Loving devotion or *bhakti* also blends together these vertical and horizontal dimensions of love. Moreover, the practice of the various types of *bhakti* will increase the much-needed affective aspect of the diocesan priest's spiritual life, for the present purāṇic practice of Hindu *bhakti* has a deep emotional colouring that, especially in certain types of *bhakti*, make even the spontaneous and intense Christian charismatic outpourings of feelings look rather pale. While many kinds of *bhakti* find their echo in different Christian forms of devotion, the diocesan priest can broaden his experience of devotion by adopting certain Hindu types of *bhakti* which are practically absent in Christianity, e.g., parental love (*vātsalya*) for God, which can be practised, for instance, at Christmas time towards the Child Jesus (Sheth 1984: 108-131; 1999: 70-86; 2001: 197).

The techniques of Yoga and other forms of meditation, such as Vipassanā (Insight), can greatly help the diocesan priest to improve his concentration and awareness, and enable him to keep calm and tranquil in spite of the hustle and bustle of his busy life.[6] In this context of various meditational techniques, it is worth pointing out that Hinduism, in which the soul has only a mistaken and apparent relationship with a body, paradoxically gives so much importance to the body in its rituals and meditational techniques. By contrast, in Christianity, in which soul and body are intrinsically united to form one being, the body is not taken seriously: it is involved so little in rituals, meditation and prayer.

This is very much the case with the Western Catholic Church and Protestantism than with the Eastern Rite Churches. The Roman liturgy hardly involves the body and so fails to grip the whole person, soul and body (Sheth 1998, Pt II: 766-767). As a Christian who believes in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and as a pastor who is very much in contact with flesh and blood people, the diocesan priest needs to develop a healthy spirituality of the body.

Buddhism can help bring home to the diocesan priest certain important spiritual attitudes and approaches, such as rising above caste and other prejudices, the necessity to avoid a fundamentalist interpretation of Scriptures, a relative freedom from dogmatism and narrow sectarianism, the importance and benefits of inculturation, the ideal of altruistic love, profound forbearance, and forgiveness and reconciliation (Sheth 1982: 23-26; 1988: 46-60; 2003: 79-97). A Christian will not agree with every Buddhist belief, e.g., the doctrine that there is no soul or substance, or that everything exists only for a moment or that, for Theravāda Buddhism, God does not exist. Nevertheless even such doctrines would help the diocesan priest to realize more deeply that things are ephemeral and that, as pilgrims on earth, we should not pin our ultimate hopes on passing things. Buddhism also offers a whole plethora of different meditational techniques, ranging from meditations for beginners to very high forms of concentration, from which one can choose according to one's spiritual needs and psychological background and preferences. Among these various techniques several Christians have tried out and benefited from the now quite popular Vipassanā (Insight), and also from the four Brahma-vihāras (Sublime States) through which one cultivates the virtues of universal friendship, compassion, joy and equanimity (Sheth [1973]: 106-110; 1974: 23-31; 2003: 90-96) – qualities that are vital especially for the diocesan priest.

An extremely important virtue in the Indian tradition is that of non-violence (*ahiṁsā*). There is no religion in the world that emphasizes this quality so much as Jainism, which goes to enormous lengths to prevent even the accidental hurting of all

kinds of life. It is not always realized that violence often springs from weakness and inferiority, while non-violence has an inner strength that can reduce the violent to helpless submission, or that non-violence benefits also the agent of non-violence by bringing inner peace and better health. The newspapers regularly report so many violent crimes, clashes and wars. Often we are even blissfully unaware of certain forms of violence in our modern 'civilized' world: boxing, for example, is a sport in which one human being physically hurts a fellow human being, so much so that boxers have even died in the ring, and yet it is a multi-million dollar business (Sheth 2001[1]: 73-76)! We are gradually becoming painfully conscious of the violence we inflict on nature, which eventually boomerangs on us! Christians will not accept the Jain belief that souls are reborn, and that too even in things which for others are purely material and not alive. Still, the Jain emphasis on non-violence can inspire us to be less violent not only to our fellow human beings, but also towards our mother Earth and nature in general. It goes without saying that the diocesan priest must not only preach but also practise non-violence, for it is his duty to bring peace and harmony in a world that is torn apart by so much violence. The Jain *syādvāda* (doctrine of 'it may be') teaches us that reality has many facets and that we cannot comprehend reality fully, so that we should be careful not to be so cocksure and absolutist in our views. This is a very important attitude in the context of inter-religious dialogue, one of the tasks in which the diocesan priest is expected to be engaged in, especially in India.

