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Building Peace and Civil Society:

**An Autobiographical Report from
a Believers' Church**

by
Paul Peachey

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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1 “Peace is the Will of God” [draft for submission by the “historic peace churches” to the *World Council of Churches*, 1952]

2 “Dare We Work for Peace” [Guest editorial, *Japan Christian Quarterly*, special number on “Japanese Christians and the Peace Movement,” October, 1958]

3 “Peacemaking a Church Calling” [*The Christian Century*, July 31, 1963]

4 “Anthropological and sociological reflections on human aggression and social conflicts” [*Concilium* 164 (1983)]

5 “Minorities with a mission in the churches” [*Peace, Politics and the People of God*. Ed. Paul Peachey. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 10-82: 26-45]

6 “The Lost Science of Man” [*Mennonite Quarterly Review* 56, 1982:82-91]

7 “Person and Society: The Soviet American Encounter” [*Soundings* LXVII. 2, Summer, 1982]

8 “The City: Atelier of the Autonomous Person” [*Urbanization and Values*, Eds. George McLean and John Kromkowski. Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991]

9 “Interests and Values in Building a Democratic Society: the Genesis of Human Agency” [*The Transcaucasian Institute*, Tbilisi, Georgia, November, 1996]

10 “Human Identity in Post-Communism and High Modernity” [Conference on *Post-Communist Identity*, Belgrade, 1997]

11 “Leaving and Clinging: Conjuality in Modern Societies” [written in early 1990s for a publication in Moscow that never materialized]

12 “Constantinianism and the Marx-Engels Phenomenon” [*Mennonite Quarterly Review* LV.3, July, 1981]

13 “Personal Autonomy in the Radical Reformation: Biblical Religion and (Post)Modernity” [Symposium on *The moral and religious dimensions of human personality*, Institute of Philosophy, Tbilisi, October, 1991]

14 “The Third Millennium; Christendom or Diaspora,” [Warsaw, 1993]

15 “The ‘free church?’ A time whose idea has not come” [*Anabaptism Revisited*. ed. Walter Klaassen. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992:173-188]

16 “God: the Redeeming Creator” [paper read at a conference at the Rolling Ridge Study Retreat Community, 2002]

Preface

Paul Peachey has led a truly extraordinary life uniting the deepest spiritual conviction with the most active engagement in works of peace. Perhaps then it would have been best to begin with the six chapters on his life which provide the context for understanding the chapters on this work. In any case we shall do so here in summary form.

Born into an Anabaptist family and reared in the countryside without other cultural communities he was deeply embedded in the tradition of his Mennonite community. As will be noted from the chapters below, this was in truth a Protestant Protestantism, a community which not only broke away from the Roman Church, but broke away, in turn, from the structures of the Reformers. The goal was to assure remaining open to the work of the Spirit, without interference or impediment.

Paul Peachey was deeply embedded in this tradition. It enabled him to develop a humble righteousness, which he would proclaim before the world. This was tested by the Second World War when he stood firm for nonviolence in the midst of the rush to military service and to victory. His own convictions showed in a more positive manner after the war when he and his Mennonite colleagues led in the effort to bind up the wounds of society by organizing food supplies and serving the vast refugee populations of a devastated Europe.

But that was only the beginning of Dr. Peachey's life and service. For the raw memory of the devastation of the war drove him in a search for a peace that would be stronger than the mechanisms of hate: a peace that would last! This, Paul saw, required not only the crucial biblical decision against war, but a deep understanding of how society works in order to guide it along the paths of peace in complex times. This took him to Zurich for a doctorate in sociology. The resulting combination of heart and mind enabled him not only to join, but to build peace coalitions for the next decades in Europe, America and Japan. The rich story of his post-world war and cold war peace building effort is described in the five chapters of Part I.

But if peace is not only a condition of society, but the work of the persons who make up the communities they construct, then Dr. Peachey had to be not only an activist, but scientist, for it was necessary to understand social structures with the tools of sociology in order to see how society could be reconstructed. This is the burden of Part II.

It is significant that for Dr. Peachey this does not move away from, but deepens family. It had been characteristic of sociology to understand its work as beginning only when the person breaks from the family and its duties to enter a realm of more impersonal public social relationships. For Dr. Peachey it is rather the opposite. His early and continuing years of life in the Mennonite community enabled him to see that social relations as human were basically interpersonal. This meant not escaping the conjugal bond and the ascriptive obligations of husband and wife, son and daughter. Rather, in biblical terms it meant leaving home in order to form the deep and intimate bond which

constitutes family -- the very essence of sociality. Thus, his concern for peace between mega powers led him back to the home as in the last chapter of Part II: "Leaving and Clinging: Conjuality in Modern Societies."

Part III concerns the religious foundations of social life. Here his radical Reformation insights and commitments come clearly into focus. His use interchangeably of "Free Churches" and "Peace Churches" are indicative of the deep personal convictions the names bespeak. In time, Dr. Peachey decided to work less in the field than in academia and to accept an invitation to teach in the Sociology Department of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. There he could continue his dedication to peace in one of the cold war centers of power while traveling to the other, the USSR and Eastern Europe, some tens of times.

Perhaps a personal story from Dr. Peachey's life would best convey the deep dedication of the life so richly lived and presented in this work. When Paul began his teaching, he met the past Chairman, Monsignor Paul Hanly Furfey -- himself a towering, self-sacrificing figure in the service of the poor and of peace and justice. His concern was that this be a distinctively Catholic University. Paul, however, was the quintessential Mennonite so how could he ever serve as Chairman of the department? Nevertheless, they worked well together and after one year I believe the Monsignor became convinced that Paul was the only one religious enough to make the department of sociology a properly Catholic. A note from Monsignor which Paul still treasures read "Paul, you are God's man for the hour."

So it may never be clear whether this book should have begun with what is now Part IV, but certainly the concluding chapters which recount his life, not only bear the gist of Dr. Peachey's vocational pilgrimage, but point as well the way to global peace in our troubled world.

George F. McLean

Introduction

Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards
-Soren Kierkegaard

This book brings together a selection of papers I wrote on a variety of occasions during the last third of the twentieth century, during the second half of my career. Some were written in American settings; others for international settings. They serve to illustrate this “autobiographical treatise” whereby I here introduce them. Gerard Loughlin, an English scholar, characterizes this genre of writing as *realistic narrative*, wherein “character and circumstance are so related that the character is the story of his or her engagement with the vicissitudes of life, and cannot be known or portrayed otherwise” (*Telling God’s Story...*[Cambridge University press, 1996]). Whether the treatise offered below meets that goal is for the reader to decide.

I write as a seventh generation American for non-American readers. The story I tell by this treatise, however, is hardly typically American, though admittedly in this multicultural society it is hard to say what is typical. In this instance the story and essays are worthwhile precisely because in important respects they are atypical. They deal with critical dimensions of American life that are too little known and even less understood otherwise.

America (the USA), as is well known, occupies a highly equivocal position among the earth’s peoples. This country at once attracts and repels. The *attraction* is captured symbolically in the enduring Statue of Liberty in the New York harbor, with its torch and inscription: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddle masses yearning to breathe free.” The *repulsion* is more recently enshrined in the same city by the “black hole” left, even if but temporarily, by the horrendously-destroyed World Trade Center towers (2001). Moreover the American story has its own dark side, readily evident in both the displacement of the aboriginal population and enslaved immigration. Even today, American prosperity and exuberance, whatever their benefits both here and abroad, impose acute costs on other less privileged populations in both domains.

What, then, are others, countries and individuals, to make of Americans as a country or of American individuals that they encounter? Obviously there is no single answer to questions as these; no one size that fits all. Nor is equivocity or ambiguity limited to American society. Do not all countries, all individuals, have their dark side? And do we not therefore have to take the claims of any country or individual “with a grain of salt,” a bit of skepticism?

That applies as well to the little story of this volume. I write as a Christian scholar with limited training and experience in religion, ethics, history and sociology; which means I am something of generalist. Moreover I was brought up in a “sectarian” tradition. As indicated I offer in this volume a selection of papers written along my life’s way, and then a brief

autobiographical treatise to provide the context in which they were written. My reading of the forces and events that shaped me reached a kind of tectonic shift near midlife, resulting in a re-mapping of my life journey. This shift meant, not the abandonment of my foundations, but rather deepening and redirecting them. Thus while in the first chapter I sketch briefly “the quarry from which I was dug,” the world that shaped me, this volume has to do primarily with the second half of my life, following this “tectonic shift.”

America, as the New World, originally defined itself against Europe, the Old World, which it thought to leave behind. Yet it is on the historical riches--and confusions--of the Old that the New World drew. The “yearning to breathe free” that motivated many of the immigrants, after all, had been nurtured in the ferment that emerged within medieval European Christendom. Eventually came the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, all contributing to the revolutions of modernization. Involved in all this is the continuing biblical story.

The divine intervention introduced in that story is at once profound and complex. God creates and sustains the universe, including the human among animal species. Humans are specially but finitely endowed, enabled thus to work with God as co-curators of the earth. When in their freedom humans default, God intervenes anew in a saving manner in his relation with humans, but without prejudice to the process of Creation. The focus of that intervention is the spiritual and moral transformation the human person, from the inside out. “Jesus then came eventually, proclaiming the Good News (gospel) of God and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news.’” Yet as the story makes clear, the two processes, creation and redemption, are linked and presently operative, though their mutual consummation will be realized only “beyond time.”

As whole libraries of theological scrolls and books over hundreds and thousands of years testify, questions and debates surrounding these claims are endless. Any summary, such as I have just offered, is incomplete. Indeed, the approach I sketch has been widely and negatively stereotyped as *sectarian* (from *sect*), and hence not needing serious consideration. The charge against this view is that it posits a particular or partial interest against the larger common good (or reality). In theological language, it is as if *God* as *Savior* were working against *Himself* as *Creator*. From the outset, however, the “good news” to the contrary is that God is setting in motion a healing process to our wounded existence within the realm of nature. Abraham was called apart, not self-servingly, but to begin the process whereby “all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12) Peace on earth, good will among all people is achieved as we respond to this divine gesture.

The designation of Europe as Christendom was and is a highly ambiguous notion. Did the fourth century CE adoption of Christianity as the imperial religion signify, as Augustine and other writers effectively claimed, that the corner to world Christianization had been turned? Or rather, did the imperial establishment of Christianity mean, by so much to the contrary, in the language of a noted historian, its “paganization”? Even the sixteenth

century Reformation failed to resolve this enigma. Instead, by newly invoking territorial rule on behalf the reform, the reformers, especially Luther and Zwingli, paved the way for the newly emerging nation-state to perpetuate the error of Christendom--*the claim that politically the reign of Christ has already been initiated.*

According to the biblical story itself, God's healing intervention, God's healing transformation cannot be externally or politically imposed. I will have more to say about this in the chapters that follow. Here I merely note that at the junction of the mid-1520s, when the above noted Reformers returned external church affairs to governments anew, a few of their associates dissented. They came together and began anew, baptizing, not infants ritualistically by decree but believers who responded personally to the gospel. This has become the *classic*, indeed the *archetypal*, moment of "sectarianism" in European and European-descended Christendom. They effectively began the task of "introducing Christianity into Christendom," to use the language of a twenty-first century writer (Bellinger).

Effectively these sectarians once more took seriously the distinction between God's *cosmological* (nature) and *salvific* (grace) agency that since the fourth century (CE) in the Christian era had been obfuscated in Christian perception and practice. The former mode is a manifest in the *determinate* order of nature. The latter is manifest in the human realm, the sphere of a finite *indeterminacy*, the arena of human freedom. Accordingly these sectarian Anabaptists, in their first recorded common statement formulated in 1527 affirmed that, with regard to political affairs, *the sword is an ordering of God (Creation) outside the perfection of Christ (saving Grace)*. This claim is irreducibly paradoxical--God, in effect, is seen as "wearing two hats"--intelligible only if we acknowledge the distinction between the dynamics of nature and the supplementary divine-human discourse! It is not that God rescinds or overrules the patterns of nature; rather he accords to humans a finite sphere of freedom . Effectively this means that within the limits of human finitude, God's action is humanly conditioned..

Meanwhile, contrary to Christendom, history in certain respects has moved in the sectarian direction. The millennium-long tie between religion and polity in European history has been broken--formally, that is. Yet herein lurks a profound ambiguity in the American experiment. For the constitutional separation of these two spheres came about, not fundamentally, but rather was "stumbled into" (Perry Miller), out of practical necessity. Thus, while no religion or denomination in American society can claim state sanction or monopoly, religion, for the most part Christianity, is readily invoked in national self-interest. We quickly call on God to support us against our "enemies." But if God is One, how can one nation invoke the deity against another? Confusion reigns.

By a tortuous route, to be traced briefly in succeeding chapters, the exploration of this creation/salvation anomaly became part of my life vocation. This task took me, by a "road less traveled" (Robert Frost), into unfamiliar territory. I found myself working at the intersection of the human sciences

(particularly sociology, history and religion), on the one hand, and the biblical story, on the other. By way of the various papers written over the last three decades included in this volume, I report on vistas that emerged along that road less traveled. The “autobiographical treatise” is intended to afford some context for those vistas. I hope that what you, the reader, find in those pages, in the words of literary critic Jonathan Yardley, “an effort to tell a story that will help (you to) see the world in a new light,” rather than an attempted “bravura performance (Look at me!).” For in this post-Christendom era, both the world and Christianity do indeed appear in a new light!

That *autobiographical treatise* will consist of six chapters. Chapter 17 sketches “the quarry from which I was dug,” an expression taken from Holy Writ. It locates the “sectarian” story that shaped me on the socio-historical map of the USA. Chapter 18 traces my response to that legacy, and the shift in course direction to which it led. The next three chapters (19-21) correspond topically to the three groupings of papers that comprise the larger part of the present volume. Chapter 19 articulates the process and profiles the perspectives that emerged. Chapters 20 and 21 comment respectively on the “secular” and then the “religious” issues and insights that thereupon engaged me. Chapter 22 ends this sketch with a brief concluding summary.

PART I

PEACE AS WITNESS

Chapter I

“Peace is the Will of God”*

Peace Is the Will of God is the title given to a statement submitted to the *World Council of Churches (WCC)* in 1953 by the Continuation Committee of the Historic Peace Churches (HPC). I wrote the working draft of that statement at the request of the HPC Committee in the fall of 1952 while I was a graduate student at the Sorbonne in Paris. I had been sent there by my sociology professor at Zurich to get in touch with a survey of Roman Catholic churches being conducted in France at the time. While there I also attended the lectures of a Dominican scholar on the early church and war, and then consulted as I wrote. This draft underwent revision and a final editing before it was forwarded in rewritten form to the WCC. The above title of that submission was inspired by the section on war in the founding report of the WCC in 1948: *War is Contrary to the Will of God*. This somewhat ponderous draft is included here, not in competition to the vastly improved official version, but to sketch my point of departure that then led me to a “road less traveled,” sketched in Par IV below. An abbreviation of my otherwise unpublished and untitled first draft of that statement follows.

“War is contrary to the will of God” declared the newly formed World Council of Churches in August, 1948, a sentiment already expressed similarly a generation earlier in by an ecumenical conference in Lambeth and again by the conference on Church and State at Oxford in 1937. These were courageous words, and yet they stand as an indictment not only against the world but especially against world Christendom, for all these conferences, nevertheless, devised formulas to condone Christian participation in war. This tragic paradox hangs like a cloud over the Church’s attempt to speak out prophetically against the tide of military hysteria that is again engulfing our world, and justifies the scorn of her enemies, as well as her would-be friends who are looking to her for a prophetic word. Backed by such an ethic her voice cannot command respect, whether in matters pertaining to war or to her message in general.

Nevertheless this state of affairs is not hopeless. The same statement is frank to admit the perplexity, yes the guilt of the church, and declares the resolve to seek prayerfully for a better answer. Furthermore, the report’s willingness to accept as honest and sincere the various viewpoints held by Christians on the matter has opened the way for fruitful fraternal discussion.

It is against this setting that the present statement by the “historic peace churches” has its justification. Beyond this, their position, listed as the third possible attitude toward war among the three enumerated by the Amsterdam report, received an inadequate definition so that further definition is desirable. Finally, though these churches do not profess to have a full answer to the anguish of today’s world, nor yet that they have fully practiced their own profession, they believe that their conviction coming out of blood-

stained centuries of experience with the Christian absolutist position deserves consideration not yet accorded.

This brief statement obviously cannot be a full creedal presentation of a position, already since these churches have a varied history and expression, nor can it be a full theological treatise on Christian pacifism. Such a treatise would of necessity go far afield into questions of Christian anthropology, of Biblical authority, of eschatology, etc., questions on which the various systems of thought prevalent within the World Council of Churches family would differ widely. Rather it seemed advisable to remain inside the scope of the theological presuppositions of the Oxford and Amsterdam reports as they reflect the great central body of received Christian belief and tradition. Naturally this does not confine the present discussion to specific items treated there, but it does define the circle within which it moves theologically.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

In spite of differences of definition and degree, we understand the following to have been the premises of the Oxford and Amsterdam conferences. Sin has impaired man's moral status and relationship to God to a degree which necessitates divine intervention, or assistance and pardon. This assistance has been offered in Jesus Christ, who has revealed the Father, and has achieved a reconciliation. Through the human response of penitence and faith the power of a new life is released to the believer, calling for and enabling a new way of life. This new way has already been exemplified and expressed in the life and teaching of Christ, coming to supreme manifestation in the Cross of Calvary. And while the significance of the Cross is variously interpreted, agreement is universal that it somehow gives the deepest possible expression to the sacrificial and conciliatory love of Christ.

With regard to war, agreement is also well nigh unanimous that war is fundamentally at variance with the real spirit, attitude and ethic of Jesus. Furthermore, exegetes are in accord that the simple, direct intent of the great passages of the words of Christ, and for that matter, of the other New Testament spokesmen, would preclude the execution of warfare. This constitutes in a very rudimentary fashion, as we understand it, the foundation of the assertion, *War is contrary to the will of God.*

The Inconsistent Interpretation of This Truth

The deeply perturbing question now arises, How is it then possible to condone war or Christian participation in it, as the predominant opinion of the Oxford and Amsterdam report unmistakably does? From the pacifist or nonresistant point of view the discrepancy and error arises at that point in subsequent application where additional pseudo-Christian or peculiar presuppositions are called into play and accorded axiomatic status. Among them the following might be noted:

1. The ethical heritage of the medieval state churches...
2. The right and duty of self-defense...
3. Solidarity with the community precludes withdrawal in time of danger...
4. Pacifism and the ethics of nonresistance are impractical in a sin torn world. Therefore what Christ really meant must be understood in this light...
5. In a broken world, and a world of relativism, we can only choose the lesser of two evils...

It would be presumptuous and erroneous to pretend that the Pacifist-Nonresistant position does not leave any problems unsolved, or that honest objections cannot be raised against it. Again a few might be examined.

1. The Bible after all does at times sanction war...
2. Refusal to bear arms can only lead to renunciation of the state and ultimate anarchy...
3. Refusal to fight is a purely negative approach, leaving as it were the anguish of military action to those who disagree or to non-Christians...

THE PACIFIST-NONRESISTANT POSITION, POSITIVELY STATED

Love and discipleship. Since war is contrary to the will of God, we hold it to be incumbent for every Christian to live accordingly. The Gospel of Christ coming to a climax in the Cross is the triumph of redemptive love over the forces of evil. That love is not merely propitiatory, for beyond the Cross lies the Resurrection, creating a moral renewal in the person of the believer. In this renewal he is reinstated to the level of true fellowship with God and man, committed unswervingly to the Way already trodden by his Lord. Here there must be love and not hatred, pardon instead of revenge, construction rather than destruction, the return of good for evil, and suffering in place of self-assertion.

But all this is provisional. In a world where man will continue to abuse the free moral agency basic to the human personality, and to spurn the overtures of Divine love, the Christian still finds himself surrounded with the violence of sin. Indeed, he even finds himself still impaired by that same sin and the limitation of human finiteness. Only the miracle of redemptive love that enables him to rise and thus to realize the Divine purpose of human existence. In this respect he already belongs to the coming aeon, when beyond the forces of history the Divine plan, now veiled to finite and sinful eyes, comes to full fruition. To reject the ethic of Agape because it is unattainable by a fallen society is to declare the redemptive work of Christ a failure.

Church and state. We hold that all war is sin, whether committed by Christians or non-Christians, and therefore war as a method of settling international disputes is wrong. Nevertheless as already indicated (paragraph

II.4.) it is necessary to keep the Biblical distinction between church and state, or to put it more explicitly, between the level or plane of Preservation and that of Redemption clearly in mind. While the Christian has distinct responsibilities in both areas, failure to distinguish properly is responsible for much of today's confusion.

The State. The New Testament clearly assumes that this aeon in which men spurn the Will of God will be marked by war and violence to the end, and that the state will make use of the sword. The Christian is nonetheless by nature and calling a "peacemaker" (Matt. 5:9), hence pacifist. He is thus interested in every legitimate effort to build international good will and stability, whether secular or religious in origin. Indeed many Christians and the churches have made many commendable efforts in this direction which must be continued.

Furthermore with war and its causes so intricately interwoven with all the aspects of corporate social life, particularly the economic, the Christian conscience cannot think of war as an isolated evil, while being blind to other abuses equally incompatible with the Christian ethic. In an ultimate sense the Christian must nonetheless regard his efforts on this level as secondary, in as much as they can be only ameliorative and can never deal with the ultimate root of war in the perverted human personality. Consequently he entertains no illusions about realizing e.g. the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount in international affairs.

The Church. Christian peacemaking therefore is of a dual nature. On the political or secular level the Christian seeks to help build the kind of society which can avoid war. But this is not yet the heart of his position. Whether or not he and the church community engage in war is not dependent on whether war can be avoided. The church's most effective witness against war is not the statements she makes against it, the legislation she influences, the conferences she holds, nor even the sermons she preaches, but simply that which *she herself is and does*, in her own members. Disarmament on the part of a nation is an act of faith that entails the risk of exploitation by a stronger power. It is a step which churches have often urged nations to take. But it is the step which the church herself has not yet demonstrated a willingness to take. This is the key to her impotence in today's impasse.

In reality the church has found herself on *both* sides of every war fought by our "Christian" civilization, and in each case the "church" has condoned or supported the effort, with the greater wrong ostensibly being on the other side. Dear brethren, our gospel is not provincial or national, it is universal. A much greater sin of Christendom than the regretted confessional divisions, where Catholic shoots Catholic, Lutheran shoots Lutheran, yes where Christian shoots Christian or the sinner for whom Christ died, in the name of God and the fatherland. Therefore we humbly submit: The refusal to participate in and to support war in any form is the only course for the Christian (that is) compatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ...

What Can Be Done?

Such a statement dare hardly close without some concrete suggestions for appropriate action, particularly at a moment such as this which cries so desperately for a new approach to war. We submit the following, realizing keenly that our proposals may seem presumptuous. Though we firmly hold the pacifist position, we do not judge those who feel otherwise, knowing full well that many such may well exceed us in their sincerity before Christ. Ultimately we all stand before God, responsible to obey and give witness to the truth as we come to understand it, realizing however that differences of opinions among Christians are a product of human limitation and not to variation in the voice of the Spirit.