The high veneration that Sikhism accords to the *Guru Granth Sāhib* will remind the diocesan priest to find strength and nourishment for his spiritual life in the word of God, preaching and practising it and making it relevant to his people. The Sikh Scripture has integrated into itself the religious compositions of Hindus and Muslims. This can embolden the diocesan priest to also discover the diverse ways in which God has spoken to other peoples. One of the important things that a diocesan priest can learn from Sikhism is its freedom from clericalism, since it has

no separate priesthood: all, both men as well as women, are empowered to perform all the ceremonies and rituals. The Church urges all priests to follow their Master who came to serve and not to be served (Mt 20.28), and it reminds them that they are brothers to all the baptized, being members of one and the same body of Christ (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 9). Sikhism, which is more radical in this regard, can be a source of inspiration to priests, particularly to diocesan priests who have to daily rub shoulders with the laity, to take the Church's exhortation more to heart. The fact that in Sikhism men and women are equal can also prompt priests to shed their male chauvinism. Among the different forms of *bhakti*, Sikhism gives pride of place to remembering and reciting the name of God (*nām-simran*). While this Prayer of the Name has been very much in vogue in the Eastern Churches, it has not been popular in the Western Church. Nevertheless, more and more Latin Christians are slowly discovering the charm and joy of the now well-known Jesus Prayer (Sheth 1999: 72-75). Walking *The Way of a Pilgrim*, the diocesan priest can "pray unceasingly" even in the midst of his hectic pastoral activities.

The various tribal religions of India can help the diocesan priest to understand and appreciate more deeply the significance of community, and practise a more intimate relationship with earth and nature that will enable him to come into more direct contact with the Cosmic Christ.

These, then, are some of the facets of Indian spirituality that can serve to enrich and inculturate the spirituality of a diocesan priest in India. While paying particular attention to those aspects which are more pertinent to his call to be a contemplative in action, he should wisely choose, with the advice of his spiritual director, those elements that will be more suited to his own temperament, needs and circumstances, so that he may be a holy and effective pastor of his people.

We have dealt with some of the salient features of the spirituality of diocesan clergy, both those more specific or appropriate to diocesan priests as well as some aspects of lay or priestly

spirituality in general but having a particular application to diocesan priests. This does not mean that every diocesan priest is to be formed in one and the same mould or that his spirituality manifests itself in one and the same way all over the world. Although there is a spirituality common to all diocesan priests, the specific form it takes will depend very much on the socio-cultural context of each particular diocese (Ponnore 1998: 364-365). If anything, the spirituality of the diocesan priest has to be an inculturated one, both for his own growth in the Spirit and for the spiritual development of his particular flock.

Thus we see that the diocesan priest is truly called to the challenging, even heroic, task of bridging the two poles of the sacred and the secular, of prayer and work, grace and effort. He resolves this polarity by becoming a contemplative in action, by surrendering himself to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and at the same time spending himself in selfless pastoral service of the people entrusted to him. His is a secular spirituality that does not keep the two poles juxtaposed in a happy balance, but that rather brings about a total compenetration of the two poles, so that prayer and action become but two aspects of the same total dedication and service. He does this by configuring himself to Christ who also united together the two poles of the sacred and the secular, the divine and the human (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 14).

Notes

1. It is hierarchical in the sense that his priestly power is canonically or juridically determined by the bishop.
2. While community support is important, one should not have unrealistic expectations from one 's community.
3. This does not preclude diocesan priests from working at the national level or in other dioceses, when the need arises (*Pastoral Guide*, 5).
4. We are obviously taking secularity in the good sense of the word.
5. This point has not been explicitly mentioned by Ponnore (1998: 244-245) in his treatment of celibacy for the diocesan priest.

6. For the sake of completeness, we may mention the peculiar Hindu salvific path of hatred for God (Sheth 2000), which of course Christians would naturally fight shy of practising, just as they would not dare to practise some forms of tantrism (Sheth 1998: 695-696). References

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Book Review

Jerome Vallabaraj SDB, ***Empowering the Young towards Fullness of Life,*** Bangalore: Kristu Jyoti Publications, 2003, pp.267.

As the author mentions in the introduction, the purpose of this book is not to propose a particular model of youth ministry but to present some pastoral pedagogical non-negotiable principles, which should guide the youth ministry. He intends to do this in order to promote an adequate paradigm for ministering to the youth in the Indian context. The author's purposeful intention is highly commendable.

In chapter one he points out how theology and human sciences are involved in youth ministry and hence such a ministry has to move from a uni-disciplinary towards a trans-disciplinary approach. This chapter also deals with the two domains of reflection and action implicit in the youth ministry praxis. Moreover the chapter highlights how the double interpretative laws of pastoral theology and human sciences and the domains of reflection and action seem to suggest three perspectives such as the criterial, the contextual and the strategical needed at the level of planning and ministering to the youth. Chapter two spotlights the need to view the youth as persons seen in their relationship with themselves, with others, with the world at large and with God. Hence the youth ministry has to move from a quasi-mechanical to an auto-poetic perception of the youth and their world.