General. We believe the churches should continue to encourage and support sound efforts for the promotion of peace in economic, political and other areas. They should pledge their prayerful loyalty and support to governments and their subsidiary organizations. Governments should constantly realize that Christians recognize the authority given to them by God, and that they do not engage in subversive activities.

Specific. We should urge the World Council of Churches to take immediate steps to challenge world Christendom to a basic reconsideration of its traditional position of war, not as an effort to discover new definitions or nor new methods of negotiation, but rather to examine without prejudice in a spirit of humble and penitent openness, the presuppositions hitherto regarded as axiomatic. The effort might begin with discussions with the staff of the World Council organization, during which appropriate plans could be developed to carry the appeal before the churches. The church could undertake nothing more fruitful for the cause of peace than to unite unequivocally in a refusal to participate in any new war. Such a course nevertheless can not be recommended without the warning that its validity or feasibility cannot be determined by its success in eliminating war as a method of settling international disputes. Its sole justification is a response to the Cross of Christ and its ultimate triumph.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.” “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

* [Draft for submission by the “historic peace churches” to the *World Council of Churches*, 1952]

Chapter II

Dare We Work for Peace?*

The 4th World Conference Against A and H Bombs and for Disarmament held in Tokyo, August 12-20, 2001, like similar rallies before it, raised more questions than it answered. With the whole convention striking a strong anti-Western note, and the inter-national sessions ending largely in the control of the World Council of Peace, the fears of those who see in “peace movements” merely disguised communism once more seem confirmed. A deeper look beneath the surface, however, reveals no such simple answer, but rather deep tragedy which may augur ill for the future.

To understand the campaign against nuclear weapons, led in Japan by the Japan Council Against A and H Bombs, two sets of facts must be kept in mind. On the one hand, one must remember that this nation suffered national destruction only a few years ago because she was misled by militarists. The war ended with the first and only atomic bombs falling on two of her cities. Her conqueror handed her a constitution, forever outlawing war and the military machine it takes to wage it. Then in 1954 in the Fukuryu Maru incident, atomic ashes once more brought death near to a few of her countrymen and potential poisoning to many more. Finally, atomic illness and death have persisted throughout the thirteen years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki (victims from the former city alone reportedly have died on an average of one every five and one half days during this time) and illnesses like leukemia actually seem on the increase.

On the other hand, in the shifting fortunes of international affairs since the end of the Pacific War, Japan finds herself joined in a pact to the United States upon whom she must lean for defense, but by whom she is also integrated into a defense system based on nuclear power. (Curiously, yet understandably, a clear majority of the Japanese population favor some sort of defense arrangement with the United States, while at the same time probably as great a majority absolutely oppose nuclear weapons, without seeming to sense the contradiction.) While during the first post-war years, the Japanese were stunned by defeat, and at any rate accepted the Hiroshima-Nagasaki disasters as events for which they had responsibility as part of the war they had fought, the Fukuryu Maru incident in 1954 stung many people to the quick. Organized campaigns against nuclear weapons now sprang up, feeding also on smoldering resentments of the first bombings as well. The mutual defense commitments of the American and Japanese governments were such, however, that this upsurge of feeling could not be absorbed within the Japanese government policy, despite government efforts, particularly through the UN, to bring about an international ban on nuclear weapons. Accordingly, what began as a genuine outburst of moral feeling against nuclear weapons was soon at the mercy of extreme left political action, which to a very considerable degree has transformed the nation's opposition to nuclear weapons into a tool

of partisan politics. This has been constantly aggravated by the fact that since the outbreak of the Korean War, and the subsequent policy to rearm Japan, US support has shifted to favor the conservative elements in Japanese society, at the expense of the liberal forces who had been favored earlier. As a result the latter have been thrown into confusion and consternation, which is certainly one factor in the current cynicism and leftism of Japanese intellectuals.

If this has been tragic nationally, it may be even more so internationally. The nation that had been widely hailed as the bridge between East and West may become herself to some degree a microcosm of a world divided. As the anti-nuclear movement looked abroad for help and sympathy, it is clear that the same factors which made for a shift in the policies of the Western allies, precluded any strong response from those quarters. The opportunity for leftist exploitation from abroad was thus even greater than that which we noted on the national level. Despite their own policy of revolution, the Soviet nations, on the other hand could well champion the cause against nuclear weapons in Japan, and from these sources have flowed men, money, and propaganda.

When the 4th World Conference met in Tokyo the stage could hardly have been better set from the Soviet viewpoint. United States atomic tests were in progress, while during the conference, Great Britain announced new tests, and the Japanese government tried to unload, eventually with success, a shipment of Oerlikon missiles from Switzerland. By contrast, the Soviet Union had suspended her tests. The most important item on the agenda of this year's conference was quite understandably the suspension of tests. The preparatory committee for the international part of the conference was composed primarily of non-communists (foreign members were Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, the last non-practicing) who worked with complete freedom and at least fair objectivity. When the conference opened, however, and the representatives of the World Council of Peace and its national affiliates began to arrive in numbers, the picture changed radically. While far more credit must be given to Russian sincerity in the suspension of the tests last spring than is usually given in the United States, the propaganda intent of the move now became abundantly clear.

While the conference was broadly inclusive of disarmament problems, the suspension of tests was handled as the overarching urgency, and was thus lifted from the general context of factors making for war. Seen in these terms, the Soviet Union shone forth virtuously, while the presumed sinister intention of the Anglo-American governments was amply demonstrated by their persistence in testing. These premises having been laid down, all international difficulties could be traced back to the same guilty powers, while by the same token, with her good intention having been "proven" at the outset, the Soviet Union did not need to pass muster on a single point of policy.

The attempt of a few Christians to raise the level of the conference to consider problems in their full dimension of mutual responsibility and guilt, on the basis of which genuine progress in building understanding and in relaxing tensions would have been possible, was persistently rebuffed as a peculiar Christian dogma that could not be imposed on an inclusive conference.

Indeed, it was rumored, such views were merely being injected to disrupt the conference, and particularly in the final session frantic views were made to keep these views from reaching the floor.

Despite this fact, however, it must be stressed that probably the majority of the delegates were not communists, and a considerable number were innocent of the game that was being played. That particularly the Afro-Asian delegates, technically from countries belonging neither to the American nor the Soviet 'blocs', nonetheless moved in the wake of the communist cause, was a stern reminder to this observer that the simple analysis of the world 'threat' in terms of the communist plot, which still so largely in forms and American foreign policy and the position of a majority of Western Christians, while it may be true as far as it goes, is certainly an extremely superficial analysis of the world crisis.

The primary factors appear rather to be the tragic urgency for profound "revolution" in country after country, and the deep crisis of truth occasioned by the present polarization of the world in two camps. Despite the fact that in the West we reckon with God, thus striving for morality and leaving the door open for repentance and renewal, a door which atheism by definition closes, for practical purposes, truth is as bifurcated today as is the world in which we live. In East (the Soviet sphere) and West (the American sphere) trust seems co-extensive with the respective system, neither of which is able to contain the others. And this works itself out disastrously for peoples struggling to be born anew, who find the truth defined by the Soviet system in terms of liberation, of upheaval and the "masses" more accessible than the truth of a prosperous and smug West.

Therefore, while one may be driven as Christian to disavow this particular movement (though there is conceivably a place to witness within it) it really raises the question, *Where do the churches figure in the world's yearning for peace?* That the communists fly the peace dove and yet plot revolution may well be a measure of their duplicity. But might it also mean that the peaceful bird sought a new home after receiving inadequate care in the Christian dovecote? Andre Trocme reminded the 4th World Conference (to the great amusement of a more "enlightened" and "scientific" Russian delegate) that the dove first became the symbol of hope in the hand of Noah.

THE PROBLEM OF THE CHURCHES

Japanese Christians and churches face exceedingly complex problems as they seek to reach Christian decisions in these matters. In Japan Christians are still a tiny minority, who so far in every national crisis have been pushed to the wall. Particularly during the Meiji period they contributed much to social reform, and thus were identified with the liberal forces in Japanese society. Today it may be a healthy sign that the Christians in the Diet are to be found in both parties, but certainly no Christian in Japan could look with favor on a pre-war type of regime. While today such reaction seems unlikely, the re-consolidation of financial, industrial and military interests in the post-Korean

War defense policy is not a reassuring trend so far as the Christian cause is concerned.

On the other hand, Japanese Protestantism was founded by Western, chiefly American missionaries who came from lands where they represented majorities of the population. Liberal and democratic reforms had already been accomplished there, and thus, despite separation of church and state, a strong affinity existed between the Protestant ethos and the national policy. Faced with the communist threat today, it is understandable that Western Christians, particularly in America, should feel, rightly or wrongly, that their welfare is bound up with the survival of the nation and its present government.

The difference in attitude between the two countries was therefore aptly summarized by a Japanese Christian who remarked to me several a few months ago, "The difference between you Americans and us Japanese is that you fear communism above all else while we fear an atomic war among all else." That is, what appears to most American Christians to be the only acceptable possibility before us today, namely a strong military and nuclear defense against communism, is precisely the thing that is most feared and hence, questioned by Japanese Christians and vice versa. It must be noted, however, that Japanese Christians have experienced difficulty in relating themselves to the movement against nuclear weapons led by the nationwide Japan Council Against A and H Bombs. Some, like Dr. Kagawa, have withdrawn their support of that movement, but they build their hope, again as in the case of Kagawa, on the World Federalist movement, or on the United Nations. But there are others who, faced with the political alternatives before the Japanese now, can only choose opposition to rearmaments as championed by leftist groups. At any rate, it is unlikely that one could find many partisans of the present American nuclear policy among Japanese Christians.

These facts seem to account for the present hiatus between Japanese and American official church bodies on this whole range of questions. Already delicate among the Japanese themselves, they can hardly be mentioned on the international level, except as they are handled by organs of the World Council of Churches. Hence the International Conference for World Peace (see the article by Sam Franklin elsewhere in this number), which followed the Christian Education Convention, was convened unilaterally by a Japanese committee in hope of starting the ball rolling thereby--it seemed to be the only possible way--while on the other hand even this meeting was suspect among some official church bodies, at least in the United States. If, then, what is Christian in the one nation is not in the other, though they are allies, there is need to look again at the criteria whereby we make our judgments.

Some Theological Questions

In his sermon, *Peace and War*, Theodor Jaekel sketches the three fundamentally distinguishable attitudes toward war found among Protestants, namely the traditional Thomist view, the "historic peace churches" (an unfortunate though accepted term) and the (liberal) pacifist. In practice we

frequently find mixtures of these several attitudes, as the report by Kaname Tsukahara elsewhere in this issue illustrates. Furthermore, all three of these views have been shaken seriously in recent years, and this, we hope, was only for the good of all.

As Jaeckel indicates, the traditional view which, since Augustine and in classical formulation since Thomas Aquinas, has informed Western Christendom, both Catholic and Protestant, namely that defensive wars are “just”, since self-defense presumably is the inherent right of the human group, has been called into question by the changed character of modern war.

Traditionally war was conceived as limited action, directed against the offender himself (i.e., his army) until he desisted from his aggression. In atomic war, says the more recent view, destruction is so devastating in intensity and scope that its destruction swallows up this limited objective. Significantly enough, this view appears to have received more attention among Catholics than among Protestants, though it is held also by many among the latter, and has decisively changed the viewpoint of well-known churchmen like Karl Barth and Marin Niemoeller. That its acceptance can bring one close to a pacifist position is illustrated by Professor Inoue’s article.

It should be noted that “just war” as such, increasingly reveals its deficiency. If we try to think in universal rather than merely in national terms, it is striking to note that this fails to relate properly the realms of nature and grace. While God is the God of creation and salvation alike, and while the human group, from family to nation belongs to the created order, recognition of this fact is not a uniquely human insight. It is rather that our natural loyalty to these groups is transcended, though not negated, by our loyalty to Christ and the community he creates. Accordingly Christ warns us repeatedly that the criterion of Christian commitment is not the claim of the natural group, but rather “the will of my Father in heaven.” (Matt. 12:50).

The concept of the “just war” virtually means a reassertion of the primacy of the ethic of the natural group. Grace becomes subordinate to nature. This is really the watershed between the “early church” and post-Constantine Christianity. For the early church, grace--the new age in Christ--takes precedence over creation--the present fallen order—while in the Thomistic view, at least at the point of war, the reverse obtains. All this comes into sharp focus in this age of seeking for the ecumenical Christian community.

A second important set of questions arises from the encounter between the several traditions described by Jaeckel, an encounter that has taken place in Europe since World War II, and is urgently needed elsewhere. One of the first problems to arise here is our view of man and sin. Both the traditional and the “peace church” view take sin in man and evil in history seriously. In the former tradition, however, the pessimistic assessment of man and history as inescapably tainted by sin, is carried in exaggerated form into the realm of grace. Men, even as Christians, are so bogged down in the morass of evil that there can be no extrication from wars and similar evils. Social commitments, therefore, tend to be oriented, not around what is new in Christ, but about that which is collectively possible for the whole society on the level of the old.

Liberal pacifism, on the other hand, runs into the opposite difficulty. Basing its hope for the elimination of war on the supposed goodness of man, it projects back into the realm of the fallen society an optimism which can be rightly postulated on the redeemed community only (not to be confused with perfectionism). Such pacifism seeks to engraft a high ethical ideal upon people whose basic life commitment is not at all prepared for it. The argument that absolute pacifism promulgated as a political program apart from the deeper changes in personal commitment which alone make peace possible, is socially disruptive and cannot be dismissed lightly. It is in this sense that Winston Churchill holds that World War II came about because “the malice of the wicked was reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous.”

It is the view of the “historic peace churches” escapes both the foregoing pitfalls, it always founders, as Jaeckel suggests, on the problem of responsibility. For their view, he suggests, offers a solution for the few but no hope for the many. But in the light of the considerations raised throughout this article, it appears that the concept of “responsibility” must be studied anew. For “responsibility” as used in Protestant ethics today is virtually synonymous, so far as basic approach is concerned, with the theory of the “just war” or the ethic of the natural group. To make the problem concrete, what does the responsibility mean in the current hiatus between American and Japanese Christians? Does true Christian responsibility mean that they are “responsible” to the opposite views regarding the twin threat of nuclear destruction and communist aggression? Does “responsibility” at the final crucial point simply mean undergirding the given national ethos in time of war, cold and hot? Or, to move across the Sea of Japan, are not Chinese Christians who collaborate with the current national ethos merely being “responsible”? Do we define Christian responsibility in terms of undergirding the potentially idolatrous ego of every human group, or rather in terms of the perpetual prophetic challenge of all such egoisms by loyalty to the kingdom of God which must transcend and transmute them all?

WHAT CAN THE CHURCHES DO?

The above questions are not merely theological, but urgently practical. And so we close this article with some practical questions facing us all. Are we right in defining the present world crisis in the usual Western terms of placing the basic blame for it on communism, and regarding this threat paramount to all others, thus allowing the redemptive thrust to fall behind the exigencies of national defense? On the other hand, has the danger become so great, that any Christian expression of peace conviction differing from Anglo-American military policies will, despite every intention to the contrary, simply aid the spread of communism? Should we therefore proceed with the task of church and mission, ignoring all these problems, and simply accepting the limitations set by military necessity? Should Japanese Christians be helped or encouraged to do something constructive and uniquely Christian on the peace question, or will this weaken by so much the will of the West to resist? Does their

interest in peace merely reflect theological weakness or communist influence? Dare one raise the perspective of the judgment of history in the progress of communism? Does the communist advance have any bearing on the possible past failures of Christendom in the face of militarism and colonialism? Is it time to fall for a prophet military “neutralization” of the Christian community throughout the world today? Has the readiness of Western Christians to back a military effort against communist nations any bearing on the communist attempt to destroy the churches in East Germany and China?

What initiative might Western Christians take at this point? Could good will missions be sent quietly to speak with revolutionary cells in the Afro-Asian world who are filled with bitterness? Would we be humble enough to listen? Should the missionary effort seek acceptable ways to communicate at such levels? Would it be possible to do so without the wrong kind of political overtones? Could the fund of a more than a million dollars earned by American COs (conscientious objectors to war) during World War II, still on deposit in Washington, be put to some constructive use here?

In what ways do we personally contribute to the causes of war? Do our decisions and commitments of nuclear weapons or on war as such stem from an obedient faith or from our fears for a world order that has brought us gain? How does it happen that at this terrible moment in the history of human warfare the followers of the Prince of Peace must still equivocate on whether war is justifiable?

The movements for peace and freedom in the world today, whatever else they may portend, must be recognized for what they are--judgment on the house of God. This we must admit and can admit without resorting to simplistic answers or cheap incriminations. In today's world the three approaches--traditionalists, “peace churches” and pacifist--all, though variously, are wanting. Patient waiting before God and listening to one another alone can open the door to renewal. And to avoid misunderstanding, let it be said that these considerations arise, not from a change in our assessment of the communist faith as fundamentally ungodly, nor from a whitewashing of the horrors it has perpetrated, but from faith in the Christ who has already conquered it.

Communism, we ought to know and confess, is a product of the Western world. I think it is not difficult to demonstrate that Communism has been possible only in a Christian world--a Christian world that has missed its aim. Remember that the white man and the white nations--the Christian world and Christian nations have been masters of the whole globe for 500 years continually since the Pope divided the world between Spaniards and the Portuguese.

Martin Niemoeller in a sermon In Derbyshire, England,
(Peace News, July 11, 1958)

*Guest editorial, *Japan Christian Quarterly*, special number on
“Japanese Christians and the Peace Movement,” October, 1958.

Chapter III

Peacemaking a Church Calling*

When today's Christian concerns himself with international peace he thinks more readily of a goal to achieve than a reality to obey.

Is there a clear Christian word to be spoken in the struggle between the Western powers and the Soviet bloc? Can the church minister to a generation caught in terror, or does it stand paralyzed? How can we as American Christians resolve the sometimes contradictory demands of our church and our nation in the East-West conflict? Has the church a distinctive contribution to make toward a resolution of the conflict?

Questions such as these were vigorously debated by a score of theologians, churchmen, and social scientists in a colloquy called by the Church Peace Mission at Oberlin, Ohio, April 26-28 (1963). Using as a frame of reference the critical analyses of our present-day "culture religion" offered by such writers as Peter Berger, Roy Eckardt, Franklin Littell, and Martin Marty, this conference was asked to delineate lines of obedience, witness, and action which would free the churches to become agents of genuine reconciliation.

The colloquy was one in a series of exploratory studies being made under Church Peace Mission auspices with the aim of developing a more biblical peace witness in the churches. As an unofficial ecumenical society the Church Peace mission views its task as one of reconnaissance beyond the frontiers of official church positions. The current effort has two main concerns: (1) to probe the confusion and the paralysis of the churches in relation to the crises of our time and (2) to mobilize the resources of biblical theology to deal with problems thus exposed.

CULTURE-RELIGION VERSUS THE CHURCH

The working hypothesis of the Oberlin colloquy was drawn in large part from a paper by John Smylie of Occidental College contending that for many Americans the nation has displaced the church as primary community. In a religious situation marked as ours is by denominational pluralism, no one denomination can assume a stance of catholicity, and in such a situation the nation more readily becomes the bearer of ultimate meanings, the claimant of ultimate loyalties. Underlying this tendency is also the vision, nourished by the early Puritan legacy, that this new nation was destined to purify Christendom.

Some of the conferees, however, immediately objected to the notion that the churches are the captives of culture, and that the churches' liberation is a prerequisite to a more effective peace witness. No one, of course, was prepared to deny that the situation of the churches is precarious. But, it was asked, if the gospel is to work as a leaven in the world, should we be perturbed

when the nation accepts and takes on what was once a church function? How can we presume as Christians or as churches to have special political insight enabling us to penetrate knotty technical problems which statesmen face, but to which the churches could never be privy?

THE THEOLOGY OF TRAGEDY

These early disagreements at Oberlin were but a token of those to come. For while the colloquy sparkled with gifts of brilliance and learning the churches possess, it also mirrored the confusion which besets them today--a confusion that perhaps can best be stated paradoxically: at a time when we as a "Christian" nation are prepared to countenance, in defense of our Judeo-Christian values the immolation of the world, we have reached a high degree of uncertainty as to what those values are. We are unable or unwilling to try to discern what God is doing at this moment in history, and in sheer terror and unbelief we reach for the rudder ourselves. Again and again this paradoxical dilemma comes to the fore as the discussion had recourse to the now-dominant theology of tragedy and reflected the concomitant bankruptcy of supernaturalism.

Familiar to most of us is the story of the collapse, under the heavy blows of the 1930s and 1940s, of the gradualist vision of the coming Kingdom. Since the coming of Hitler, surprisingly little has changed in the outlook of the churches; despite the revolutions of the nuclear age we still seem mesmerized by the traumas of World War II. We read the Hitler episode not as a warning against idolatrous nationalism but as a definitive argument against disarmament. The lesson of a Bonhoeffer becomes primarily not a reminder to look to our own prophetic tasks, but a gratuitous proof that we were to take up arms against the Nazis. In other words, we have become aware of the immoral nature of the human collective. A sociometric view of morality--that the possibility of moral behavior varies inversely with the increase of connecting points in the network of society--has virtually attained canonical status. The gospel is seen as offering not new possibilities but comfort amidst old impossibilities.

Matters are hardly more clear among the minority of churchmen who have adhered to a "purist" ethic as over against a "responsibility" ethic. To be sure, the "purist" vision still holds that the gospel both summons and enables. But the problem of power, as posed by Reinhold Niebuhr, has yet to receive an adequate answer from the camp of pacifists and near-pacifists. Too often the proponents of "purism" have sought indiscriminately to urge solutions arising out of a context of faith on a community of indifference and unfaith. Where does one find the incarnations of redemptive power to which the pacifist testifies?

As the Oberlin discussions emphasized anew, this break in the witness of the churches is but a re-enactment of a much older crisis brought to full consciousness by Ernst Troeltsch's familiar *Kirche-Sekte* (church-sect) dichotomy. For since the church's domestication to civilization from

the fourth century onward, its life has been bifurcated into channels of “responsibility” and “withdrawal--into, on the one hand a *Kirche* enmeshed in social power structures and , and on the other, monastic or “sectarian” protest movements. Neither *Kirche* nor *Sekte* has ever full accepted the other on its own terms, nor has one triumphed over the other. During the social gospel era mainline denominations in the *Kirche* tradition, seized by the fantasy that violent conflict was about to be sloughed off forever, flirted superficially with the “sectarian ideal.” The security of today’s theology of tragedy is based in no small measure on the determination of theologians not to be “taken in” again.

The Bankruptcy of Supernaturalism

A corollary--perhaps a necessary one--to the theology of tragedy is the bankruptcy of supernaturalism. Here I use the semantically slippery term “supernatural” in a broad, general way to designate the divine redemptive initiative to which the biblical revelation testifies. Our discussions at Oberlin demonstrated constantly the enormous difficulties we face today when we seek to witness on the basis of the verities of the gospel. I offer three illustrations.

(1) *The moralization of grace.* Today the explication of Christian duty tends to be made, not in terms of the response of men to an acting God but in terms of “values” inherent in the legacy of culture--values that perhaps legitimately , though only secondarily, are designated as “Judeo-Christian.” The claims of a civilization so informed tend to take precedence over the “invasion” of grace, over the realities staked off by summons and response, by repentance and renewal, by enablement and obedience, by faith and hope. The suggestion that a Christian style of life can be discerned, much less realized--a style which if followed might thrust the Christian community athwart the national destiny--is in many ecclesiastical settings remote from the present scheme of things. The great theme of numerous theological conclaves--“world under world law”--may be a laudable goal, but it is hardly to be equated with redemption, and it cannot be the primary goal of the community of grace.

(2) *The instrumental view of the church.* A basic question posed at Oberlin was: What can Christians contribute toward the resolution of the East-West conflict? Eventually our quest was raised to a somewhat higher level when we began to ask: What would the churches of the world look like if the promotion of interbloc peace, with growing justice, were felt by every congregation to be its primary responsibility? But at no time did we attend to the proper means-end relationship and to proceed outward, as it were, from the reality and purpose of the church. Properly conceived, a view of the church as instrumental is not without its theological validity. The church exists for servanthood; it is not a ghetto of self-interest. But its servanthood is one which properly serves no end other than redemption. In practice, however, we speak of international peace more as a goal than as a reality to obey.

(3) *A quasi-eschatological view of the nation-state.* If the Oberlin colloquists were circumspect regarding the political implications of grace, many of them evinced great confidence in political possibilities apart from grace. The ancient proverb, “If you desire peace, prepare for war” is, for all its 20th century maulings, still very much intact. According to these “realists,” while men be unequal to the counsels of Jesus, they are still rational enough to maintain an intricate balance of nuclear weaponry--and without mishap! Indeed, the administration of that system would seem to be precisely the arena for the courageous exercise of Christian morality: the restraint with which America organizes her awesome power constitutes its own way to witness! Thus under the *aegis* of “nuclear realism,” one is led to conclude that while the world is too evil for the church to dare to be the church, the state can achieve great things indeed.

It would be misleading, however, to cast the entire conference in so negative a mold. In regard to war itself the discussions reflected a mounting anxiety. While the conferees could not agree that Christians must categorically renounce nuclear war, no one was willing to subscribe without qualification to the classic (Clausewitz) view of war as the legitimate extension of diplomacy. Anxiety was also manifested concerning the growing militarization of our culture and the isolation of the military community from the common life of the nation in a completely socialized society. Though disagreeing as to short-term or emergency actions that the churches might take to prevent war, the participants concurred in the view that the churches’ long range task is peacemaking, to be conducted in keeping with the gospel of reconciliation.

But the primary focus of the conference was on recovery of the church’s essential witness. The reasons for this focus are clear. General appeals made by church bodies have little effect so long as they do not take effect in the life of the congregations. Most denominations have, for example, gone on record in favor of racial integration, yet local assemblies are sometimes bulwarks of race prejudice. It was argued that the discrepancy derives from the fact that while church membership rolls have swelled in recent decades, almost all semblance of church discipline has disappeared. A number of discussants stressed repeatedly the need to recover at the congregational level the churches *tertia nota*, namely obedience. Similar emphasis was put on the need to recover the integrity of the sacraments, so often vitiated by exclusion of brethren from the altar for reasons of race.

TAKING THE WORLD SERIOUSLY

The separation of church and state in America was viewed in its deeper meaning--as affording an opportunity for the church once more to be the church. Through the ages, organized religion has served as the “cement” of society. Church-state separation in the U.S. reflects the achievement of national framework outside organized religion. Unfortunately, the churches, failing to recognize the responsibility of their freedom, have tended to emulate the culture--to hanker, as it were after the leeks and garlic of establishment. And

despite the postwar, church “boom,” Christian initiatives in peacemaking and reconciliation which have significantly broken through the crust of national unbelief have been few indeed.

The option of withdrawal into “no institutionalism” and “privatization” of the faith held little attraction for the majority of the colloquists. The decades of *Kirche-Sekte* disputes perhaps have not been in vain. Communities of faith which, like our Lord, take the world seriously are the setting in which our destiny must be wrought. Nonetheless, concrete suggestions toward recovery of visible witness encountered rough going at Oberlin. The suggestion that there might be “prohibited vocations” in committed communities was greeted with consternation. Obviously the churches have had too much experience with pharisaic and with judgmental and schismatic enclaves to approach this matter lightly. Moreover the conferees were reminded forcefully that autonomous congregational dialogue can also issue in bigotry, racism, presumably, jingoism.

One scholar argued, startlingly enough, that from the biblical perspective the state is quite able to be the state without instruction from the church; what the state cannot provide, however, is free, whole men delivered to help heal the brokenness of which war is a symptom. Another discussant pleaded for the renewal of the kind of prophecy which can lay bare to men what God is bringing to pass today. Still another gave a personal testimony whose depth may be obscured by its seeming naivete:

I was brought up on the very conventional ethics of the just war, and like most students I saw no reason to question what my teachers taught me. I just memorized the answers and lived by them faithfully through a couple of wars. The attitude which I just now expressed (repudiation of armed conflict), believe me, is purely self-propelled. It came simply from teaching the prophets. That’s all--and then checking with the New Testament. In the New Testament I can think of only one text in the entire collection which deals with war, and that is in Matthew. “They that take the sword shall perish by the sword.” I have not yet been able to rationalize that out of the New Testament.

Positive note was taken of the initiatives of the churches which have come from the churches in recent years: the recent reception of Russian churchmen, the statements of the Cleveland world order study conference several years ago concerning China, efforts in the churches on behalf of UNICEF and the like--but above all, the late Pope John’s encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. In the end we did not presume to judge or to discount what has been done but sought to address ourselves constructively to the deficiencies in the lives of the churches.

At the conference it was recalled that in the postwar emergency the churches acted magnanimously to feed and to clothe the destitute of the world. With remarkable singlemindedness the churches recognized in the war victim the neighbor whom the Good Samaritan discovered in the man fallen among thieves. Today, it was asked, may not the neighbor be an anxious humanity living under the threat of a mushroom cloud? If so--and here I reiterate the question which in effect became the Oberlin conference’s theme--what would

it mean if the promotion of peace with justice were felt in every congregation to be its primary calling?

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Chapter IV

Anthropological and Sociological Reflections on Human Aggression and Social Conflicts*

Intra-specific violence sometimes described as ‘man’s inhumanity to man’, is a baffling trait of *Homo sapiens*. Is this cruelty of human beings to human beings innate or accidental? Much historical evidence can be interpreted as supporting the former conception, that such cruelty is indeed innate. War, genocide and mayhem appear far too widespread and recurrent to be regarded as merely accidental or aberrational. On the other hand, such phenomena are by no means universal. Intraspecific violence occurs neither always nor at all places. Moreover, a ‘killer instinct’ in man, as we shall see, is otherwise at odds with ‘human nature’.

Paralleling, and perhaps mirroring, this paradoxical evidence is the ambivalence regarding war we find in human culture and consciousness. The horrors of war repel, yet they also fascinate. Despite the overlay of myth and pretence involved in military legend, military exploits appeal to something primitive and irrational within the human psyche. This ‘something’ is doubtless a powerful factor in the perpetuation of the war system in civilisation.

Attitudes and cultural themes, however, are subject to shifting moods. If there are times when a psychosis of war may dominate the reality perception of a particular society, at other times, when the grim realities of war are more immediately at hand, a period of revulsion may set in. The early years of the nuclear era were such a time. During the 1950s when the hydrogen bomb was first tested and deployed, masses of people in many lands responded in consternation. ‘Nuclear pacifism’--the view that military strategies and actions based on nuclear weapons must be rejected on moral grounds--became an option for many people who otherwise accepted the legitimacy of conventional armaments. Eventually a policy compromise emerged which seemed tacitly acceptable to political majorities: nuclear weapons came to be tolerated temporarily as a means of deterrence as the lesser evil, on the assumption that in fact they will not be used in combat. This policy, as is readily evident, is inherently ambiguous and unstable. Weapons will have a deterrent effect, if at all, only if the possibility exists that they will be used. Nonetheless for about two decades, political majorities seemed to accept some version of the deterrence theory on the above grounds, a compromise further mollified by the willingness of governments to talk about arms control.

A combination of developments at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s triggered a crisis of confidence in the balance of terror which had developed meanwhile. Prominent among these were hints emanating from official sources that actual strategic or combat use of the ‘nukes’ was being contemplated. Decision-makers spoke publicly of the possibility of ‘fighting’ and ‘winning’ a nuclear war. Such discussions, however, served only to alarm many political constituencies, and in a number of countries

movements demanding an immediate 'freeze' in the further deployment of nuclear weapons suddenly became politically volatile. Political leaders were compelled to take the mounting public pressures into account: however, it was not clear that this public clamor was sufficiently focused, or that it had the staying power necessary to effect basic changes in policy (the dismantling of the nuclear arsenal). Proponents of 'strong' nuclear policies expect this opposition, like earlier protests, once more to fade. Freeze advocates, on the other hand, looking for staying power, confront the question: How can the momentum of opposition to the nuclear weapons race which emerged in the early 1980s be maintained? Are we at long last at an historical turning point where the popular determination can effect a fundamental change in the way nations conduct their affairs?

Until the twentieth century, reflection on international relations was dominated by normative thought. Political theorists sought variously to describe ideal polities and/or interstate systems. The great religious traditions all contain visions of a world at peace which have had some modifying influences. All, however, have been compromised by the assimilation of spiritual vision to earthly empire. In fact, at least in Western history, religious and secular establishments have frequently been allied in the suppression of the pacifist impulse. Moreover, while the Judeo-Christian tradition projects an exalted vision of a coming reign of peace, that vision seems overshadowed by that same tradition's pessimism as to possibilities 'within history'.

During the present century, in the study of international affairs, attention has shifted increasingly from the *normative* to the *empirical* disciplines. Human communities are treated as natural systems, subject, therefore, to 'laws' paralleling those governing other phenomena in nature. An empirical understanding of the relations of power, for example, is thought to improve our ability to cope far more than does the projection of ideal blueprints. Many researchers are sustained by the hope or belief that as the empirical foundations of the political theory are strengthened, the techniques of peacekeeping can be perfected. In effect, ignorance and underdevelopment rather than built-in flaws are assumed to be at the root of international anarchy. But we face the question: to what extent, and in what ways, are such expectations justified? Do the biological, social and behavioral sciences hold the key to a warless world?

DETERMINISM AND SCIOCULTURAL REALITIES

A wealth of specialized data on aspects of human conflict, aggression and violence has been generated by the various sciences. The usable yield, however--usable in terms of collective action or public policy-- remains disappointingly limited. As was observed in another connection, this corpus of material consists of all limbs and no head. The difficulties are inherent, both in the scientific enterprise and in the nature of the problem of conflict. We shall sketch these difficulties briefly.

The sciences advance by increasing specialization both among and within disciplines. The methods of investigation are reductionist. In a mechanistic universe, the 'cause' of war, for example, might be discovered in that fashion. Even in a dynamic and open universe such inquiries are useful. Something is to be learned, for example, from a comparative study of the events that precipitated the outbreak of hostilities in a given sample of wars. On the other hand, the "causes" of any given war are far deeper and more complex than the precipitating event. Hypothetically one might argue that wars could be avoided if the precipitating event could be eliminated. But how is that to be done since the precipitating event takes on that quality only in or after the fact?

In reality wars are highly complex and multi-causal phenomena. Necessarily complementing the specialized investigations proper to science, work of a synoptic sort adapted to configurations of events and relations, causes and effects, of violence and conflict, is poorly developed. Despite the low probability that early success will be realized, persistence in the effort is mandatory.

Beyond this methodological problem lies a substantive one: to what extent is human action accessible to scientific investigation? Sociology in particular, and the social sciences generally, are recent arrivals in the hall of science. Prior to the modern scientific revolutions, as already intimated, normative and ideal states dominate political discourse. Descriptive, anthropomorphic and mythical perspectives commingled. In the wake of the modern industrial, political, and scientific revolutions, the world of human action came to be regarded as part of the determinate world of nature. Human social behavior, it was found, displays regularities which are independent of the strivings of individuals. Giants among the founding fathers such as Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim, though differing profoundly in their approaches, concurred in their focus on the social patterns which are independent of actor intentions. Social systems and structures 'determine' acts and events, and these systems and structures consist of determinate relations among causes and effects.

The discovery of society as a reality *sui generis*, however, exacted a cost which has not yet been fully absolved. First, the more structural explanations of human events were developed, the more problematic personal agency became. Strictly speaking, for example, human groups consist of systems of roles rather than of persons. Actions can thus be described as functions of such systems, rather than as spontaneous inventions of actors. On the other hand, the more complex a social system, the greater the number of variables comprising it, and the greater the range and importance of personal agency. Personal agency, however, rooted as it is in individual subjectivity, is in some measure idiosyncratic. Subjectivity, moreover, is for science a problematic datum. The conflation of the human with the natural in any case tends to exclude from social analysis those dimensions of the human phenomenon which are *sui generis* vis-a-vis other biological species.

If on the one hand, the human was identified with the natural in the rise of the social sciences, on another plane a distinction was drawn between the biological and the social spheres. For the possibility of creating a social science depends on the identification of a corresponding subject matter. Thus it is important to put as much distance as possible between biology, for example, and the social sciences. As already intimated, there are substantive reasons for separation as well. Culture and learned behavior distinguish *Homo sapiens*. The need to demonstrate the independent (from biology) variability of sociocultural phenomena contributed importantly, thus, to the conceptions of human being and society which informed the social sciences. The distinguished anthropologist, Ashley Montagu, argued a generation ago, that “man is man because he has no instincts, because everything he is and has become, he has learned, acquired from his culture, from the man-made part of his environment, from other human beings ...”. Social phenomena, though an aspect of the natural world, are thus not reducible to their biological substratum.

To separate thus extremely the biological and social planes of *Homo sapiens*, though analytically and methodologically appropriate, nonetheless was exaggeration. Recent developments in sociobiology represent a perhaps inevitable reaction and corrective. Here it is important to note the cost at which the social sciences acquired their birthright--an overly-deterministic view of the social universe, and an exaggerated distance between social behavior and its biological base.

War and Human Nature

Violence in human affairs assumes many forms, and occurs on various levels, both individual and collective. Our attention here focuses on the latter, notably on war. War is a social phenomenon, and is something other than the aggregation of the violence felt or expressed by individuals. Researchers do not agree on the nature or the origin of war. Some see war as originating in a primitive or primordial context--something akin to the theological notion of a ‘fall’; others link war rather directly to the rise of civilization. In this view violence increases as civilization advances. There is also the question as to how often war was invented, or whether it spread by diffusion from a single (central Asian) origin.

Conflict traditionally received considerable attention in social theory. Conflict theory is one of the contending general theories in sociological thought. With antecedents in Greek thought, and direct roots in the Hobbesian tradition (seventeenth century), conflict theory treats conflict as the constitutive process in social organization. Taking the egoism of the human individual as the basic datum in social life, order, in so far as it exists, is the product of struggle. The patterns of dominance and hierarchy which emerge solve (to a degree) the problem of order in human aggregates. Conflict theory offers itself as a preferred alternative to consensus theories, of which structural- functionalism has been the best known in recent times.

Marxism is the most comprehensive and fully developed conflict theory. Much of the appeal of Marxism is due, no doubt, to the fact that it offers itself as an alternative to the otherwise acephalous state of social theory (see above). The Communist Manifesto (1848) describes all previous history as class conflict. Though Marx's basic economic formula is arguable, his emphasis on what are now called the 'structural' sources of conflict and/or violence is one of Marx's lasting contributions.

If a common denominator with reference to violence is to be sought among the many, sometimes conflicting sociological theories now prevailing, it will most likely be found in reference to the structural genesis of conflict. Inequities in the distribution of wealth and privilege in society are regarded widely among social scientists inevitably as sources of conflict. Moreover, political regimes (reflecting existing social inequalities) appeal to violent sanctions to defend authority; violence may also be used to challenge authority.

The distinction between the "objective" and "subjective" dimensions of conflict has also been underscored. Failure to recognize this distinction can result in confusion. Objective dimensions refer to structural incompatibilities which must be dealt with if conflict is to be resolved constructively or peacefully. Subjective dimensions refer to the attitudes of the actors in the conflict which may or may not be congruent with the objective dimensions. Conflict behavior, and even violence, may occur without objective grounds, depending on the subjective states of given actors. Similarly objective conflict need not issue in conflict behavior or in violence if the parties possess the resources needed to reach solutions otherwise.

During recent decades the social sciences have advanced in more specific terms. Three principal, and competing, explanations for violence and aggression in human societies have been offered: frustration-aggression, social learning, and biological-instinctual. The first of these theories posited a linear relationship between the frustration of goal-directed activity and aggressive acts. When aggression occurs, there has been antecedent frustration. When frustration occurs, a discharge of aggression necessarily follows. Criticized as overly-deterministic, frustration-aggression theory soon was modified to take into account the joint operation of other determinants.

The second of these explanations, social learning, largely reflects the heyday of the separation of the social from the biological sciences. Rejecting the notions of instinct as the root of aggression, and emphasizing the importance of culture in the shaping of human character, social learning theorists accounted for aggressive and violent behavior in terms of social process. Social learning theory rejects both the notion of fixed inner dispositions, of whatever provenance, or of stimulus events with invariant force in accounting for behavior. Violence is a social outcome.

The third of these arguments, the biological-instinctual, is the most controversial. Though the idea that *Homo sapiens* has a 'killer instinct' is not new, it received a new lease of life in recent years, thanks to the impact of studies in ethology and primatology. The response to popularized treatments

of an aggressive instinct in the human species by writers such as Robert Ardrey and Desmond Morris suggests a widespread proclivity in many social circles for such ideas. While at the present stage of research many questions are unanswered as to the interaction of biology and culture in human development, the grounds are strong for rejecting the biological-instinctual theory of human aggression and violence: (a) the lack of empirical evidence for such an instinct; and (b) the minimal role of instinct in human endowment otherwise. Neither of these counter-arguments, however, has been, or can be, fully 'proven'. With regard to the first, the scientific method requires the operationalization of all the elements in an explanatory calculus, as well as the possible falsification of any explanatory proposition. Such tests have not yet been devised with reference to the possibility of instincts. Meanwhile such evidence as we have is largely circumstantial. Nonetheless, the view tentatively advanced here is that intraspecific human violence is not instinct-driven: we must account for it otherwise.

A more important argument than lack of evidence stems from a phenomenological approach to human being, sometimes described as 'philosophical anthropology'. Without foreclosing the philosophical and theological questions regarding evolution, special creation, and the like, it has been widely argued that deprivation of instinct, comparatively speaking, and therefore both the need and the possibility of culture is what distinguishes the human from the other species. There are complex biological corollaries: early birth and prolonged dependency; large brain, bipedalism and the opposable thumb and the like. The human being in effect is anticipated in human biology. Alongside the genetic legacy in the case of the human species there is a cultural one, perhaps with analogous evolutionary mechanisms operating in both spheres,

Not only is culture made possible and necessary by the biologically unfinished nature of human nature, but subjectivity agency and symbolic communication as well. Biological needs and drives persist nonetheless, and culture, whatever its higher symbolic content, is perhaps to a major extent the outcome of the adaptive processes of human beings in the "natural" environment. Human beings are both rooted in nature, and destined somehow to defy, to transcend, and to supplant it.

THE PRECARIOUS COSMOS OF HOMO SAPIENS

These few theories are by no means exhaustive. What we must note here is the fact that results in the social sciences so far lead away *from*, rather than *towards*, the expectation that a single explanation for aggression and violence in human affairs can be sought. This does not mean that attempts to identify or to measure specific variables or correlates linked to violence are futile. Below I shall argue quite to the contrary.

What this does suggest, however, is the need for greater clarity with regard to the basic issues of theory and methodology. If we recognize that the causes of violence generally, or of war particularly, are complex and

multiple, our task is to determine the configurations of circumstances under which violence does or does not occur. “Destructiveness and cruelty are not instinctual drives,” Erich Fromm wrote in his last major work, “but passions rooted in the total existence of man.” Ordering of the environment, provided by the articulation of instinct and environmental resources in other species, is left for human beings themselves to achieve. Indeterminacy, and hence freedom and insecurity, are the human destiny. Nothing can be more threatening to human beings than the destruction of their cosmos, the set of definitions and expectations which they themselves create to fill the void left by their instinct-deficient biology. It is these definitions that provide security, both against unpredictable action by others, and against unchanneled or undefined drives within themselves. As a Marxist philosopher once remarked, the human animal posits meaning, and when meaning is denied, existence becomes intolerable. If he is right, we may well have a clue to an understanding of a great deal of violence and warfare.

Political rule has conventionally been territorially defined. Gaining monopoly of political power functions within a specified territory is the first task of a State/ government. Establishment of a rival entity, laying claim to political monopoly within the existing jurisdiction, is one condition no State/government can countenance. Territory is thus a critical specific of the State, not because of some blind ‘territorial imperative’, but because territory appears as the most effective tool in the establishment, the definition, and the management of the prevailing set of social conceptions and expectations which order the existence of given human aggregates. The territorial tie is not for that reason instinctual in nature. In federal States, different authorities in fact operate within the same territorial unit. The commingling of authorities within territories grows in an increasingly interdependent global society, and may contribute importantly to the coming post-national era. Reasons for exclusive claims, by political authorities, in other words, are not *instinctual* but *human*.

Territoriality, along with spatial variables generally, remains critical in all social life. It is one of the properties of the material environment readily available as a material coordinate of social interaction. Physical contiguity is a primary category in all human cultures: contiguity of residence spontaneously defines distance, closeness, and basic obligations. Spatial categories have provided thus basic dimensions in the definition of human community. Both with regard to the State and the locality, however, it is not territoriality as such, but territoriality as a symbol of variables critical to collective survival which account for the irrational collective power of territorial symbols. What appears to be at stake is the integrity and the perpetuation of the collective understandings on which the existing collectivity (social system, society) rests.

Direct physical contacts between human organisms occur continuously, but even then, social definitions intervene. Basically, however, human interaction involves complex processes of reciprocal interpersonal perceptions. Other people threaten the constructed world which we inhabit,

not when or because their entry as such directly threatens us (though that may be the case), but when or because such intrusion implies to those intruded upon the undermining of the existing reality. In this respect the otherwise rather careless UN dictum--'War begins in the minds of men'--makes the critical point. An act is an act of war when it is so perceived by one or both (or more) parties.

The Falklands/Malvinas War: A Case Study

Analytically we thus confront a fairly abstract model of analysis. Application in a concrete case study may therefore be an important aid to understanding. The war in and over the Falklands/Malvinas (1982), considered against the backdrop of the nuclear threat, appears well-suited to that purpose. The eruption of the South Atlantic crisis against the backdrop of the nuclear weapons debate produced some interesting analytical possibilities. Much about that crisis was reminiscent of the classic imagery of diplomacy and war in early modern times. In fact those dimensions of the case were pronounced enough initially to eclipse the serious nature of the conflict in progress. The question of interest to us here is the following: How was it possible, in a relatively brief period of time, both in England and in Argentina, to mobilize if not galvanize, these populations around military-backed policies and courses of action which tended to be viewed by others in more relaxed circumstances in tragic-comical terms?