Chapter three starts with the youth context of India which is a multi-faith context and highlights the invitation of youth ministry to make a shift from an ecclesio-centric to regno-centric ministry in which kingdom of God is the symbol of fullness-of-life-for-all and becomes the motive and the ultimate goal. Taking into consideration the multi-faith situation of the youth in India this chapter advocates advaitic approach, which affirms unity in pluralism. Chapter four deals with empowering the youth through daily experiences to become agent-subjects of their own life in relationship through triple dialogue with other individuals, the social context and the multi-faith context. In this dialogue, the youth enter into a reciprocal relationship of mutual learning and growth. This chapter spells out four conditions such as fullness-of-life-all, accountability, self-impression and helpful systems and structure, which supply the framework for empowerment.

Chapter five starts with the correlative relationship among education,

evangelisation and youth ministry, which needs dialogue and then points out that the youth ministry is a task to educate by evangelising and evangelise by educating. This also means to educate by ministering and minister by educating. Chapter six, while talking about animating a process-oriented youth ministry, presents the meaning of animation along with the goal, principal elements, task and styles of animation. This invites the minister to move away from a mentality of dominance to an animating mentality supporting growth through change and participation in the central values of one's life. Chapter seven spells out the need for becoming a pastoral educative community, its implications and the required skills and practices to promote this community. The chapter invites the ministers to move from individuals-centred ministry to community- centred one.

Chapter eight expresses the need for visionary planning and highlights the characteristics, principal moments and invisible dynamic fields of such youth ministry planning. The chapter also indicates that it is the educative-pastoral community that plans and shares its responsibility in the ministry planning. While chapter nine speaks about the milieu and the setting for youth ministry as well as the criteria for the choice of a setting in youth ministry, chapter ten spells out a plan for youth ministry in India and highlights the salient features and an appraisal of the national youth ministry plan.

Though it is praise-worthy that the book gives an appraisal of a plan for youth ministry in India in the last chapter, the entire book is not adequately contextualised so that the pastoral pedagogical non-negotiable principles offered for the youth ministry may be concretely and culturally applicable in the Indian context. Moreover the urban, rural and tribal contexts of the Indian youth should have been taken into serious consideration while working out the pastoral pedagogical principles of youth ministry because the subculture of the rural and tribal Indian youth plays an important role in the pastoral pedagogy. The author of the book seems to keep in mind to a larege extent the urban context of the youth.

While dealing with education, evangelisation and ministry in chapter five, the essential link between evangelisation and inculturation should have been highlighted with reference to the multi-religious context of India because faith-education, evangelisation and inculturation should be an integral part of youth ministry in India

Though the topic of empowering the young towards fullness of life is well dealt with, the presentation does not seem to be well focussed on the topic. The titles of various chapters do not seem to flow one from the other with an inner coherence needed for focussing well on the topic. However, the pastoral and pedagogical insights presented in the book are highly valuable.-

Lorenzo Fernando

Emilio Alberich SDB and Jerome Vallabaraj SDB, *Communicating a Faith that Transforms,* Bangalore: Kristu Jyothi Publications, 2004, pp315.

This book is envisaged as a Handbook of Fundamental Catechetics. The intention of the authors is to create and form the mind-set of catechists and those responsible for catechesis, and to provide useful and key elements for understanding and responding to questions that underlie catechetical ministry. The book contains eleven chapters.

Chapter one deals with new challenges of today's catechesis and analyses its relationships to the general ecclesial practice as a part of a holistic plan in which it is inserted and from which it receives its significance. Chapter two situates catechesis within the renewed pastoral project of evangelization and chapter three articulates the identity of catechesis in relation to the diverse forms of the ministry of the word.

Chapter four deals with catechesis as the service of the word and proclamation of Christ. Catechesis is considered an illumination and interpretation of life, which is the action of the Spirit in the journey towards complete truth. This chapter highlights the relationship of catechesis with inculturation as well as religious experience.

Chapter five presents catechesis as initiation and education in faith and spells out the three dimensions of the mature attitude of faith as well as the link between catechesis and popular religiosity. This chapter makes reference to the various sects and new religious movements and spells out the need for dialogue with other great religions in the catechetical context.

Chapter six highlights catechesis as an ecclesial action and as an experience of the church. Catechesis as an ecclesial action builds the church and the church in turn fashions catechesis. This ecclesial catechesis is unique but differentiated service rendered by the community, the pastors, the religious, the catechists and the families.

Chapter seven deals with catechesis as the ecclesial diakonia having operative and promotional dimensions leading to political options for commitment to transformation. Chapter eight highlights the community dimension of catechesis and spells out the socio-cultural roots of and the theological and pastoral motives for the revival of the community dimension with special reference to the revival of small communities. The same chapter brings out the importance of school catechesis.

Chapter nine clearly articulates the essential links between catechesis and liturgy with reference to the renewed liturgical perspective of Vatican II. While spelling out the evangelizing dimension of liturgical catechesis, this chapter shows how catechesis and liturgy mutually need each other especially in the context of sacramental liturgical celebration. *(Contd p. 107)*

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