To the Argentinians one might readily concede the going geopolitical logic: the location of the Malvinas suggests possible identity of interest between Falklanders and Argentinians which was hardly as self-evident in the case of Britain. To the British one might concede--despite the geopolitical arguments in favor of Argentina, the Falklanders were tied nonetheless ethnically, historically and politically to Britain. This forcible displacement by an alien regime was surely a violation of sovereignty as popularly conceived. But a war, from either side, on these grounds alone? What additional variable accounted for the ostensible outrage of each at the other? If foregoing analyses are valid, and we offer them only as a working hypothesis, the critical variable in this conflict was neither a biological or social determinism in any direct or linear sense, but the respective threat which each society saw in the action of the other to its own core reality. The perceptions were by no means spontaneous. Historical, national, and military myths operated as powerful conditioning forces. But there was nothing "blind" or "inevitable" about the South Atlantic denouement. Political leaders, themselves prisoners, to be sure, of the same mythology, made decisions and manipulated the symbols of collective self-definition in ways which set the two governments on a collision course. Not, it can be argued, that the debacle was due to lack of negotiating know-how. No, what was and remains problematic is to be sought, as Fromm suggests, in the human domain, in the ways we construct and misconstruct our interhuman reality.

SOME GENERALIZATIONS

Here I shall summarize results scattered through the foregoing parts of this article, supplemented and expanded by excerpts from some empirical studies.

(a) Conflict, when defined by multiple and (at least partially) mutually exclusive ends or interests, is inherent in human existence. Hostility, aggression, violence, and the like, on the other hand, though conflictual in character, are conditional or *accidental* rather than *innate* human phenomena.

(b) The sources of “man’s inhumanity to man,” of aggression, violence and war are best sought in the precarious position of *Homo sapiens* (partly determined, partly free) in the cosmos, rather than in biological or social determinism. This view, held by many but not by all social scientists, does not deny the existence of such determinisms, but asserts only that war, or any other form of violence, represents human action rather than necessary or determined behavior. (Thus, while prediction of the early eradication of war could be irresponsible, it is equally misleading to accept war as a fatal necessity.)

(c) Given current studies in primatology, ethology and sociobiology, the force of the genetic legacy in human social behavior is undergoing review. Again, though there are disagreements and false starts, genuine new evidence bearing on the interface of the biological and the social can only be welcomed.

(d) War and other forms of collective violence, though arising on the foundations of biological needs, drives, and resources, represent socially learned and/or generated behavior. The acquiescence of vast populations to war, and their psychological availability for military mobilization demonstrates the nature and the power of the human social heritage. It demonstrates as well the need for the cultivation of the processes of individuation and personal agency in contemporary societies. Mass psychologies and stampeding impulses must be challenged by autonomously critical individuals. When war is accepted as inevitable, and preparations and capabilities for war become institutionalized, the sociocultural momentum is all but irresistible. At this juncture the “realists” gravely observe that the world is a dangerous place, that disarmament is folly. As a result, prophecy fulfills itself. Sooner or later, ‘aggression’ occurs, and ‘realists’ can always be shown to have been right!

(e) Where the theoretical basis for research is adequate, empirical investigations can contribute enormously to our understandings of both the etiology of violence and the processes of peace. Vast bodies of data exist, for example, which link insecurity (of the persons or groups) to aggression-or violence-proneness; on relationships between violent sports and hostility levels in populations; on effects of violence in the mass media on behavior particularly of youth.

(f) Meanwhile the applied disciplines provide perhaps the most practicable and accessible resources in areas other than military. New institutions, based in part on newly-developing mediation techniques, are

developing for the solution of domestic and community disputes. Historically the development of national (central) legal systems appears to have atrophied local informal conciliation processes. Given the general renewal of interest in local democracy, the time appears ripe for the revitalization of personal and local conflict-resolution processes. Study and training programs at several levels--lay, paraprofessional, and professional--have much to contribute.

(g) On the one hand, the continuation of diplomatic and defense establishments appears inevitable in any foreseeable future. On the other hand, the sense of inevitability inherent in that assumption paralyses our collective will, thus guaranteeing the very inevitability we claim to fear. The supreme tragedy of the era is our inability to assemble our many capabilities into idioms of collective action. Thus the energy generated in 'nuclear freeze' and other initiatives cannot be harnessed productively for sustained peacemaking action and the structural changes required. The questions persist: Why?

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Chapter V

Minorities With a Mission in the Churches*

The 1980s dawned under an increasingly ominous international sky. The sunshine of superpower detente was clouding over, and threats of nuclear war rumbled like distant thunder. If the clouds showed any possible silver lining, it was the rather abrupt awakening of public opinion, notably in the churches. Suddenly the public discovered that actual rather than mere deterrent use of nuclear weapons was under consideration. While the laity organized for public action, official church bodies in a number of countries were staking out unprecedented positions in opposition to nuclear weaponry. Mainline church leaders began to wonder audibly whether the time had come for their charges to declare themselves “peace churches.”

If the stir in the churches was a hopeful sign, it was fraught, nonetheless, with uncertainty. Where can-or where should-a religiously inspired repudiation of nuclear weapons go? After all, skeptics may well observe, such an act leaves untouched the complex conflicts of which nuclear weapons are but the symptom. Moreover, peace movements in the past have mushroomed only to subside, slowly or quickly, because they were merely reactive phenomena. Spokesmen for the Reagan administration in the early months let it be known that they anticipated a similar fate for the then-current movement.

Peace movements owe their existence to war and related military actions, hardly possessing a life of their own. War, for its part, however, as suggested by the famous dictum of Karl von Clausewitz, is simply the continuation of diplomacy by other means. While wars usually begin in some trigger event, events that *trigger* do not *cause* wars. Wars grow from existing conflicts, already possessing a life of their own. But how about peace movements? To what extent do they represent abiding commitments by their adherents to the peaceful resolution of conflict? To what extent are they merely reactive, without substance of their own? Are such movements ineffective for lack of root or substance, or are their demands simply unattainable?

On the surface, the anti-nuclear actions of the early 1980s appeared to differ little from peace movements of other days. Millions of people on both sides of the Atlantic were aroused by the continuing development and deployment of ever more destructive weapons, and by speculations by public officials over the winnability of nuclear war. The result was protests and marches. Most of the energies behind these actions, however, originated in the churches, a fact which suggested that something more than fear may have been at work. Many who are inspired by Christian faith and hope find the possession, the deployment, or the possible use of nuclear weapons to be an ultimate blasphemy.

But more is afoot in the churches than most people, both inside and outside, realize. It is not only that the nuclear threat, in the words of the hymn

writer, makes ancient truths “uncouth.” It is also that the rapid growth of global interdependence has poured new content into the ancient ecumenical vision. Suddenly the just-war ethic, long taken for granted in the churches, for the most part uncritically, is thrown into doubt, while the pacifist challenge, long ignored, once more gains a hearing.

The claim, of course, is not that the just-war doctrine has been abandoned or that the majority of Christians are about to become pacifists. It is to assert, rather, that in the flux of this era, many, perhaps most, people in the churches are driven to reexamine the foundations of both faith and ethics, and are discovering hitherto unfamiliar parts of the Christian legacy. It was long the conventional view in Christian ethics that the pacifism of early Christians, though plausible in the first generations, became obsolete as Christianity moved from minority to majority status. Likewise, it was thought that the just-war doctrine embodied perennial principles or truth. Whether or not those assumptions were valid, the nuclear era reveals that the just-war doctrine, like the pacifism that preceded it, was in some measure the product of a particular historical era, but an era now passing.

The claim by some that nuclear weapons can in no way be justified by the just-war doctrine, or by others that such weapons render the doctrine itself obsolete, creates a novel situation. The just-war doctrine loses the monopoly it once held in the churches, and the common ground between the two conceptions, pacifism and the just war, suddenly appears broader than imagined earlier. That is, once the position is taken that certain actions are forbidden, even at the risk of defeat or occupation by an enemy, we have entered the pacifist “predicament.” Once the use of nuclear weapons is rejected categorically, the question is no longer *whether* but, rather, *where* to draw the line.

To a degree unprecedented perhaps since the early centuries of the churches, pacifists and non-pacifists found themselves side by side in the churches, needing to take each other seriously. Few, if any, were prepared for this transformation. The non-pacifist option is likely to remain predominant in most parishes, with pacifists still an uncomfortable minority. But none can escape the sea change now upon us in the ethics of war and peace.

THE ECLIPSE OF CHRISTIAN PACIFISM

Historians report no evidence of Christians bearing arms prior to about A.D. 170. Arms-bearing by Christians became general only with the fourth century establishment of Christianity as the imperial religion. Though taking human life, for whatever reason, was explicitly rejected by early Christian writers, historians do not agree on the reasons for early Christian refusals to bear arms. By the third century, objections to military service apparently had more to do with the conflict between Christian and Roman values generally, particularly the religious overtones of military oath, than with pacifism specifically. Whatever the facts, as Roland Bainton shows in a standard work on Christians and war, three major positions emerged in the history of the

church: pacifism, the just-war doctrine, and the Crusade.¹ Though the Crusade notion remains as a perennial temptation, only the first two paradigms, the pacifist and the just war, can lay serious claim to the Christian conscience today.

At the outset of the Christian movement, however, there was little ambiguity. There was no place for bloodshed and war in the new reality embodied in the presence of Jesus, in his passion and resurrection, and in the Pentecost event. As the early accounts show, the impulses of love and community-building were overwhelming. People were drawn together in the simultaneous discovery of personhood and community. Their whole historical existence was transformed by the new order which had erupted in their midst, and which led them to anticipate an imminent *Parousia*. The resulting faith paradigm was summed up eloquently by a participant: “Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps...When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly.”²

It must be recognized, nonetheless, that the “pacifism” of the early Christian bands was, in part, a function of historical circumstances. Apart from the temptation offered by the Zealot resistance “movement,” to which two or more of the twelve apostles originally belonged, military action of whatever sort was not an issue requiring decision.³ Palestine, the arena into which Jesus came, was occupied by Roman legions, into which the subject Jews, naturally enough, were not conscripted. At the most, many scholars have noted, since converts to “The Way” expected the early return of their Lord, their radical code was really an “interim ethic,”⁴ unsuited to the demands of the long haul of history.

Be that as it may, the fourth century produced a radical mutation or paradigm shift in the definition of Christian faith and life.⁵ That century opened with Christians subjected to the most severe of all the Imperial Roman persecutions. That same century ended, however, with the empire in the hands of Christians, with the persecutees having become the *persecutors*. Constantine (325-37) first legitimated and promoted Christianity in the Roman Empire, while Theodosius (379-95) made it the official Roman religion. Pagan cults were eventually suppressed, and by 412, only “Christians” were permitted in the Roman army. Some contemporaries, notably the bishop-historian Eusebius (died ca. 399) of Caesarea, were jubilant. Given the severe persecutions that some had suffered, this emotion is understandable.

But the larger import of the fourth century change remains in dispute. Did the establishment of Christianity as the imperial religion constitute the “fall” of the church, as some historians claim, or its “triumph,” as others have maintained?⁶ Did the church fall *down-or up*? This much is clear: where initially the center of gravity of Christian action in the world lay in the regeneration of those thereby incorporated into the new community, it now shifted increasingly to investment in the external logic of a civilization. The fate of the religious and the political communities became inextricably linked.

Meanwhile, however, the empire, which was the agent of the Christian triumph, itself fell into decay. Following the fall of Rome (A.D. 476), monasteries, dioceses, parishes, and other Christian institutions filled some of the political, social, and economic void.⁷ Clergy and churches became increasingly mired in temporal, even military, affairs. Political and military anarchy prevailed, and the doctrine of the just war evolved as a largely futile attempt to discipline and to restrain. The pacifism of the early Christians survived in the sometimes-violated immunity of the clergy from military service, and in occasional sectarian protest (the Waldensians, for example). But the pacifist option was generally absent from the official church or explicitly forbidden until the twentieth century.

The just-war doctrine, evolving over the centuries, dominated Christian thought for a full millennium, beginning with the fifth century. Renaissance, Reformation, and nationalism are the leading initial transformations said to lie between the medieval and the modern eras. Pacifist stirrings resurfaced briefly in the Renaissance and the Reformation (Anabaptists), but these stirrings were quickly squelched. The new national monarchies from the sixteenth century onward, presupposed, but also quickly manipulated, the just-war doctrine. The aspect of the doctrine legitimating military action could be invoked, while the strictures restraining it could be ignored. The resulting vulgarized version of the just-war doctrine that dominated the modern era was aptly summarized and transmitted in the familiar American dictum, “May she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong” (Stephen Decatur, 1816).

The modern era, stretching from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, bears the onus of ever-wider wars, fought among nations comprising Christendom. Why, it may be asked, did not the concepts of human dignity, which inspired the modern democratic revolutions, result in a much earlier and greater outrage against war? Whatever the answer, not until the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the year of the Vienna Congress (1815) ending that epoch, did the first modern peace movement appear. Three peace societies were formed that year in the United States. The following year, 1816, saw the establishment of the British Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace in London. Its purpose was to “print and circulate tracts and to diffuse information showing that *War* is inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity and the true interests of mankind.”⁸ In the United States, during the next few years, a number of local peace societies were formed, and, by 1828, the American Peace Society was established to oppose war on a broad basis. That society was to remain active until the latter part of the century.⁹

While the initial movements were rooted in religious soil, humanist inspirations operated as well. Typically, movement goals were issue-specific, permitting the cooperation of participants of varying persuasions, both religious and other. There are no grounds for Christians to claim exclusive credit (or blame!) for modern peace movements.

Since the early nineteenth century appearance of the first peace societies, a kind of cyclical rhythm can be discerned. Following each war, somewhat commensurate to its destructiveness, reaction sets in, and pacifist

sentiment stirs anew. When the nation once more goes to war, most of this sentiment evaporates or goes underground. Over the past century, nonetheless, some cumulative momentum can be observed. Likewise, international interdependencies have grown rapidly, as have the lineaments of international organization. The International Court of Justice (The Hague), formed in 1899, the short-lived League of Nations, and the more durable, if still halting United Nations, represent advances toward global political order. Peace movements, though hardly the decisive dynamics underlying these developments, nonetheless contributed to the climate that made them possible, and, in turn, may be viewed as manifestations of a growing global awareness.

Though organized peace movements emerged early in the nineteenth century, not until after World War I did they become politically effective.¹⁰ As the horror and the futility of that holocaust sank in, conviction mounted that war must--and can--be outlawed. Meanwhile, the force of nineteenth century optimism was far from spent. From a marriage of dread and illusion was born a progeny of unrealistic schemes to rid the world of war. The churches for their part, now appalled at their complicity in the war (that story is told by Ray Abrams¹¹), resolved, as Bainton observes, "to make every effort to see that there would never be another war to bless."¹²

Initially, these efforts appeared successful. In 1929 sixty-three nations signed an agreement, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy, and committing the signatories to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Pacifists were jubilant. The following year a major disarmament conference was held in London which declared a five-year holiday on capital ship-building and set tonnage limits for battleships. In 1934, the Oxford Union, the leading club of Oxford University, adopted the famous resolution, "This house will not fight for King and country." Revulsion at the horror and futility of the Great War (1914-18) combined with the legacy of nineteenth century optimism to generate wholly unrealistic expectations.

Today we know that this "pacifist" victory was illusory. History, certainly in the then near future, was headed in a different direction. Nothing had happened structurally within nations, or in relations among them, to sustain the renunciations implicit in the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The key phrase in the agreement, "renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy," was itself vague. In any event, as Bainton observes, "all of the programs for the elimination of war"¹³ rested on the assumption that man is good enough and wise enough to abolish war. Not only were the results ephemeral, but critics charge that the "pacifism" of the 1920s and 1930s was self-defeating, that the disarming of the Western democracies produced the vacuum that Hitler filled. Had the Western democracies possessed the will and the might to resist him earlier, so the argument goes, World War II could have been avoided. This interpretation became quasi doctrine in postwar American strategic policy: Disarmament brings war, not peace.¹⁴

Peace groups and movements, it must be reemphasized, were only a tributary to the wider stream of sentiment that sustained the disarmament initiatives of the post-World War I era. In the churches, the social gospel

movement, which antedated World War I, had its own momentum, though it, too, had a strong pacifist penchant. During the 1930s three thousand Protestant clergy, mostly from that movement, joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation. On the secular side, this was also a time of socialist internationalism. In a word, “pacifism” meant many things, as did “religion.” Assessment of the era, and of the critics’ verdicts on the era, requires a careful sifting of movements, actions, and policies. Undifferentiated indictments of the era serve no useful purpose. *Christian* pacifism entails dimensions of penitence, renunciation, and renewal that cannot be presupposed in the political arena, nor organized politically. On the other hand, to discredit disarmament efforts today because of the confusions and futilities of efforts in the 1920s and 1930s is both to misread the past and to mislead the future.

THE EMERGENCE OF CHRISTIAN REALISM

Beneath the euphoria surrounding the supposed renunciation of war as an instrument of policy not only was history in the short term moving in a different direction, but the social gospel was generating its own “antibodies” against misguided pacifist optimism. Reinhold Niebuhr, an articulate young pastor who had been nurtured in the liberal and social gospel traditions, served in Detroit during the decade following World War I, the final years of the struggle of organized labor for recognition. In 1928, he left Detroit to join the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Before moving to New York, Niebuhr had already become convinced that the liberal vision failed to confront the tragedy of power in society. His early work, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*,¹⁵ published in 1932, quickly became a classic. Where unselfishness is the highest ideal for the individual, Niebuhr argued, for society the highest moral ideal is justice. He railed at “the moralists, both religious and secular,” who ignore this distinction, and who fail to recognize that “when collective power, whether in the form of imperialism or class domination, exploits weakness, it can never be dislodged unless power is raised against it.”

Niebuhr, however, had early joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and in the 1920s, while in Detroit, he had become national chairman of the American branch of that organization. In his analysis of social class and conflict in American society during those years, he drew heavily on Marxist thought (on occasion he described himself as “Marxian”). On the other hand, his belief that international war was too destructive to contemplate kept him in the “pacifist” camp in international relations long after his domestic reorientation was under way. In late 1933, however, the FOR polled its members to determine the extent to which pacifism was being defined in absolutist terms. In the wake of this survey, Niebuhr resigned as chairman, unable any longer to embrace an absolutist position. In an article entitled “Why I Leave the F.O.R.,” Niebuhr made his decision public:

Recognizing, as liberal Christianity does not, that the world

of politics is full of demonic forces we have chosen on the whole to support the devil of vengeance against the devil of hypocrisy. In the day in which we live a dying social system commits the hypocrisy of hiding its injustices behind the forms of justice and the victims of injustice express their politics in terms of resentment against this injustice. As Marxians we support this resentment against the hypocrisy. As Christians we know there is a devil in the spirit of vengeance as well as in the spirit of hypocrisy. For that reason we respect those who try to have no traffic with devils at all.¹⁶

Despite the enormous change in thought that had taken place, however, Niebuhr in 1934 had not yet fully reversed his position. Elsewhere in his statement, he asserted that “I am forced to associate myself with the 20 percent of the fellowship who are pacifists only in the sense that they will refuse to participate in an international armed conflict. Perhaps it would clear the issue if we admitted that we were not pacifists at all. We probably all recognize the terrible possibilities of violence. *We regard an international armed conflict as so suicidal that we are certain that we will not participate in it*” (italics added).¹⁷

By 1941, however, some months before Pearl Harbor, he joined others in launching *Christianity and Crisis*, the journal which became the mouth-piece for the reorientation in thought that came to be known as “Christian realism.” In his opening editorial, Niebuhr identified two schools of thought, one believing that “war could be eliminated if only Christians and other men of good will refused resolutely enough to have anything to do with conflict.” Another school, he wrote, holds that “there are historic situations in which refusal to defend the inheritance of a civilization, however imperfect, against tyranny and aggression may result in consequences even worse than war. This journal intends to express and, if possible, to clarify this second viewpoint.” “Christian realism,” with Niebuhr as its most effective spokesman, was to gird the American churches, and American opinion far beyond, for the “tragic” ordeal of World War II. Hans Morgenthau, the dean of American political scientists for some years, wrote later: “I have always considered Reinhold Niebuhr the greatest living philosopher of America, perhaps the only creative political philosopher since Calhoun.”¹⁸

Christian realism succeeded in stamping an entire era. Apart from a vigorous but numerically small community of conscientious objectors, pacifist voices during World War II were largely muffled. Several years were to elapse after the war before they once more were to find a common voice, and it is to that pacifist revival that we now turn.

The Oxford Conference and the Ecumenical Movement

The pacifisms of the 1920s and 1930s, and the Christian realist response of the 1940s were not the only important developments during

this era. Among the non-Roman Christian communions, several important ecumenical conversations were in progress. While these did not stem the tide toward what turned out to be a second “world war,” the conversation and the movement it presaged survived. An ecumenical conference on “Church, Community and the State,” held at Oxford in 1937, signaled the coming shift of the attitude of the churches toward war. Summoning the “church to be the church,” the conference identified three main positions prevalent in the churches with regard to war. “Some believe,” the report read, that “especially in its modern form, war is always sin. ...Some would participate only in just wars..., [and finally] some, while also stressing the Christian obligation to work for peace and mutual understanding among nations, hold, nonetheless, that no such effort can end war in this world.” None of these three positions, the statement observes, can claim to “represent the only Christian attitude.” Rather, the perplexity arising from these disagreements ‘is in itself a sign of the sin in which its [the church’s] members are implicated.”

In view of this fact, the church, cannot “rest in permanent acquiescence in the continuance of these differences but should do all that is possible to promote the study of the problem by people of different views meeting together to learn from one another as they seek to understand the purpose of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.”¹⁹ The lack of a common Christian practice and witness with regard to war and peace was attributed simply to human failure, rather than, as so often in the past, either to divine inscrutability or to the human condition.

Oxford paved the way for the positions espoused by the World Council of Churches in the founding Assembly of Amsterdam in 1948. Though Amsterdam may have meant a partial retreat from advances notable at Oxford—the impact of both the war and Christian realism could be felt—the dawn of the nuclear age between Oxford and Amsterdam released new impulses. Moreover, it was evident that Christian disunity was not only an ecclesiastical or a sacramental problem. More scandalous than sacramental disunity were the recurrent wars of Christendom.”

Building on Oxford, the appropriate section of the Amsterdam WCC Assembly report began, “War is contrary to the will of God.” Once more three positions were identified: the just war, the pacifist, and then, registering the dawning of the nuclear age (1945) in the interim since Oxford (1937), a new position held by those who believe that “modern warfare, with its mass destruction, can never be an act of justice.”²⁰ “Nuclear pacifism” was aborning. Though the dominant influence of the just-war doctrine was still evident throughout the report, for the first time in the modern context, pacifism was restored explicitly by the major communions as a legitimate Christian option.

Analogous developments were to follow on the Roman Catholic side less than two decades later. First came the encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (1963), and then decisions of the Vatican II Council. “Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas along with their population,” declared one of the council documents, “is a crime against

God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.” Though with greater qualification than the Oxford and the WCC statements, Vatican II also offered support for the conscientious objector to military service. In any case, pacifism now became an option within the Roman Catholic tradition as well.²¹ The pacifist paradigm of the early church had been restored as a valid option in the life, the dialogue, and the witness of the church.

CONVERTING THE CHURCH TO PACIFISM?

Meanwhile, pacifists once more bestirred themselves. In 1950, nearly four hundred church persons, mostly pacifist, gathered in Detroit in a four-day national conference on “the church and war.” Planned by an ad hoc committee composed of Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Peace Churches, and denominational peace group representatives, the conference was more than a year in the making. According to *The Christian Century* (May 24, 1950), it was the first large postwar gathering of Christian pacifists in the United States.

Two important developments facilitated and perhaps triggered the Detroit initiative. The first was the rapid crystallization, in the late 1940s, of the Cold War. In Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union was consolidating the band of buffer states to its west, the embodiment of the strategic doctrine that it derived from its experience in World War II. In the West, the Marshall Plan had been launched in 1948, and the following year, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed. More seriously, though the notorious Pacific thermonuclear tests of the 1950s were still more than a year away, and antecedent developments were secret, the threat of coming events was already casting a shadow. According to some pacifists, it was time to signal the dangers ahead.

The other antecedent development was a hopeful one. As noted above, the World Council of Churches had just been formed, and pacifist church people were keenly aware of both the Oxford and the Amsterdam declarations. If the atomic threat made action urgent, the ecumenical movement appeared to make it possible. Nonetheless, the purposes of the May 1950 event in Detroit were somewhat vague. After planning had been under way for more than six months, John Oliver Nelson, chairman of the planning committee, in a meeting of that group in 1949, observed that “the Conference was originally thought of as a means of studying more fully the third position of the Amsterdam Conference of the World Council of Churches.²² (“others, again, refuse military service of all kinds”). Now legitimated as a valid Christian option, pacifism, it was implied, had to rework its agenda.

But the summons for pacifists to reformulate their self-understanding was not an end in itself. Earlier planning-committee agenda minutes observed that the proposed conference “would be one of church people, with church orientation, speaking to the church but would not be an officially designated church conference. ..[that it would] attempt to present the dilemma which

faces the church when, in the atomic age, it is divided on the crucial question of war." As the Oxford Conference had pointed out, "the variety of opinions in the church on this issue is itself an evidence of sin. What, then, can the churches do about it?"²³

While the Detroit event did not fully meet the organizers' expectations,²⁴ it generated considerable encouragement and enthusiasm among the participants. The work of the conference fell into three broad areas, theological, social and political, and practical. Perhaps the most important product of the gathering was a theological tract of some forty pages published under the title "A Christian Approach to Nuclear War." Originally signed by a committee of thirty leaders in the Detroit gathering, it was cosigned later by hundreds of ministers. This tract went through a number of printings, and eventually forty thousand copies were distributed. This document, sober and evangelical in tone, was further evidence that pacifists had learned, both from the tragedies of the era and from their chastisement by "Christian realism."²⁵

A continuing organization, "The Church Peace Mission" (CPM), was formed to reach the churches throughout the country with the Detroit message, and in fact to ask them "to break with war." A. J. Muste, then the executive officer of the FOR, stated in the initial proposal that "the object of the Mission is to make pacifism articulate in the church." Minutes of the first executive committee meeting were more direct; the aim of the CPM was said to be to "convert the church." In the same breath, however, it was also noted, likely in anticipation of criticism, that the Mission was "opposed to totalitarianism and violence." During 1950 and 1951, a dozen regional consultations were held across the U. S.A. and several important studies were commissioned.

The CPM confronted basic problems from the outset. Its stated goals would have required a far deeper pooling of energies, resources, and structures among the supporting constituencies than was ever in the offing. In a small way, the problem paralleled that of the World Council of Churches: initially, the grandeur of the vision appears to carry everything before it, until there is time for rebound from constituent member interests. The CPM reached this critical point by the end of the second year, when the executive director of the Mission, J. Martin England, reported a fundamental organizational change. While the sponsoring organizations were to continue the appointment of representatives to the executive committee, "Individual projects hereafter would be carried out by the organizations themselves, rather than by a paid Church Peace Mission staff."²⁶ That decision indicated clearly that the original goal was beyond reach.

A second national rally, this one convened directly by the CPM, was held in Detroit in December 1953. Considerable attention was devoted to the then-forthcoming Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Evanston, summer, 1954). Steps were set in motion to contact delegates and to seek stronger action toward peace by the Assembly. Such CPM efforts to engage the WCC peaked with that Assembly, though some contacts continued throughout the decade. Meanwhile, the "Puidoux Conference," a Europe-based dialogue between pacifist and nonpacifist scholars, to which the CPM

had ties, had more direct access to the WCC staff.²⁷ The CPM coordinated its efforts with, and after the Evanston meeting deferred to, that group.

The CPM held two more national gatherings during the 1950s, one a youth conference, but otherwise continued a more limited program- colloquies, studies, pamphlets, sermon contests, and the like-until the end of the decade. One important venture during this time, undertaken jointly with Christian Action (a Niebuhrian circle) ended as CA disbanded, and the papers from both sides, many of them already completed, became archival material.²⁸

A.J. Muste--A Pacifist's Pacifist

Even a fragmentary account of the CPM such as this is incomplete without a profile of A. J. Muste (1885-1967) who, more than anyone else, was the moving spirit behind both the 1950 Detroit Conference on the Church and War and the Church Peace Mission to which it gave birth. Muste was at once an ordained Presbyterian minister (on inactive status) and a Quaker. Discovery of the writings of the Christian mystics and the Anabaptists led the young minister to become a pacifist during World War I. A labor organizer by the early 1920s, already in conversation with Reinhold Niebuhr, Muste became a Marxist. But since he understood Christianity as intrinsically nonviolent, and Marxism was tied intrinsically to revolutionary violence, he felt constrained to abandon the former. Yet, not for long. By 1936, having found the strain of violence in Marxism repugnant, Muste abandoned Marx to return definitively to his earlier faith.²⁹ Christian nonviolence clearly had deeper roots in Muste's soul. Throughout his long life, Muste initiated and participated in many causes and organizations, most of them outside the "organized church."

Mutually critical and respectful of each other's polar positions, the two contemporaries, Muste and Niebuhr, played somewhat analogous roles within their respective constituencies. Muste was a remarkable blend of a flaming Hebrew prophet and the meek man from Nazareth. Alienated from the organized church in the sense that he could not wait for it to shake off its shackles, he acted with others outside the church who responded to the prophetic mandate. Yet, he remained at heart a Christian and even a churchman. Like an importunate lover, he responded when something seemed afoot in the churches. Thus, he followed with hopeful interest the theological conversations in the National and World Councils of Churches, as these pertained to international peace and justice. During the CPM years, he corresponded widely with theologians and clergy.³⁰ Perhaps more than any venture, proposing *a mission to the churches* expressed both the closeness and the distance that he felt.

The End of a Mission

By the late 1950s, the goals of the CPM had been "displaced": the original Church and War Conference of 1950 sought a reconstitution of pacifist thought, whereas the CPM, which it fathered, sought to convert the

church. That goal being quite beyond reach, there remained among the original objectives, the possibility of dialogue with representatives of the other two positions outlined at Amsterdam: those holding that since military action is the ultimate sanction of the rule of law, it is the duty of citizens “to defend the law by force if necessary,” and those adhering to what was coming to be known as nuclear pacifism.

The fourth and last of the CPM national conferences held in 1959 sought particularly to engage the latter group, the “nuclear pacifists,” in dialogue. This choice may have been tactical in part for if, as the Amsterdam report noted, nuclear pacifists held that “modern warfare, with its mass destruction, can never be an act of justice,” persons who have moved to that position (presumably from the just-war camp), might be persuaded thereupon to take the final step to full pacifism. But there were deeper reasons for the choice. The concern was genuine: Who, indeed, could pretend to have “the” answer to the nuclear threat then engulfing humankind? Who could claim to embody precisely “the” form of Christian obedience in such a world? But the 1959 conference, like its predecessors, led to no major breakthrough.

The CPM now turned to its final option-dialogue with the dominant non-pacifist tradition within the churches. This decision resulted in a modest five-year program of smaller colloquies and publications, mostly in or related to theological seminaries. Initially ecumenically Protestant, it soon drew in Roman Catholics as well, along with occasional Jewish contacts. By the mid-1960s, however, Vatican II had met, the civil-rights movement was at flood tide, and controversies over the growing war in Vietnam were heating up. Action now seemed more important than recondite dialogue. In August 1967, the CPM was terminated.³¹

THE WAR-NATION-CHURCH STUDY GROUP

In the early 1960s, the CPM had assembled a small advisory committee of ethicists which over the next few years developed a life of its own after CPM folded. With the blessing of the retiring CPM, this group decided to enlarge its membership and to stay together. It adopted as its own the name of the CPM monthly bulletin, becoming, thus, the War-Nation-Church Study Group (WANACH). Its purpose became the continuation and deepening of a church-centered pacifist-nonpacifist dialogue among Christian ethicists.

The WANACH group, now numbering some twenty members, continued into the 1980s, meeting annually for two days in Washington, D.C. Each meeting, with a prepared agenda, chooses the problems to be treated the following year. Members report on scholarship work and other experiences during the previous year. On occasion, a guest expert may be invited to treat a particular topic. Issues of war and peace are explored in terms of the pacifist-nonpacifist tension in the Christian tradition. Neither exponent seeks to convert the other. A line of accountability to the churches is maintained as support comes from denominational agencies-Brethren, Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic.

Consider an excerpt from a WANACH session in 1970. Charles West had probed alternatives between reform and revolution:

In the ensuing discussion, questions were raised concerning the legitimacy of the state to rule, which did not seem clear in West's presentation. West restated his problem as the search for a view of order which permits positive expression for the one dehumanized by it, but an expression which will not forget the need to keep the enemy within the relationship. Paul's admonition to pray for authorities assumes that God is creating some kind of order through the covenant. But, even if the state lacks legitimacy, the people can be conditioned to question nothing: what is, must be (Monika Hellwig). But the problem, West replied, is that people live with a concept of eternal order, but with no concept of covenant. In such a society, the preaching of the gospel tends to break things up. A regime may have the power to conquer a nation without possessing the power to organize a society. If I were a Christian in the Soviet Union, I'd live by the hope that the society would open sufficiently for covenant-based communities to emerge within it (West). But what of Latin America and Africa (Thomas Heath)? Would you ever take a gun (David Little)? I might (West). But how would you reconcile that with the view that the enemy must be kept within the covenant (Hellwig)? The deterrent effect of such an act, coupled with the readiness of the opponent to yield ground, may be the beginning of covenant enactment (West). But am I to stop killing with killing? What is the covenant with the ones I am killing (Hellwig)? No answer-only the forgiveness of God? West turns the question back to Hellwig, who likewise is uncertain, but feels pushed more and more to give a pacifist answer. Hehir: So you have a value scale which permits the violation of every value except life? Hellwig: I can find no basis upon which to make such a judgment instead of God. West, accepting the dictum, Who am I to play God?, therefore finds himself extremely reluctant, except for the most extreme necessity, to act against the life of another, and then only in penance and appeal to grace. But the real meaning of penance was always that I might have done otherwise and didn't (John Howard Yoder). Whereupon Hellwig: Is the concept of tangible guilt essential to *metanoia*? *Metanoia* means, said West, given the situation I have created, what do I do now? The discussion ended with an exchange concerning filial and covenantal categories, with the offertory seen as contract and the communion as gift.³²

OUTCOMES OF HONEST EXCHANGE

What happens when, as in this exchange, pacifist and non-pacifist Christians take one another seriously? What are the issues that crystallize between them? What outcomes can be awaited? At most, WANACH probably did advance reconnoitering, looking to a time when such dialogue will assume central importance in the churches. The WANACH dialogue illustrates once more the fact that the pacifist-nonpacifist disagreement reaches to the heart of the major tenets of the faith itself, to the central affirmations concerning salvation and redemption. Each seems to purchase the clarity and validity of

its position at the expense of other aspects of the biblical message. To put the difference aside as secondary, as one of the *adiaphora*, left to the personal taste of the believer, is simply to trivialize and confuse the issue. Early agreement between the two views theologically is unlikely, perhaps even undesirable, yet the issue is both fundamental and urgent.

More importantly, however, the possibility of fruitful and sustained encounter between the two traditions is not only a tribute to a more tolerant age, though it is that, but is above all a function of historic change. Though tenacious vestiges persist, the churches generally have been “disestablished.” Christendom as civilization has passed. As pacifism was surpassed many centuries ago, so too the just-war tradition is being surpassed along with the Christendom that nurtured it. Both pacifism and non-pacifism are now disestablished options, competing with other value systems in a pluralistic universe. Moreover, despite the deep differences just noted, the nuclear threat, and other challenges of the modern world, crystallized to an unprecedented degree the substance of faith which they share in common, a faith which must assert itself in the face of the obscenities of an arms race out of control.

The history that is rapidly bringing the two traditions into dialogue also in part constitutes the agenda itself. In some respects, the era of global experience that we have now entered resembles more nearly the early centuries than it does the Christendom era of recent centuries.

The Church Re-Sectarianized?

Sociologically speaking, the churches, at least in the Western world, have been returned to a “sectarian” position within society;³³ that is, they represent one of many value options available to a population, rather than the dominant mode. Less and less can they rely on monopoly or even a favored position in the symbolic universe. Accordingly, *witness* rather than *control* becomes once more, as in the New Testament, the basic mode of the Christian presence in the world.

This “re-sectarianizing” of the church in the world is fraught with peril, a peril to which the heirs of the just-war tradition are particularly sensitive. Basically, the just-war doctrine, as restated in the language of Christian realism, views the enforcement of justice and order as the specification of the works of love in the public sphere.³⁴ The early Christian communities, though constrained by a compassionate missionary zeal, concentrated their ethical energies on the interior life of the bands of disciples. A minority position of this sort, however, readily translates into a spirit of withdrawal or a ghetto mentality among Christians.

In a second way, history constitutes the agenda for the pacifist-nonpacifist encounter: namely, by the threat of nuclear mass destruction. It is ironical, when the just-war doctrine is suddenly taken seriously (nuclear weapons are renounced because they exceed all bounds which might make war conditionally “just”), that many Christians brought up in that tradition are ready to abandon it. Perhaps their real frustration is the blame they place,

rightly or wrongly, on the doctrine for legitimating a system that gave rise to the nuclear dilemma in the first place.

Be that as it may, the moment nuclear weapons are renounced on the basis of the just-war doctrine itself, the believer finds him- or herself in the same eschatological position in which the traditional pacifist has always stood. "We are prepared to risk defeat in history because of faith in, and commitment to, a higher kingdom." While this posture can lead to resignation or escapism, that is not its intrinsic meaning. Few nuclear pacifists or just-war objectors sense or understand the new eschatology into which they have been catapulted. Here is one rather concrete and potentially fruitful area for a common and mutually instructive search by pacifists and non-pacifists.

Finally, if all this means in fact a renewed engagement with the basic categories of the faith, it results in a gain for all concerned. Obstacles, to be sure, are enormous, though this is not the place for their enumeration. The pluralization of theology and faith is clearly a corollary of the pluralization of the culture.³⁵ Less and less can we presuppose reinforcement of faith categories by the culture. The Bible is increasingly remote, and even many Christians find it to be hardly an accessible and authoritative source of guidance.

To dwell only on these features of our age, however, is truly to miss "the signs of the times." Undoubtedly, for many the encounter between Christianity and the forces of the modern world has been costly. Whether one thinks of historical forces such as the industrial and the political revolutions, or of intellectual currents represented by names such as Darwin, Marx, and Freud, the faith has "taken a beating." But this has been a means of liberation and purification of the faith. Laying bare the historical relativities of the biblical saga has also exposed the profound significance of the Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition, of which Abraham serves as a prototype.³⁶

We have access today to a broader and more mature grasp of that faith and its significance than has ever before been possible. It is true, of course, as in scientific knowledge generally, that (to reverse a common saying) the whole is less than the sum of the parts. That is, we have knowledge far more detailed and specialized than what becomes available in configurations that are usable in the common life. Coining the idioms of action to bridge these gaps is a critical task for our generation.³⁷

Any new movement for peace in the churches is hostage to such bridge-building as well as to the pacifist-nonpacifist dialogue. Until there is a broad, a fundamental, or a principled commitment to peace, government officials can only manipulate, and the arms race will continue.

NOTES

* Essay published in *Peace, Politics and the People of God*, ed. Paul Peachey (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp. 26-45.

1 Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1960).

2 I Peter 2:21, 23.

3 The classic treatment of this theme was Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1961)

4 G. J. Heering, *The Fall of Christianity* (New York: Fellowship Publications, 1943); Shirley Jackson Case, *The Social Triumph of Early Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1933).

5 The concepts of "paradigm" and of "paradigm shift," to refer to dominant models of understanding and/or methodology, were developed by Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1970). The conceptions have proved fertile as seen in the discussions they have triggered meanwhile. Here we refer to the typical and hence ruling configurations of the Christian faith.

6 G. J. Heering, *The Fall of Christianity* (New York: Fellowship Publications, 1943); Shirley Jackson Case, *the Social Triumph of Early Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1933).

7 The early Middle Ages show striking, and likely instructive, parallels to base-community phenomena in Latin America and elsewhere, and to the liberation theology linked to them. In a time of political anarchy, monasteries and parishes in the early medieval era offered the only centers of stability and security. But we need to ask: to what extent did the eventual militarization of Christianity spring from quite understandable actions of "self-defense"? Can a careful study of that era in Europe provide any guidance to liberation theologians today? Someone needs to find out!

8 Norman Angell, "Peace Movements," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), 12:41-47. For a fuller treatment, see Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

9 Peter Brock, "The American Peace Society: The First Decade," in *Pacifism in the United States*, chap. 11.

10 Peter Brock, *Twentieth Century Pacifism: New Perspectives in Political Science* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1970), p. 2.

11 Ray Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms* (New York: Round Table Press, 1933).

12 Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, 214.

13 Ibid.

14 For example, see Telford Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Co., 1979).

15 Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960 [1932]).

16 Reinhold Niebuhr, "Why I Leave the F.O.R.," *The Christian Century* (January 3, 1934).

17 Ibid.

18 Ronald Stone, *Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet to Politicians* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1972) 9.

19 J. H. Oldham, ed., *The Oxford Conference: Official Report* (Chicago: Willett & Clark, 1938), 162-63.

20 In the three positions sketched by the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam, 1948) the just-war position (Oxford's second) became in effect what was later known as "pacifism." It was listed first and read, "There are those who hold that even though entering a war may be a Christian's duty in particular circumstances, modern warfare, with its mass destruction, can never be an act of justice." W. A. Visser 't Hooft, ed., *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (London: SCM Press, 1949).

21 This quotation comes from the document entitled the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 294. On conscientious objection, see p. 292. For a contemporary discussion, see the essay by Bryan Hehir below.

22 Minutes and other records of the conference and planning have been deposited in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection classified under "Church Peace Mission."

23 CPM file, Swarthmore College Peace Collection. In the same collection, see also the A. J. Muste files (microfilm AJM 89.8,9, 10). Quoted by permission.

24 Compare the announcement in an unsigned editorial in *The Christian Century* 67 (May 10, 1950) with the *Century* editor's report on the meeting. Harold Fey, "Pacifist Christians Call on the Church to Break with War," *The Christian Century* 67 (May 24, 1950): 652-53.

25 *The Christian Conscience and War* (New York: The Church Peace Mission, 1951).

26 Letter from Martin England to W. W. Wittcamper, dated September 2, 1952. CPM file, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, cited by permission.

27 Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *On Earth Peace: Discussions on War/Peace Issues Between Friends, Mennonites, Brethren and European Churches 1935-1975* (Elgin, Ill.: The Brethren Press, 1978).

28 The file of papers is in the possession of the chairman of the joint committee representing Christian Action, Edward Le Roy Long, Jr., currently of Drew Theological Seminary. The files of Christian Action are in the custody of Robert Handy, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

29 Jo Ann O. Robinson, *Abraham Went Out: A Biography of A. J. Muste* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Nat Hentoff, ed., *The Essays of A. J. Muste* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970); also by Hentoff, *Peace Agitator: The Story of A. J. Muste*, rev. ed. (New York: A. J. Muste Memorial Institute, 1982). The Robinson volume reached me only after this chapter was written.

30 Before and after the major CPM events, and on occasions such as the Second Assembly of the WCC in Evanston (1954), Muste wrote many letters to prominent churchmen and theologians, and received numerous, sometimes detailed replies (tapes 89., 8. 9.10 in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, cited by permission). These are important because they

demonstrate his continued sense of identity with the church in its profound sense, despite his institutional distance, and his active collaboration with many extra-collegial groups.

31 A set of August 1967 minutes of the F.O.R. (Muste file, Swarthmore College Peace Collection) simply notes that as of that date CPM activities have been discontinued.

32 A complete set of notes on the advisory committee and the subsequent WANACH sessions is in possession of the writer. The files of the Church Peace Mission for the period 1961-67, are now on deposit in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

33 Cf. Ernst Troeltsch's classic, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960 [1931]). George Lindbeck offers a contemporary reflection on the changing position of the churches in the modern world in "The Sectarian Future of the Church," in *The God Experience: Essays in Hope*, ed. Joseph P. Whalen, S.J. (Paramus, N.J.: Newman Press, 1971), 226-43.

34 Paul Ramsey, initially something of a "voice in the wilderness," espoused this point at a time when little formal attention was given to the precise maxims of the just-war doctrine. See especially his *War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1961).

35 David Tracy's *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975) is an important theological response to the pluralist challenge. (See also Tracy's *Analogical Imagination* [New York: Crossroad, 1981]).

36 For a stimulating treatment of the significance of Abraham by a contemporary Jewish writer, see Silvano Arieti, *Abraham and the Contemporary Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

37 Some of these problems quickly surfaced when in the CPM study program in the early 1960s an attempt was made to establish a crossover between the renewal in biblical thought sometimes known as "biblical realism" (best known in the U. S.A. in the scholarship descended from the work of W. F. Albright at Johns Hopkins University). On the CPM venture see *Biblical Realism Confronts the Nation*, ed. Paul Peachey (Nyack, N. Y.: Fellowship Publications, 1963).

PART II

PERSON, COMMUNITY, SOCIETY

Chapter VI

The Lost Science of Man*

“What is man?” is a question as old as our Western literary heritage. It has never received a definitive answer, and perhaps never can, yet the question persists on both the genotypical and the phenotypical planes. Should it ever be answerable on the former level, it would doubtless persist on the latter, more properly on the biographical plane. Indeed, the more complex the development of the species, the more problematic the individual may become to himself. Certainly in our own time, the search for identity, an answer to the specific question, “Who am I?”, is something of an obsession.

The question is addressed in two broad but distinct arenas: in religion, philosophy and the arts, where “private” or “personal” taste prevails, and in the sciences and the polity where the considerations and outcomes are more “public,” and collectively consequential. To be sure, activities and assessments in the two domains interpenetrate, yet the distinction remains important. For in some sense, concern for our “spiritual” fate appears uppermost in the former instance, and for our “material” fate, in the latter.

In human being, however, “spiritual” and “material” are inseparable. Moreover, as modern science advances, the ancient and “self-evident” distinction between the two sides of our being appears increasingly problematic. Already our practical experience teaches us that material problems--drought, famine, poverty, disease and the like--imperil the life of the “spirit.” Assuredly our belief in the reality of the “spirit” is nurtured importantly by the human triumphs we witness in the midst of material deprivation. Nonetheless it is to modern science, and to the inclusion of human phenomena within its scope, that we owe today’s relative freedom from material destitution. But will the sciences, particularly the human sciences, provide us with a fulsome and authentic model of human being, and hence of generic “man?” Is a science of human being, of “man,” possible, necessary, or even desirable? Do the applied helping professions, in the present instance, the mental health professions, require a “theory of man?” Or is it enough for each discipline, whether basic or applied, to develop its own specific tools without preoccupation with the larger question?

Current practice, to some extent, already provides the answer implicit in the last of the foregoing questions. Willy-nilly, each discipline is compelled to proceed without tarrying for general answers. That being the case, the ancient query, “What is man? ,” can be left to idle speculators. This solution, however, is only a provisional one. Scientists and professionals are humans, and as individuals they too face the ancient query. But the provisional separation of the special disciplines from the central issue is subject to the handicaps intrinsic in all provisional solutions: namely, the tendency to come unstuck. Certainly in this instance the original question remains very much on the agenda. Moreover, some model of human being appears implicit in

most if not all of the special human sciences and theories, and the general assumptions frequently get smuggled into ostensibly technical operations. Against that possibility, none are fully immune. But is something more than a provisional solution, a mere *modus operandi*, possible? In a book entitled *The Lost Science of Man* (New York: G. Braziller, 1971) Ernest Becker, a decade ago, sketched the dilemma, indeed the enigma, which the modern intellect confronts. Becker recounted the “tragic paradox” of the career of Albion W. Small (1854-1926), one of the founding fathers of American sociology. The first to be named to a chair of sociology in an American university (Chicago, 1892), Small also founded (1895), and for thirty years edited, the *American Journal of Sociology*. This is still the ranking journal in the field. While he wrote extensively, Small’s lasting contribution lay rather in his efforts toward establishment and consolidation of the new discipline in the academic and the scientific worlds. According to Becker, the “tragedy” and “paradox” of Small’s career lay in the price that had to be paid for sociology to become a science, namely the abandonment of the vision of sociology as the unifying human science.

Small’s experience, however, merely mirrored the wider fate of the new discipline which he helped to shape. In 1865, triggered by the dislocations of the Civil War, the American Social Science Association had been formed to bring together a great number of local and state reform societies. For a quarter of a century this organization was instrumental in promoting social science courses in colleges and universities throughout the land. Then, near the turn of the century, in rapid succession, the separate disciplines—economics, political science, history and sociology broke out to form separate disciplines and professional associations. For a brief time sociology teetered as if contemplating a possible imperialist mission among the sciences in the quest of a larger unity, only in the end to opt likewise for the status of a special science.

The abandonment of the larger vision in favor of an ostensibly scientific vocation for the new discipline resulted in the “tragedy” of Small’s career. As a means to achieve the former, he strove for the latter, without sensing the inherent contradiction between the two. or at least, so it appears in retrospect. In securing a place for the “science” of sociology, he had in fact wheeled a Trojan horse into the city of social philosophy. The doors opened, and an army of “value free” specialists swarmed out, only to join, rather than to overcome, the “enemy.” Small’s mission was at an end. The “science of man,” to quote Becker once more, was “lost.” Never mind the fact that full agreement was never reached as to the precise definition of the subject matter of sociology. Even today the most that can be said for sociology is that it is a “multiple paradigm science.”¹

This tragedy had already been foreshadowed in an earlier generation in Europe. Auguste Comte (1798-1857), usually called the father of sociology, had championed the spirit of “positivism” to replace the theological and metaphysical thought modes of the past, and in so doing, exerted an intellectual influence extending far beyond the borders of the emerging discipline which

he sired. Positivism, for Comte, meant the abandonment of the futile search for first or final causes in the phenomenal order in favor of the laws of “coexistence” and of “succession” among phenomena.² Genial though this insight was in scientific terms, Comte at the same time was still possessed by a mystic vision of social unity, of “Catholicism without Christianity,” as a critic observed. Thus despite his analytic grasp he ended his career dreaming up a fantastic, (and unscientific) “religion of humanity.” But whereas Small was to lose man to science, Comte unwittingly sacrificed science to a phantasmagoric vision of humanity.

Why such a choice? Was it accidental, or is it in fact inevitable? In an important phenomenological essay, James J. Dagenais elucidates the problem further. He writes:

While the real thing which man is may become constituted in consciousness, under the guise of a synthesis of its multiple noematic presentations, all conscious noetic perspectives are impossible *simultaneously*; the identity of noemata as constituting presentations of real things, “identical as opposed to the multiple perceptions and also to the multiple noemata,” still leaves the noetic acts multiple. The mystery of how we know “man” as a totality while at the same time knowing that each separate scientific perspective is *not* a total perspective cannot be solved scientifically. The basic reason for the impossibility of scientific resolution of this question is that, by its options, each science accepts the task of restricting itself to one single noema as its object of investigation; this constitutes the “formal object” of science and it can have no other and still be true to the scientific enterprise.³

In effect, the many-splendored complexity of the human phenomenon dictates a corresponding diversity of modes of investigation, of scientific enterprises. The object of cognition in each particular case being real, attention must be devoted to each *serially* rather than to all *synthesizingly* and *simultaneously*. Not even philosophy, whose vocation is to reflect on the unity that underlies the multiplicity of the phenomenal order, can synthesize the pluriformity of science. Because each science is “autonomous and independent,” Dagenais remarks already in his preface, “[r]eflection upon the sum of the results of the human sciences will not reveal what human being is.”⁴

Nonetheless, in everyday life, we encounter people as wholes. We experience ourselves and others as individuals who are conscious, sentient, and intending agents, mutually accountable in the infinite richness and diversity of the social universe. The unity in human being thus experienced, however, is in fact “pre-scientific and pre-philosophical.” The task of philosophy, Dagenais maintains, is “a critical explication of this experiencing.”⁵

Dagenais clearly makes an indispensable point. Scientists are frequently faulted by the lay public for moral obtuseness when they refuse to venture beyond the boundaries of their disciplines to draw moral or policy generalizations from their findings. Scientists, of course, are as vulnerable to moral cowardice as are their fellow mortals. But Dagenais explains and underscores a fundamental principle, too little understood and respected,

namely, that the scientific explication of a particular variable implicated in human behavior does not of itself provide a key to a theory of man. The physician-scientist who successfully identifies and combats the virus behind a particular illness thereby contributes importantly to the pool of extant knowledge about the human organism. But to expect that same practitioner, on the basis of that particular discovery, or of the skills leading to it, to pronounce authoritatively on the reasons for an abrupt increase in the homicide rate, is to misunderstand both the nature and the limits of scientific inquiry.

Nonetheless it must be asked whether Dagenais has completed the circuit on which he embarked. Analysis by reduction coupled with inductive generalization are the procedures which are the keys to the success of modern science. The abandonment of speculative philosophy in favor of empirical methods of investigation, however, does not mean the abandonment of deductive theory. Indeed, without a theoretical frame the empirical enterprise flounders.⁶ At one level our virus-combating physician engages “nothing but” biochemical processes, under the microscope. But tracing the etiology of the illness which results, he encounters a variety of conditions under which the illness develops or fails to develop. At that point the “whole person” somehow begins to invade the diagnostic process, including those dimensions which are not physiologically apprehensible. And this fact in turn draws his *own* view of the organism--it is, *or* it is not, “merely” a machine--into the calculus. That is, scientists work simultaneously and interactively with both a focused, limited perspective and a broader deductive theory. Whether or not the “explication” of the precritical experience of human being falls to the philosopher, as Dagenais maintains, can be debated on its own merits. That this approach obviates the responsibility of the behavioral *or* the social scientist to grapple with problems of synthesis *or* of a general theory of man is unconvincing. Nonetheless, Dagenais performs an important service when he shows why a synthetic *or* imperialistic social *science* is not possible.

METHODOLOGY AND THEORY

The issue raised by Becker and Dagenais may properly be regarded as methodological. The impossibility of a general science of man is rooted in the nature of the scientific enterprise. But the problem reaches deeply into what has at times been known as “substantive theory.” Early in the development of the social sciences, “theory” and “method” seemed relatively discrete aspects of scientific endeavor. Theory referred to the; body of generalizations pertaining to a class of phenomena. Method referred to the practical techniques of data gathering or analysis. Nonetheless it was evident that method was incipient in theory, and vice versa. Today, to a considerable extent, “methodology,” treated as the logic of inquiry, somewhat eclipses the older distinction. Theory development is dictated by the investigative task, and thus becomes method, while the nature of the phenomena under investigation, which is the object of theory dictates method. In important respects, however, the distinction remains, and our problem here lies on the plane of substantive theory.

Some early modern sociological theorists distinguished among the “inorganic,” the “organic,” and the “superorganic” levels of reality.⁷ The distinction between the second and the third levels corresponds roughly to the traditional dualism which concerns us here, the supposed dualism of “body” and “mind” or “body” and “soul.” Recognition that human beings are both part of nature and somehow outside or beyond nature has been a problem in social thought as far back as our records take us. The problem may have been compounded by our tendency to think in terms of dichotomous categories. Why this is so is not fully clear.⁸ Dichotomous modes of thought may be useful in first-stage classification or other specific acts, but when reified may deform our perceptions.

Since the several levels of reality here identified, the inorganic, the organic, and the superorganic, appear to be hierarchically ordered, one arising from the preceding other, the question arises: is the “superorganic” reducible to, and hence explainable by, the “organic,” and the latter in turn by the “inorganic?” In the Western intellectual tradition (whether Platonic realism or Hebrew Christian) the relative autonomy or even the priority of the “superorganic” order was never seriously in doubt. In the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, however, man was viewed as “wholly a piece with nature,” sharing thus “in the general uniformity of composition which natural science, under Bacon’s urging and Newton’s guidance, had discovered there.”⁹ Even Kant, who contributed importantly to the philosophy of subjective individualism, observed that “human actions are determined by general laws of nature like any other event in nature.” Kant’s argument rested on the observation which was later to become critical in the social sciences that human aggregates display patterns which are independent of the behaviors or choices of individuals.¹⁰

Other modern developments, however, were destined to challenge a naturalistic view insofar as it presupposed a fixed human nature. Travel, trade and increasing interpenetration of peoples and cultures fostered a growing awareness of the immense diversity of human phenomena. As Geertz observes further, “the image of a constant human nature independent of time, place, and circumstance... may be an illusion, that what man is may be so entangled with where he is, who he is, and what he believes that it is inseparable from them. It is precisely the consideration of such a possibility that led to the rise of the concept of culture and the decline of the uniformitarian nature of man.”¹¹ The limit of Geertz’s claim, of course, is debatable. What is relevant here is the autonomously formative power of sociocultural phenomena in shaping the character of man. As Manfred Stanley has observed, “If one were to ask for an expression, in a single sentence, of the main accomplishment and direction of the social sciences to date, a fair answer would be the progressive substitution of sociocultural explanations for those stressing the determinative influence of physical nature.”¹²

The sociocultural correction of an overly naturalistic view in turn gave rise to new problems. Durkheim, who early commented on the traditional (medieval) body-soul dualism, offered a sociological explanation of man’s

“dual existence.” The bodily component, of course, is “purely individual and [is] rooted in our organisms.” The other component is “social and nothing but an extension of society.”¹³ Karl Marx before him, though with a different formulation, had followed essentially the same path. “The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual,” he argued. “In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations.”¹⁴ In yet other terms contemporary scientists have separated, “the factors located in persons, and those that have their source in the environment of those persons.”¹⁵ While many contemporary researchers would not follow these older writers in a reduction of “soul” to man’s social nature, more particularly, to the social dimension of personality, the discovery of the sociocultural order led in some instances to an “over-socialized conception of man in sociology.”¹⁶

The form in which the ancient dualism of soul versus body or mind versus body confronts us in the social and behavioral sciences today appears in efforts to deal with, or to circumvent, the phenomena of consciousness and of human agency. Becker notes that Herbert Spencer, another nineteenth century pioneer (of a different stripe than those already noted), “was embarrassed by the phenomenon of mind and admitted that he could not explain its emergence satisfactorily with his system.”¹⁷ Weigert, citing Herbert Blumer, observes that “the assumption of a responsible actor is not generally found in social psychology.”¹⁸ In a classic monograph, Gilbert Ryle ostensibly disposed of “the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine,” the notion that “there exist both bodies and minds.” Ryle argued that “both Idealism and Materialism are answers to an improper question.”¹⁹

A contemporary brain specialist, who is willing to take an unpopular position, comments as follows:

If the prevailing view in neuroscience is correct, that consciousness and mental forces in general can be ignored in our objective explanatory model, then we come out with materialism and all its implications. On the contrary, if it turns out that conscious mental forces do in fact govern and direct the nerve-impulse traffic and other biochemical and biophysical events in the brain and, hence, do have to be included as important features in the objective chain of control, then we come out at the opposite pole, or at mentalism, and with quite a different and more idealistic set of values all down the line.²⁰

Upon assessing the evidence supporting each viewpoint, Sperry concludes that given the large gaps in the available knowledge the debate cannot be won in these terms. Accepting the pool of knowledge available to brain researchers, the knowledge on which the “currently prevailing objective, materialistic approach of the brain-behavior sciences” rests, he wonders whether it is possible, “in theory or in principle, to construct a complete, objective explanatory model of brain function without including consciousness in the causal sequence.” Advances in the unraveling of the elaborate circuitry which constitutes the human brain becomes, contrary to the popular view, not an argument against “consciousness” or “choice” as real factors, but evidence supporting their probability,

Describing his own hypothetical model of the brain, Sperry proposes that “conscious awareness does get representation as a very real causal agent,” Consciousness, however, is not Ryle’s “Ghost in the Machine,” or the outside entity mysteriously conjoined to the body of earlier dualists, but “mind and consciousness are dynamic, emergent (pattern or configurational) properties of the living brain in action.” In effect, the partly unsuccessful formulations of earlier Gestalt theorists are here sublated.”

[T]he flow and the timing of impulse traffic through any brain cell, or even a nucleus of cells in the brain, are governed largely by the overall encompassing properties of the whole cerebral circuit system. “Further, “the general circuit properties of the whole brain... may undergo radical and widespread changes from one moment to the next with just the flick of a cerebral facilitatory ‘set’... [I]f one keeps climbing upward in the chain of command within the brain, one finds at the very top those over-all organizational forces and dynamic properties of the large patterns of cerebral excitation that are correlated with mental states or psychic activity.” Thus in Sperry’s hypothetical model, “the conscious mind... far from being put aside as a by-product, epiphenomenon, or inner aspect, is located front and center, directly in the midst of the causal interplay of cerebral mechanisms. Mind and consciousness are put in the drivers seat.”

Space does not permit the detailing of the argument here, nor is the present writer qualified to sift Sperry’s technical evidence. But Sperry clearly opens some windows. Much humanist and/or religious thought that has come to terms with the process of evolution generally has had difficulty with the emergence of the human phenomenon. One need not buy a particular package of creationist or evolutionary theory to sense the importance of Sperry’s evidence concerning the patterns and functions of the human brain, Sperry, of course, does not claim to have demonstrated the independent force of “mind” and “consciousness,” Rather he appears to be in a position to demonstrate their possibility, indeed probability, by much of the evidence which was adduced to support the contrary view.

In the opening paragraph of this essay it was suggested that personal identity becomes more problematic with the increase of social complexity. Experience becomes *more* individuated, the sphere of consciousness enlarges, and the possibilities as well as the needs for autonomous human agency increase.²¹ Ironically, as the scope of consciousness and agency in modern society has expanded, the pertinent sciences have grown more reluctant to acknowledge their reality. The reasons for this reluctance are substantial, both methodologically and theoretically. Basic life forms and processes have yielded increasingly to empirical investigation. Appeals to concepts such as vital principles are less and less persuasive. Basic research as well as applied disciplines such as medicine meanwhile become more specialized.

But a reaction has set in, at least on the rhetorical plane. The “wholistic medicine” movement illustrates the point. An aroused public seeks care for the person, *not* merely for the kidney. Continued interest in religions, old and new, in psychic phenomena, in encounter group experiences, in consciousness raising and the like, though frequently faddish, are *more* than mere mood phenomena. Counter-cultural developments, bizarre and even criminal behaviors arise in a social context of high differentiation where individuals must define themselves socially by a form of navel-gazing, by looking inward, and choosing from a variety possible role identities with which their varied social exposures through the media and otherwise have endowed them.

In effect, the constantly growing differentiation in the society correspondingly enlarges the subjective spaces within which we move, and by so much increases the burden of personal self-definition. The existential burden, the compulsion to invent an identity, is experienced by many people, particularly at some life stages, as overwhelming. “Who am I?” is a question which will surely continue to demand seemingly excessive attention and energy.

Under these conditions, both the human sciences and the helping professions face enormous responsibilities and opportunities. Practically speaking, researchers can more easily evade the responsibilities than can practitioners. However tempting a merely “technical” approach to a task which a physician or social worker confronts, those practitioners directly confront human beings. Researchers working with numbered data need not personally confront people. Religiously committed scientists and practitioners confront additional ambiguities and responsibilities. The “interface” of “science” and “religion” is so overlaid with antipathies arising in the wrangling of vested interests that reluctance to dabble is easily justified. Still the responsibility cannot be evaded. But unless we can break free from the “God of the gap” entrapment, little advance can be expected. The new battle shaping over evolution in American education demonstrates the urgency of our task.

The “science of man was lost in its discovery--fortunately so, we may add. But a theory of man? That we all have, layman and professional alike. On our theories we build both lives and professions. The sagging lives and professions we observe demonstrate the inadequacies of our theories. Our common task is to build, not in the first instance to defend.

NOTES

*This essay was published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 56 (1982): 82-91.

1 (New York: George Braziller, 1971).

2 George Ritzer, *Sociology: A Multiple Paradigm Science* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1975). For a different view see Charles C. Lemert, *Sociology and the Twilight of Man* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979).

- 3 Ronald Fletcher, *The Making of Sociology* (New York: Scribners, 1973) Vol. I.
- 4 James J. Dagenais, *Models of Man* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972) 144f. "Noema" is a Husserlian term which refers to the objective aspect of, or the content within, an intentional experience.
- 5 Ibid, x
- 6 Ibid, xi.
- 7 George Homans as cited by Lemert, op. cit., 98.
- 8 Pitrim A. Sorokin, *Sociological Theories of Today*. (New York: Harper, 1966).
- 9 Emile Durkheim, a founder of scientific sociology (1858-1917) proposed a sociological explanation. Believing that important categories of thought originate in social experience, he speculated that the halving of tribal groups in primitive social development (origin of the *moitie*) may account for our penchant to think dichotomously. See his *Elementary Forms of Social Life*.
- 10 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) :34, drawing on Arthur Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York, 1960)
- 11 Immanuel Kant, "Ideas for Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent," in *The Philosophy of Kant*. ed. by C. J. Friedrich (New York: Modern Library, 1949)
- 12 Geertz, 35
- 13 Manfred Stanley, "Nature, Culture and Scarcity" (*American Sociological Review XXXIII, 1963*)
- 14 Emile Durkheim, "The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Condition" in *Essays on Sociology and History*, ed. by Kurt H. Wolff. (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1960) 337.
- 15 "Theses on Feuerbach," *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. by Robert C. Tucker. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972) 109.
- 16 Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1958).
- 17 Dennis H. Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology" *American Sociological Review XXVI* (1961): 183-193.
- 18 Becker, op. cit., 13
- 19 Andrew J. Weigert, "Substantial Self: a Primitive Term for Psychological Sociology," *Philosophy of Social Science V* (1975): 47.
- 20 Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Man* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949).
- 21 Roger W. Sperry, "Mind, Brain and Humanist Values," *New Views of the Nature of Man*. Ed. by John R. Platt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965): 71-92.
- 22 Paul Peachey, "Individuation vs. Bonding." Paper read in a symposium on the *Antinomies of Industrial Societies: Civilizational Sources of Conflict*. Lublin, Poland, 1980.

Chapter VII

Person and Society: The Soviet-American Encounter*

Men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance, with different properties. ...Human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from, and may be resolved into, the laws of the nature of individual man.” -- John Stuart Mill

The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations.” (*Theses on Feuerbach*) “Here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he remains. ...” (*Capital*) -- Karl Marx

A professor was once asked, ‘Which is the more important, the collectivity or the personality?’ ‘The collective, of course,’ he replied, ‘but only if it consists of individuals. For the sum of integers is a number that is always greater than one, while the sum of zeroes is always zero.’

-- Igor Kon

World peace for the last half of the 20th century, to a considerable extent, remained hostage to the hegemonic rivalry between the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States. Buried within that rivalry, and contributing to it, were the differing visions of person-society interrelationships which inform the two systems. To put the matter succinctly though simplified: whereas in the Soviet system society tends to preempt the individual, in America the opposite tendency prevailed. While in both systems the principal tendency is tempered by its opposite (indeed only because the principal tendency is thus tempered can the respective societies function at all), each remains wedded to its key principle.

The relationship of the differing societal visions to the hegemonic rivalry is not fully clear. That rivalry, as a geopolitical phenomenon, obviously possesses a life of its own, and thus appears in itself as cause sufficient. On the other hand the framework of rivalry is not a closed or mechanical system. Variables other than geopolitical ones are operative in the super-power rivalry. Hence the question: do the conflicting visions of society function as

“independent variables” with reference to the hegemonic rivalry? Or can these respective visions be treated more usefully as “intervening” or as “dependent” variables? These questions, of course, can be answered only empirically, if at all, and the answer, presumably, will vary from case to case.

By way of illustration, the Soviet treatment of dissenters in their society evokes highly negative responses from Americans, and continuously reconfirms long-held stereotypes regarding the Soviet system. The Soviets, for their part, are appalled at unbridled manifestations of individualism in American society, and see in these manifestations a confirmation of Marxist prognoses regarding the inevitable decline of capitalism. Meanwhile, Soviet leaders were fearful of the corrupting influence of American and other Western ways on the Soviet people.

Accordingly, they have adopted a form “friction theory”¹ as the guideline for the policy which controls the movement of persons in and out of the country. In keeping with this policy, contact between Soviet citizens and foreigners (or at least Westerners) is limited as far as possible to exchanges between “roles.” Genuine interpersonal relations and ties, on the contrary, are discouraged, perhaps even prohibited. In both directions, insofar as the foreign policy of each power is affected by, or dependent on, public opinion, perceptions of person-society relations on the other side can function as an independent variable.

Prior to the crisis in detente, the U.S. Department of Commerce reported that nearly 100,000 American tourists visited the Soviet Union annually. No breakdown by categories, however, was available. While some of these travelers no doubt were well-prepared and serious about their encounter with the Soviet world, the majority presumably were not. A combination of commercial agencies and Intourist scheduling provided visitors with novel visual experiences and little more. On such a tour the traveler usually encounters enough discomforts and stodginess to confirm the prejudices and stereotypes that he or she brought along on the journey. Freedom of movement is high on the list of demands which the United States has pressed on the Soviet Union, both in connection with the 1975 Helsinki Accords and elsewhere. Yet much of the movement that does occur is unlikely to contribute greatly to improved understanding and better relations between the two societies, and in some cases is downright detrimental.

This paper views the encounter of Americans with Soviet society as an important opportunity for self- as well as other- discovery. It recognizes the independent variability of the rivalry for hegemony between the two societies, the Soviet and the American, while viewing the differing conceptions of society as contributing (and at times, possibly critical) factors. In what ways, and for what reasons, do the Soviet and the American approaches to the definitions of persons and society differ? What accounts for the constant recriminations in both directions: we pillorying the Soviets for their violation of the rights of free speech and assembly, of religious practice, and the like, while they charge that unemployment, racism, and the like in American society represent violations of basic human rights on a far grander scale? Having outlined this

background, the paper traces briefly some current trends in Soviet personality studies, and then locates both the Soviet and the American experience in the broader framework of societal modernization.

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Social scientists have struggled long, and not too successfully, with the enigmatic duality of human existence. On one plane, human beings appear and act as individuals, self-consciously choosing among alternative possible acts and courses of action. On another plane, human actions appear to be determined by the “roles” which individuals play. Roles consist of the behaviors expected of the occupants of particular social positions. Indeed, some theorists hold that role networks, or the system which they together comprise, represent a level of reality *sui generis*. Seen in this perspective, individuals are manifestations, indeed products, of social systems. Karl Marx observed that man is not only a political animal (Aristotle) but “an animal which becomes individuated only in society” (Marx, 1961).

Analytically, of course, contrasting definitions and approaches are appropriate. When introducing *Capital*, Marx observed that in that context “individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are personifications of economic categories.” A perspective thus limited permits one to abstract a certain class of relationships. Thus if one wishes to ascertain the consequences of a specific incomes policy for the living standards of the affected workers, an economic view of persons may be appropriate. But if that particular perspective is expanded into a general theory of human nature or of society, difficulties arise. By the same token, for certain types of inquiry one may wish to add the acts of separate individuals as means of arriving at statements about human aggregates. Yet once again, when this limited perspective is elevated to the plane of a general theory of either persons or society, serious distortions result.

As societies differentiate, and the persons comprising them individuate, this problem increases in complexity. The further back we go in history, Marx observed, “the more the individual, and thus also the producing individual, appears not to be independent” (Marx, 1961). That is, the more simple and elementary the society, the less individuated or specialized the members of the group. With little differentiation of experience possible, and with few specialized roles to play, little differentiation among group members appears. Growing specialization, however, makes each individual dependent on a proportionately greater number of persons. As a result each individual becomes simultaneously more dependent and more independent; i.e., the area within which personal discretion obtains enlarges continuously (Cf. Durkheim, 1933:37).

This equation may also be turned around. Social differentiation presupposes individuation, namely the availability of individuals, both psychologically or socially, for specialized role allocation. Though in ideal development the processes of differentiation and individuation would

advance reciprocally, in the real world, depending on circumstances, one or the other may lag behind. In societal modernization, both modes of lag may appear. A society, through its government, may wish to speed up the process of industrialization, but may be frustrated by the lack of middle class versatility among the population. On the other hand, a school system may turn out graduates faster than the society can assimilate them in specialized occupations.

The choice of the level of inquiry (whether conducted at the level of the individual or the collective) may well be determined by the nature of the inquiry to be undertaken. Frequently, however, a full (and hence multidimensional) account of particular behaviors of socio-cultural configurations is desirable. Multidisciplinary or multidimensional investigations then become necessary. But these are tedious and costly. Researchers may at this point be attracted by the reductionist use of a particular discipline, theory, or perspective. Thus, for example, it has been argued that social behavior in the end is reducible to psychological (Homans, 1971), biological (Wilson, 1978), or economic (Engels in Tucker, 1972: 640) sources or causes. Attempts to work back up by expanding particular perspectives into general theory, however, inevitably precipitate controversy, even though they may also produce advances in the discipline, since individualistic and collectivist modes of explanation exist along with a number of others (Ritzer, 1975), with none having achieved a monopoly.

Individualism

In Western thought the awareness of the tension between the individualistic and collectivistic poles extends back through medieval times and beyond. But through the "prism" of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thought, the two perspectives "refracted" into distinct "rays." The development of sociology as a discipline is at least an indirect result of that refraction. Robert Nisbet traces the sociological conception--namely that the social universe constitutes a reality distinct from the individual acts comprising it--to the conservative reaction to the French and the Industrial Revolutions, and hence also to Enlightenment individualism (Nisbet, 1966; 1978). Others, however, distinguish two strands within the Enlightenment itself: namely, the individualism of the Scottish moralists (Schneider, 1967) on the one hand, and the collectivism of the French thinkers such as Condorcet and Turgot--which descended through St. Simon and Comte to Marx and others (Van Berg, 1975)--on the other. More important, however, than the resulting split in social theory, is the translation of the polarity into political constitutions. The individualistic strand developed within utilitarian and laissez-faire institutions into the political freedoms of liberal democracy, with individualism achieving its classic embodiment in the New World. Here there emerged "a radical individualism that insists that reality resides in the end definable only with reference to the individual" (McMurrin, 1968). The Declaration of Independence referred to "certain inalienable Rights" inherent in individuals,

thereby making the basic point that basic rights precede, rather than flow from, political society. Here is the foundation for limited government and autonomous social vitality.

American individualism, however, is only in part intellectually derived. Its other source is the lived experience of the ostensibly empty continent with its receding frontier. Indeed, the American experience is a laboratory within which the growth and the power of an idea may be observed. Ideas neither operate independently from without, as it were, nor are they, on the other hand, mere reflections or rationalizations of social interests. Max Weber wrote of the “elective affinity” between ideas and “interest”: i.e., some congruence can be expected between ideas and the social milieu in which they are embraced (Gerth, 1958). Thus the new continent of North America afforded a setting congenial to the elaboration of individualism as a pervasive ethos.

Collectivism

Meanwhile, in the French Enlightenment a quite different conception took shape. Indeed, quite early it developed in conscious opposition to utilitarian individualism. Reference has already been made to Condorcet and Turgot, who advanced the notion of the historical development of human societies, i.e., the concept of “progress.” Henri de St. Simon (1760-1825), together with his followers, proposed that humankind consists of a collective being, subject to laws which can be called “the physiological laws of the human species” (Ramm in Van Berg, 1975: 137). St. Simon, impressed by Newton’s law of gravitation, believed that societies as collective entities are likewise governed by discoverable laws. August Comte (1798-1857), his intellectual heir and erstwhile secretary, developed these ideas further. Comte, who coined the term “sociology,” was critically opposed to individualism, regarding it as the disease of the Western world. While the collectivist conception, particularly in its Marxist form, was indebted to German idealism as well as to the French Enlightenment, Marx acknowledged his indebtedness in this regard to Comte (Van Berg, 1975).

As the newly discovered North American continent provided an opportunity for the implementation of the individualistic ethos, so Czarist Russia was fated to host the collectivist vision. Insofar as the collectivist model assumes centralized control, Russian history and culture were well prepared to receive it. But in one respect Russian history and Marxist theory are difficult to harmonize. According to Marxist theory, revolution is to occur in the late stages of capitalism. The October Revolution, however, occurred in a largely peasant society. Moreover, while according to Soviet Marxist theorists the Revolution introduced the post-capitalist stage of history, the reality evokes skepticism, for most of the developments--spiritual, social, economic, and political--which had transformed and “modernized” Western societies since the Renaissance had, for many reasons, touched Russian society only peripherally.²

How then can a revolution, whose task it was to industrialize and modernize a peasant society, chart the course for post-industrial/capitalist development? To what extent was the October Revolution merely bringing up the rear in European modernization? The statement that the October Revolution represents the latest or last in the modernization series, rather than the vanguard of postmodern development, is a statement in need of immediate qualification. A comparison with Western chronology can imply a normative status for the latter which is inadmissible. It is evident today that modernization assumes various forms and sequences. Moreover, societies and societal changes are too complex to be locked into single categories. Some Soviet Marxist achievements may well have represented “the wave of the future,” despite the reservations noted above. In any case the introduction of advanced industry and technology into a peasant society results inevitably in a path of development markedly different from the earlier but slower transformation of the West.

Modernity, Peter Berger (1979) observes, entails “a near inconceivable expansion of the area of human life that is open to choices.” This claim contrasts strikingly with the frequent jeremiads one encounters today concerning the contemporary loss of personal identity and autonomy. Berger’s claim, of course, postulates the correlative processes of social differentiation and personal individuation that are the human crux in modernization. In the West, due to the “accidents” of history, individualism as an idea appears to have advanced more rapidly than the social differentiation essential to its realization. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the forced march into modernity since the October Revolution required a highly specialized division of industrial labor that has outpaced the growth of individuation in personality and culture. Viewed in these terms, developments in Soviet society appear promising indeed, and it is to these developments that we now turn.

PERSONALITY AND SOCIETY

The eclipse of the human individual in Marxist theory and in Soviet society need not be documented or labored here. T. G. Masaryk (1913) observed that “Marx formulated historical objectivism, thereby effectively eliminating the ego and individual consciousness.” Historical “necessity” (achieving, defending the revolution), ideology, and historical legacy combined to produce the Gulag Archipelago. Critics and opponents of Marxist theory doubted that the system is capable of transformation from within. Even Russian dissenters were divided on this point, with Solzhenitsyn denying that possibility, and Medvedev (1975) still hoping. Foreign policy is a further consideration.

Internally, however, evidence is convincing that both *pluralization* and *individuation* are underway. This observation, it should be noted, neither predicts nor advocates pluralization and individuation Western style for the Soviet Union. The point is, rather, that human societies by their very nature are pluralistic and individualistic, and whatever form a society assumes it can

“live” and “breathe” only if it incorporates or embraces these aspects of social reality.

Of pluralization we can take only brief note, and then hasten to discuss the indications of individuation. Jerry Hough, perhaps the foremost interpreter of the pluralist trends in Soviet society, underscores the force of the multiplicity of levels and of units in the polity, the economy, and the Party. Inevitably these each develop vested interests of their own, resulting in continuous bargaining among various levels and units. He describes the result as “institutional pluralism,” not the pluralism both celebrated and bemoaned in the West, but pluralism nonetheless. Similarly, increasing discussion appears in the public arena. Writing in the early 1970s, Hough asserted that “there has, in part, been virtually no conceivable proposal for incremental change in Party policy ... which has not been aired in the Soviet press” (Hough, 1972; 1976).

Of primary importance here, however, is concern with the human person in Soviet social research. Here we must distinguish two types of literature, the ideological and the empirical. On the former plane, not surprisingly, the themes long since familiar continue. These are all readily recognized in the following excerpt from a psychology text published for popular use as recently as the mid 1960s:

Great Lenin applied Marxism to the practice of the working class movement and created a state in which the people have done away with the contradictions between personal and social aims. These people live to build communism. They are building it and in this they see not only the aim, but also the joy of life, and they will achieve communism (Platonov, 1965). There is no inkling here that the *teloi* of individuals and of collectivities are not simply and reciprocally reducible. Similarly the new Soviet Constitution (Soviet, 1977) remains committed to the letter and the spirit of “democratic centralism.”

Those formulations will likely be the last to undergo modification.

The empirically-oriented social sciences, however, present a very different picture. A journal published in 1978 by two well-known Soviet sociologists, abstracting sociological publications in Russian for the decade 1965-1975, listed a total of 725 titles (Osipov, 1978). Of these nearly one hundred, or about fourteen percent, deal with problems of “the development of the individual” or with “the sociological problems of spiritual life.” The term “spiritual,” of course, does not have a religious connotation. Basically it refers to cultural development, perhaps with a focus approximating Znaniecki’s (1969) “humanistic coefficient.” Nonetheless our English expression, “the human spirit,” appears to be a good approximation of the Russian *dukh* (spirit) or *ukhovnoe* (spiritual).

The editors indicate that two points of view have emerged among Soviet personality researchers. “The first regards the human personality as a

unity of its social and biological properties; the other concentrates exclusively on the social content of the human personality." Generally they report "a shift in emphasis from the condition necessary for the development of man to man himself" (Osipov, 1978: 45-46).

Examination of a major work will reveal more clearly the important developments underway. The work chosen is a volume entitled *Sotsiologiya lichnosti*, (*The Sociology of Personality*, here followed in a German translation), written by a Leningrad sociologist, Igor Kon (1971). In approaching this study it is useful to recall Adam Schaff's contemporary work, *Marxism and the Human Individual* (1970). Schaff, then a member of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party (and a controversial figure for other reasons), with this book was caught in the cross fire over "revisionism."³ While Schaff insists on an integral Marx--here he is orthodox--he draws on Marx, and certainly the humanistic side of Marx, to build a case for a concern for the human individual in a socialist society.

Kon, while keeping his Marxist bearing intact, draws extensively on empirical and empirically-oriented literature, notably American. He summarizes, and quotes extensively, theorists like Mead, Cooley, and William James, as well as empirical scholars such as Morris Rosenberg, Alex Inkeles, and Leon Festinger. Naturally he draws heavily on Soviet sources, both theoretical and empirical, and to a more limited extent on other European writers in a number of languages.

The study is divided into four major sections, the first two dealing in conventional terms with "personality and society" and "how the human being becomes a personality." While occasionally critical of Western researchers for their lack of a holistic perspective, these sections offer a genuine contribution to the scientific understanding of the complexity of human personality and its development.

The third section, the most valuable for the Western reader, traces personality in the history of society, primarily the history of Western society. Beginning with pre-individuated tribalism, Kon moves through Greek antiquity and feudalism to capitalism and periods in its development, such as the Renaissance and the Reformation. Capitalism brings important gains in expanded individuation. The Protestant Reformation strengthened the "inner determinism" of personality, in contrast to medieval piety, in which the individual is absorbed in deity. But now the bond of the societal whole is lost. The individual becomes the end, society merely the means. Individuals become mere means to one another. These disintegrative effects are then traced through the stages of "state monopoly capitalism." Here the themes are familiar--alienation, dehumanization, bureaucratization, and the like. Here, too, many of his sources are Western, and the critique strikes home. Still the thought arises: is this also indirectly a critique of a similar industrial development in the socialist instance?

In the final section, Kon treats the "all-round development of personality" in (an eventual) communist society. Here he holds out the hope for an eventual harmony between personal and societal *telos*. Nonetheless

he regards as “utopian” the expectation that no mediating mechanism to harmonize the personal and the societal will any longer be needed. Certainly at the present state of socialism various external constraints (such as differential rewards) and moral constraints are needed to bring social and individual goals into balance. Both society and personalities are too rich and differentiated for it to be otherwise. Indeed, personal initiative and innovation (i.e., variation) are needed for the system to function at all.

CONCLUSION

There can be little doubt that in the numerical growth of the human population and in the size of human groups, social differentiation and individual personalization are essential and correlative developments. Tribal formations of necessity yield to more complex and large scale interdependencies. Yet both the starting line and the paths and stages of development vary endlessly from place to place. So far, however, the progression has been devastatingly costly. Whether the West, with its pogroms, inquisitions, and wars offers a more favorable historical balance than the brutalities that burdened the Russian experience will have to be determined by the Grand Accountant.

The relatively rapid advance in Soviet society of pluralization and individuation, at a time of a crisis of individualism in American society, as well as renewed hostility toward the Soviet Union, is of extraordinary importance. East Europeans plead for the extension of detente precisely to permit these transformations to continue. The tragedy (perhaps in the classical sense of that term) is that much of the hegemonic rivalry on the American side was fueled by dislike for the Soviet system. In fact, two histories--in some respects, two *stages* of history--confronted each other. But how is one to quarrel with history as the lived past out of which the present is being constructed?

The Soviet experience is enormously important to the West as it struggles with the legacies of an individualism which has assumed unrealistic and even destructive proportions. The Soviet Union has much to learn from the West, which has managed to foster contexts of freedom of choice within ordered communities. Both have suffered, however, from treating their key principle as an immutable “law,” thus absolutizing a single variable in a sea of complexity. Given the record of both systems, continuing either/or ideological battles (and their geopolitical repercussions) has little to commend them. How is the geopolitical problem of hegemony, to be resolved? I do not know. But the above sketch clearly indicates where our duties and opportunities lie.

NOTES

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1 “Friction theory” holds that “physical, social, cultural, and economic differences between peoples are fundamentally incompatible, leading to friction on contact, and thus that harmonious relations between groups can be

secured only by reducing the points of contact to a minimum... (Berry, 1973, p. 110).

2 Scholars have long noted features of Russian history as the long Tartar occupation, The Byzantine legacy, and the tradition of autocratic rule, whose consequences in The culture outlived the October Revolution. Here see, for example, Masaryk 1913; Tomasic, 1953; Wolfe, 1948; and Pipes 1974. Arend T. van Leeuwen (1964) Provides a broader framework of interpretation. He describes the “four earliest centres of European civilization” as “autocratic,” a concept according to which “the state is the embodiment of the cosmic totality.” This notion was transmitted Through Byzanz to Czarist Russia. Though autocratic notions were eventually Challenged in modern democratic movements, van Leeuwen sees evidence of the “irresistible power of the autocratic ideology” in the fact that “the West has only with great difficulty contrived to escape its founding spell” (p. 283).

3 The well-publicized debate over the “young Marx” and revisionism is directly relevant to a discussion of human nature in Marxist theory, but is beyond the scope of this paper. Schaff’s edition (1970) includes a lengthy review of revisionist issues.

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Chapter VIII

The City: Atelier of the Autonomous Person*

Horace Miner once wrote, "Everyone knows what a city is, except the experts." Don Martindale, in his "Prefatory Remarks" makes the same point: "The theory of the city somehow cannot account for what every journalist, poet and novelist knows--the city is a living thing." Martindale drives the point home by listing a few of the myriad elements that comprise a city, then continues, "One may find anything or everything in the city texts except the informing principle that creates the city itself." In the end, however, whether intentionally or not, Max Weber's ideal type of the city serves Martindale as a stand-in for a city theory. Weber's conception will engage us later in this essay.

In the absence of an informing principle, urbanists are much like the fabled blind men of Hindustan, trying to describe an elephant. Each writer is right in the semblance which he discerns, but wrong in concluding that what he has in his hand is the organizing principle of elephantness. Yet the need and the desire for a basic theory are so persistent that every successful part-theory soon sounds like a candidate for the real thing. Meanwhile, any urban dimension, coherently viewed, is theoretically valid. But the dimension chosen in any given instance depends on the observer's stance and purpose. The urbanist likely has one advantage over the blind man of Hindustan. If he or she finds the elephant very like a rope, it is not because of the happenstance of reaching the tail first, but rather because of an interest in ropey things.

Given its assumptions, the question: "How is it possible in the modern urban environment to form the communities within which new human self-understanding and hence new values can emerge?" lands us somewhere midstream. It assumes that values exist, that they are essential, that they depend on human self-understandings, which in turn depend on communities. Finally, it implies that the urban environment is somehow problematic for communities. Anyone of these questions deserves a monograph to determine what they entail before we take them finally as axiomatic. But overarching these problems is the implication that we know what "the modern urban environment" is, in a word, that we have a conception and theory of *the city*.

All this represents our human predicament. Always we must begin somewhere midstream, else we are doomed to infinite regression. For the purposes of this study and its authors, a better question can hardly be posed. Both our interests and competencies, presumably, pertain to the human component of the city rather than to its spatial order, its architecture, or even its demography. It is human beings, of course, who build cities; and cities as they are built act back on their builders in an unending spiral. Thus we confront both dialectic and paradox in the urban experience.

The human consequences of city growth is what the question intends to probe. It is an ancient question, yet ever new; and not merely with every

generation, but also with every new turn of the urban screw. A recent urban textbook, in its opening remark, formulates the problem as the “difficulties cities have encountered in performing their communal functions.” Communal functions are the “we”-creating consolidations out of which the human self, in this instance “the new human self,” emerges. Both Berger and the present study sense that these processes are jeopardized in the growth of cities. Cities presuppose and require a new type of human being, an autonomous and individualized self, which traditional societies neither required nor produced, but which nonetheless must be communally rooted.

THE AGE OF THE CITY AT AN END?

In the absence of a full-fledged urban theory we are compelled nonetheless to posit a working definition, with some degree of generality. For that purpose I shall accept Weber’s conception of cityness, without seeking here either to critique or to defend it. As a direct route to the heart of that conception I shall take Martindale’s final prefatory sentence. Given Weber’s definition of the city, Martindale concludes that “the age of the city seems to be at an end.” Martindale’s preface is thirty years old and a great deal has transpired meanwhile, both in historical developments and in the social sciences, of which we need to take account. Given the often explosive urban growth meanwhile, the claim that the age of the city is at an end at first blush may seem nonsensical. If we go deeper, however, we discover an important key to a decoding of advancing urbanization in the world today.

Allow me to quote the pertinent paragraph from Weber’s text. “An urban ‘community,’ in the full meaning of the word, appears as an eternal phenomenon only in the Occident. Exceptions occasionally were to be found in the Near East (in Syria, Phoenicia, and Mesopotamia), but only occasionally and in rudiments. To constitute a full urban community a settlement must display a relative predominance of trade-commercial relations with the settlement as a whole displaying the following features: (1) fortification; (2) market; (3) court of its own and at least partly autonomous law; (4) related form of association; and (5) at least partial autonomy and autocephaly, thus also an administration by authorities in the election of whom the burghers participated.”

In effect, Weber takes here the European medieval city, with its Greek antecedents, as the “ideal type” of the city. The backdrop, of course, is the pre-modern era. The “city,” thus conceived, contrasts starkly with the tribal, feudal, agrarian and patrimonial orders of the traditional world. A city is an autonomous and free community, composed of free, self-determining citizens. A military encampment, a royal court or a kinship-based settlement is not a city. The case in point is the walled medieval city, ruled under a contracted charter which had been wrested from the authoritarian rule of the territorial prince or from the Empire by independent craftsmen. “The city makes one free” (*Die Stadtluft macht frei*) was the slogan that inspired the serf to abscond. If he escaped detection for a year and a day, he was formally free as well.

From City Growth to Societal Organization, and the Resulting Problems

In the above setting urbanization meant growth in the number and size of urban settlements in populations and territories that had not been urban. The measure of urbanization was thus the proportion of the total population living in urban places or changes in that proportion. In the Western world, however, the growth in the number and size of settlements and the increasing proportion of populations that was urban was linked to other developments in technology, industry, and economic and political organization. Not only did the urban sector become dominant, but the entire population or society became “citified.”

Urbanization thus appears as a finite process, a process that does not and cannot continue indefinitely. Sorokin and Zimmerman likened this process to a parabolic curve. In the beginning the rural-urban distinction does not exist because there are no cities. As the number and size of urban settlements grows a rural-urban contrast emerges and increases. At a more advanced stage, when the rural population is itself drawn increasingly into the process, the distinction declines. Cityward migration of rural peoples ends when the rural population has been incorporated into the urbanized whole. It should be noted in passing that the last decennial census (1920) before the Sorokin-Zimmerman text appeared reported that the urban portion of the American population for the first time had passed the 50 percent mark.

Martindale’s postulate that the age of the city is at an end applies only in those instances in highly industrialized countries where the society generally has been urbanized. The proposition, moreover, entails a change in the definition of the city, and hence is subject to challenge. We noted above the distinction between the two word-families, urban and civic, the former referring to physical space, the latter to social quality. The earlier definition of urban referred to number and size of settlements and to population proportions residing in urban settlements. To shift the definitional focus to qualities characterizing entire populations, in fact, refers to a different phenomenon. Even in urbanized societies, differing population densities persist, and in that sense Martindale is wrong--high density/low density distinctions have not disappeared, and are unlikely to do so.

Sociologically, nonetheless, the argument can be sustained. The technologies generated in the industrial city have greatly reduced the friction of space. “Cities were evolved primarily for the facilitation of human communication,” hence the rise of high density settlements. High density, however, has certain negative side effects. With the advance of communication and transport technologies, de-concentration of urban settlements set in (see below). Much initially uniquely urban activity has now been delocalized and characterizes entire populations irrespective of place of residence. We have only to recall that our entire political vocabulary arose by extension of civic (urban) categories to entire populations, and hence to territorial states.

The flip side of this development, however, is the reversal at some levels of the dominance flow between cities and societies. As Martindale observes,

the city has “everywhere lost its military integrity--its right to defend itself by military means.” Its local self-sufficiency and self-determination has been superseded by larger national and supranational systems of action, of which it is now the dependent variable. “The modern city is losing its external and formal structure. Internally it is in a state of decay while the new community represented by the nation everywhere grows at its expense.” Lewis Mumford makes the same point in the preface to his work, *The City in History*. The book opens, he says, “with a city that was, symbolically, a world; it closes with a world that has become, in many practical respects, a city.”

From Family to Individual

Before returning to our original question regarding the formation of “the communities with which new human self-understanding. . .can emerge,” we must engage another, even more fundamental problem. We noted that the language of cities refers to qualities characterizing urban dwellers, specifically “citizenship,” rather than to properties of geography or real estate. This notion was critical in Weber’s definition of the city, which depended on the action of free citizens. Louis Wirth, whom Martindale mentions briefly, and whose 1938 essay, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” has been considered by some as the most influential paper ever published by an American sociologist, defined the city as “*a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of social heterogeneous individuals.*” It is not the family, but the individual that is the basic social unit. Wirth’s essay is in fact a distillation of the classical literature on urbanism to which Martindale refers.

One of Wirth’s predecessors, the legal historian, Henry Sumner I. Maine contrasted traditional, kin-based “stationary” societies with modern “progressive” societies. The distinction lies in the fact that in the latter instance, “The Individual is steadily substituted for the family as the unit of which civil laws take account.” We readily recognize here the categories of social and political expectation that continue to make revolutionary history around the world in our own time, and even in such ostensibly advanced societies as the United States. Every person, irrespective of variations in kinship, race, religion, sex, nationality, occupation, place of residence, claims equal dignity and right. One person, one vote. Coercive, ascriptive qualities, the ties and definitions of blood and of place, must yield to the self that each individual creates. This is an urban phenomenon. The city is the atelier of human individuality and personhood.

The Urban Malaise

Despite the fact, however, that historically the city has been the scene of human liberation, the growth and spread of cities has been accompanied by considerable gloom among both subjects and analysts of urbanization. Cities have been the scene of disorganization, alienation, violence, and crime. Curiously enough, American culture long harbored a strong anti-urban

bias. I say “curiously” because here, if anywhere, the traditional definition of urbanization developed above is misleading. Low density and the long dominance of ostensibly rural life diverts our attention from the fact that the republican conceptions underlying the entire system are highly urban. The American system presupposes, in the words of Maine, that the individual already has been substituted for the family as the unit of which the civil laws, indeed the values, the mores and institutions of the society take account.

One can detect malaise behind the question. “How is it possible in the modern urban environment to form the communities with which new human self-understanding. . .can emerge?”--the implication is that this may not be happening. Berger is more explicit--cities are experiencing difficulty “in performing their communal functions.” Indeed, we must go further, for at least in the American case we see serious problems, even breakdown, in many sectors of our urbanized society. Counter-urbanization, the increasing deconcentration of the population, is but one response to the problem. In fact, however, the situation is bewildering. Continuing advances in science, technology, affluence, and other areas are paralleled, as it were, by increases in alienation, rebellion, crime, substance abuse and the like. Yet the relationships among phenomena, both positive and negative, elude ready detection.

Still there are anomalies, lags and anachronisms. For women in the United States the shift from family to individual has not yet fully matured. “Status” continues to prevail over “contract,” to use Maine’s language. Freud’s old adage that ‘anatomy is destiny’ has not yet been fully surmounted in the society. The historical reasons for this are instructive and, if understood, could hasten progress. On the other hand, families increasingly come apart or are never established as families in the first place, as births out of wedlock become more common--and it is families above all that form “human self-understanding” and hence autonomous selves.

FROM CONSANGUINITY TO CONJUGALITY

Early human societies were family and kin based. In fact, for kin-based peoples the term “society” is inappropriate, for there is no enveloping social fabric beyond family and clan. In the rise of the Greek *polis* we witness the rise of the “public” realm over against the private. In this realm further differentiation then appears, eventually the differentiation between state and society. Meanwhile, the rise of the public realm has meant a corresponding abridgement of the kinship system. As the public realm expanded and became more highly differentiated, it assumed the economic, political, and educational functions once vested in family systems. By the same token, household and family, now more limited in scope, specialize in the formation of persons, both spouses and their children.

Kinship however, is a resilient force, and until modern political and industrial revolutions the ascriptive power of kinship--the attachment of and placement of people in the social scheme--remained decisive. While many champions of modernization viewed family solidarity as an obstacle to

progress, the process was viewed more popularly and sorrowfully as family decline. In this climate the significance of these transformations was often obscured.

It will be argued here that the ostensible decline of the family was, in fact, its liberation. Contrary to widely prevailing views, especially among anthropologists, the innate axis of the family system is not the blood tie, what we call consanguinity, but the marital tie, conjugality. Failure to recognize and to come to terms with this fact in the modern world is the source of much of our trouble. To be sure, the resulting isolation of the marital pair and of the nuclear family is in itself a problem with which we have scarcely begun to cope. But this is merely a special case of the more general problem in the society.

Our concepts of human dignity and liberation require the attenuation of family-based ascriptive solidarities in favor of personal achievement. But liberation is understood too often as mere freedom from external constraints, as the possibility of impulsive, self-interested action. (*I am entitled to my own happiness.*) Ethicists, to the contrary, stress the importance of the proper balance between rights and responsibility. However, the problem is not merely perceptual or attitudinal; it is structural as well. The social, economic, and political dynamics of American society impinge on us in ways that permit, even foster, communal irresponsibility. The issues come into sharp focus in the mounting rates of marital breakdown, for one-sided individualism makes the marital “we” ever more difficult to realize.

This paper, however, is about the city, and not in the first instance about marriage or the family. The city breaks down and recombines the raw human material, as it were, much as a factory of synthetic materials breaks down and recombines substances given in nature. Thereby individuals are freed from the unwilled ascriptive ties given in nature, and are made available for recombination in the willed contractual relations that constitute society. The formation of communities “within which the new human self-understanding can emerge” now confronts us on two levels: the infra-urban and the urban or societal.

CONCLUSION

On the former, the infra-urban level, the family persists as the family persists as the primary matrix of personal identity. But once reduced to its nuclear core of husband and wife, along with their immediate offspring, the family is often too isolated from the communal supports of kinfolk and place to carry this freight. Thus, we confront the question: given modern urbanized social relations, how can the communal underpinnings of family life be reconstituted and maintained. For in the urban social sphere, cohesion falters. The synthetic urban fabric consists, strictly speaking, of systems of roles which are separable from the persons (individuals) who perform them.

This permits social collaboration on a scale unimaginable in pre-urban settings. Role-incumbents, on the other hand, invest only limited facets of the

self in these roles, enabling them to participate in many diverse configurations of action. Role-based affiliations make only role-specific demands on the incumbents; the rest of the person remains beyond the reach of the given role set. Multiplicity of roles means multiple partial identities as well. Thereby personal autonomy is enhanced, not only because individuals choose among numerous roles, but above all because such diversity of experience and affiliation enriches and expands the socially constituted self.

Integration and cohesion, in both the self (or personality) and the city or society, now become problematic. In traditional settings, personal identity is anchored in family, clan or village. Apart from emigration or exile, alternative affiliations or identities scarcely exist. In urbanized societies individuals must “choose” their identity from among the various affiliations and possibilities the context offers. Many people are poorly prepared for this daunting task. Indeed, we lack the needed understandings and norms, for much of our insight is fragmented, locked up in specialized investigations. The lack of cross-fertilization between century-long reflections on the nature of the self in philosophy and modern inquiries in the behavioral and social sciences is a glaring example.

But how is communal cohesion to be formed and sustained on the level of the urbanized society? Emile Durkheim, one of sociology’s founding fathers, proposed that the interdependence that is rooted in advancing division of labor provides a partial answer. On the expressive or emotional side of the human enterprise, nationalism has been perhaps the strongest communal force in the sphere of society. But this has proven to be vulnerable to excess, perhaps largely because the nation state, in displacing numerous lesser loyalties, has had to assuage the emotional needs thereby generated. Yet in many respects both nation and state are too remote and impersonal to meet the very needs which they thus evoke. For this reason modern societies are emotionally volatile and vulnerable to symbolic fluctuation and manipulation. It is unlikely, even on a theoretical level, and much less in practice, that a single answer can be given to the question put forward for this study. Societies differ too greatly in their point of departure, as in their resources, their composition and their possibilities. Urbanization nonetheless possesses features that we may well regard as intrinsic, and thus--however varied in manifestation--generally identifiable. It is these common features and our global diversity that makes the work of this study both possible and rewarding.

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Chapter IX

Interests and Values in Building a Democratic Society: The Genesis of Human Agency*

What is the role of interests, on the one hand, and of values on the other, in the building of democratic societies? How are interests and values related in that process? What do we mean by these two terms in the first place: are these terms antonymous or synonymous? But further, how do we acquire the democrats, i.e., the human material, from which democracy can be built? This last question is the focus of this paper. The preceding questions map the terrain in which this question is located, and thus require brief introductory notice.

INTERESTS AND VALUES: MAPPING THE TERRAIN

To what do the terms, “interests” and “values,” refer? Though their meanings seemingly differ, both terms connote objects or qualities that appear desirable. In ordinary conversation we tend to rely on the context to suggest our intended meaning. But ambiguities readily arise. At times interests and values appear as synonyms. James L. Connor, director of the Woodstock Center at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, summing up the results of a conference on interests and values held there earlier this year, concluded: “To my mind, ‘interests’ are ‘values,’ and vice versa.”¹ Values accordingly can be viewed simply as the interests that persons or groups pursue.

In other contexts, however, such as in the theme of the present conversation, interests and values appear rather more as antonyms. While interests can be treated as the values which their exponents espouse, values are values primarily because they possess properties that transcend and sublate interests. Conceptually then, if interests and values appear to overlap, they nonetheless remain irreducible, the one simply into the other. Their relationship can perhaps be visualized by the “Venn diagram”—two circles drawn in a partly overlapping manner, thus distinguishing three phenomenal spheres—the overlapping commonality and the two distinct areas, the latter pair connoting interests as interests, on the one hand, and values as values, on the other.

Thus understood, the relation between interests and values somewhat parallels the age-old quandary concerning the many and the one or parts and wholes; by extension, individuals and collectivities, or in sociological jargon, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (community and society). In the former, Ferdinand Tonnies observed already a century ago, “(individuals) remain essentially united in spite of all separating factors, whereas in *Gesellschaft* they are essentially separated in spite of all uniting factors.”²

As we well know, the emergence of democracy, of popular sovereignty, means far-reaching emancipation of individuals and interests from the hegemony of *Gemeinschaft*, of primordial solidarity. Whereas in traditional or “pre-modern” societies, the inter-human equilibrium tilts strongly toward the priority and unity of communal wholes, modernization shifts the balance in the opposite direction. Individuals, and hence individual interests, become ascendant. Values in that context refers to “goods” that transcend, unify, and restrain the atomizing potential of multiple individual interests and actions.

In that sense values connote the common good in contrast to the particularity of interests. To that extent, the relation between our two concepts, interests and values, is antonymous rather than synonymous, or dialectic rather than univocal. And while each of these two domains has its own intrinsic characteristics, and hence effects in the democratic process, here I shall focus on the emergent properties arising from their antonymous dialectic. What is/are the value(s) that harness or sublate particular interests, and how do they become articulate?

My dictionary³ lists 20 definitions of interest and 16 of values. According to definition #12 (out of 20), interest can be regarded as “the group of persons or organizations having extensive financial or business power.” “Values,” on the other hand, can be defined sociologically as “the ideals, customs, institutions, etc., of a society toward which the people of the group have an affective regard” (#10 out of 16). Interests energize and articulate; values restrain and unify. Even so, the distinction is more clear analytically than really; value inheres in interest, interest in value.

Society as Theater

Concretely, in human affairs, the distinctions between interests and values are functions of social differentiation, and thus become increasingly pronounced with advancing modernization.⁴ Socially and culturally modernization entails the drastic curtailment of primordial solidarity (spontaneous familial and local affiliations and their varied extensions) in favor the continuous division of labor, the separation of roles from persons and from communal integration.

Here social discourse draws heavily on the language of theater. Stage performances consist of stories enacted by players recruited to perform the roles whereby the story unfolds. Much of the interest evoked by the play turns on the manner in which given roles are performed. The principles of the automobile assembly line, as an example of modern social organization, are analogous to the theater. Like a theatrical play, the blueprint of automobile manufacture is worked out, and then workers are recruited and trained to perform the necessary tasks. Family and kinship groupings likewise consist of pre-defined roles--mother/father, wife/husband, and the like--but familial roles are far more lasting and engrossing than those of the stage and the assembly line, and cannot be rotated.

Modern societies thus appear far more as systems of roles, rationally ordered and linked, than do pre-modern human aggregates. Modernization entails the continuous decomposition of kin-based social affiliations and groupings in favor of rational, instrumentally organized coordination. Meanwhile it also presupposes the existence of “free-standing” individuals, available for recruitment into the multiple, diverse and limited roles of which it consists. Conversely it also presupposes the role-transcending autonomy of the person in a role. This fact was dramatized, albeit in a flawed manner, in the Nuremberg Trials following World War II. In modern society, individuals, often overloaded with multiple, frequently conflicting roles, resemble the juggler who has thrown more balls into the air than he can keep bouncing.

The extraction of individuals from primordial solidarities, on the one hand, and the creation of role-based systems of activity, on the other, enormously enhance the human enterprise. Task specialization and exchange of production vastly increases both the scale of social interaction and the total production. Simultaneously these processes enlarge the spheres of human possibility and freedom. Yet these gains exact a price, principally with reference to the integration and regulation of activity. This must be met, in part by society by means of formal organization and control, in part by personal agency and responsibility. Contrary to the common complaint that modern societies are “impersonal,” they are instead too “personal,” that is, they demand degrees of individual or personal autonomy that are beyond the reach of many.

SURMOUNTING THE FAMILY: THE QUEST FOR THE HUMAN MOLECULE

Given the pervasive tenacity of consanguinity (“blood tie”) in pre-modern social orders, conflict between modernizing and familial impulses was doubtlessly inevitable. Robert Nisbet, a contemporary social theorist, observes that from “Plato’s obliteration of the family in his *Republic*, through Hobbes, Rousseau, Bentham, and Marx, hostility to family has been an abiding element of the West’s political clerisy.”⁵ Already in 1861, the British legal historian, Henry Sumner Maine, could write:

The movement of the progressive societies has been uniform in one respect. Through all its course it has been distinguished by the gradual dissolution of family dependency and the growth of individual obligation in its place. The Individual is steadily substituted for the Family, as the unit of which the civil laws take account starting, as from one terminus of history, for a condition of society in which all the relations of Persons are summed up in the relations of family, we seem to have steadily moved towards a phase of social order in which all these relations arise from the free agreement of Individuals... (i.e.) from *Status* to *Contract*.⁶

The “forms of Status,” Maine explains, “were taken from, and to some extent are still coloured by, the powers and privileges anciently residing in the Family.” Contracts, on the other hand arise as indicated as “the free agreements of Individuals.”

In the present setting, two assertions in Maine’s description require particular attention. First is “the growth of individual obligation” that follows upon “the gradual dissolution of family dependency.” That is, the modern self, both unconsciously and deliberately, must perform and integrate actions and interests previously realized in the interdependencies of familial solidarity. Ironically, thus, in modernization the self is called upon to do more with less! I will return to this problem below.

Second is the contrast between “relations of family” and “relations of persons.” Relations of the latter type “arise from the free agreement of individuals,” as “contract.” In earlier political thought, political authority was viewed as extension or outgrowth of familial patriarchy. “Social contract” theory, already in the 17th and 18th century, had already disposed of that claim. Social contract thinkers, however, had wrestled unsuccessfully with the legacy of the family, primarily because of the difficulties they encountered with the marital covenant. They were stymied by the cultural legacy of the inequality of women to men that survived from antiquity, a legacy that they softened yet failed to surmount.

By definition, contract was thought to require equality between the contracting parties. Thus, still regarding women as unequal to men, contract theorists could not regard marriage as fully contractual, nor in any case as contractually archetypal. Even for John Locke, who included women in civil society, within marriage they remained subordinate, with the husband owning the property and controlling the relationship. Carole Pateman, on whose work the preceding paragraph is based, suggests that since the 1970s, contract theory is of greater interest than at any other time since the original era noted above. Nonetheless, even in this renewed discussion, she reports, “The sexual contract is never mentioned. The sexual contract is a repressed dimension of contract theory, an integral part of the rational choice of the familiar original agreement.”⁷

The logic espoused by Nisbet’s “political clerisy,” as noted above, implies contract “all the way down,” that is, all human ties reduce to contract. Contracts are both limited and soluble. Until recently, however, except in utopian speculation, neither family nor marriage appeared thus reducible. In any event, the problem of the status of women has never been resolved. Even in the USA, where the accidents of history and territory gave unusual rein to the contractual impulse, women were accorded the franchise only as recently as 1920. (Thus at my birth my mother was not yet a full citizen!)

Meanwhile there has always been a dissenting stream of social and political thought to the application of contract theory “all the way down.” Nisbet, an exponent of that tradition, in the work cited above, continues:

It should be obvious that family, not the individual, is *the real molecule of the society*, the key link of the social chain of being. It is inconceivable to

me that either intellectual growth or social order or the roots of liberty can possibly be maintained among a people unless the kinship tie is strong and has both functional significance and symbolic authority. On no single institution has the modern political state rested with more destructive weight than on the family (emphasis added).

In this claim of Nisbet we meet the crux of the problem of modernity for human existence and identity. Insofar as the problem is fundamentally existential, it remains theoretically aporetic. Logically, given the physical embodiment of the individual human, the claim of contract “all the way down” appears plausible enough--take away people and groups disappear as well; dissolve or scatter groups, yet individuals remain. But conversely, Nisbet appears to argue, sociability is a collective, not an individual phenomenon. Sociality is a molecular, not an atomic reality. Unsocialized, the human potential of the organism is unrealized, in effect, aborted.

Until the advanced stages of modernization emerge, this question can be avoided. Step by step families have adapted to both reduction in scope and to inner transformation. The most important adaptation has doubtless been the emergence of the nuclear family, in contrast to a variety of pre-modern extended forms. Not only is a global trend toward family nuclearity everywhere reported, but at mid-century, at least in the USA, it was briefly thought that in its nuclear form, “the family” had been viably integrated into modernity.

Soon afterwards, however, that happy ending collapsed in a series of upheavals whose end is not yet in sight. Basically, modernizing trends suggest that the expectations of the “political clerisy” are being realized. While numerous variables are involved, the most far-reaching impulse doubtless has been the women’s movement, or rather the structural transformation of which that movement is an articulation. Marriage itself is rapidly being reduced from covenant (see below) to contract, to a temporary, terminable relationship like any other. This era is meanwhile marked with rising anomic pathologies, though not unidimensionally traceable to marital redefinition.

CONJUGALITY AS THE MATRIX OF THE HUMAN: THE GENESIS MYTH

The bonding impulse between two particular persons, a male and female, is everywhere attested, from the earliest times to the present, though diversely expressed. At the same time, however, that impulse has widely been eclipsed by other priorities, and became institutionally enshrined as procreative means. Family systems, to which marriage was thus subordinate, both socialize the young and anchor adults in society. So deeply was this conception rooted in both culture and consciousness, and linked as well to the above-noted conception of the human female, that the conjugal ethos in Western societies was poorly prepared for the conjugal autonomy that modernization abruptly thrust upon it.

Consequently the inner meaning of both family and marriage were in part misconceived. With family procreatively defined, its basic mission was biological reproduction and the socialization of the young. The social, this implied, already existed, and needed only to be transmitted and instilled. As the emerging society increasingly assumed functions earlier carried by family and kinship, families retreat defensively to become “havens in a heartless world.” “The family” came to be viewed as a pre-modern vestige, sheltered from the turbulence of society, rather than the societal germ or “molecule” that Nisbet proclaims (but see below).

Historically familial arrangements possessed a givenness, a sanctity in societies, that were transcendently grounded; that is, appeal could be made to nature, to natural law, to religion, even to tradition, thus to “absolutes” beyond the flux of the visible order. Given the mounting pluralization and secularization of advancing modernity, such claims are no longer convincing, even to many practitioners of religion. To the extent that this occurs, moral relativism appears to be the only possible outcome.

Perhaps, however, the search for unidimensional absolutes may have been misconceived. Perhaps too lightly we toss aside the pre-scientific idioms of thought because of their non-empirical articulation. Here I turn to an ancient Hebrew myth that offers a rather different reading of the conjugal union. I do so at considerable risk, since given the limitations of the present context I must abstract it from its historical and spiritual matrix. If one recognizes that thus abstracted this story cannot be full comprehended, one can nonetheless respond to its intrinsic logic.

The LORD GOD said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” So out of the ground the LORD GOD formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD GOD caused a deep sleep to fall on the man, and while he slept he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD GOD had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. Genesis 2:18-24.

Contextually this story appears highly anachronistic. Scholars date it around the time of King David, about 1,000 BCE. Hebrew society at the time was patriarchal, tribal, and in today’s language, sexist. Hints of this setting appear at the margin, though here caution is needed. If on the surface, there are clear patriarchal overtones, the transfer of attachment from parents to wife in marriage could also be read matriarchally. Apart from these overtones, however, the thrust of this account might well be described as late modern.

Given its historical setting, what is immediately arresting about this story is the absence of a procreative reference, to which there is at most a secondary allusion. As one writer points out, the conjugal pair are husband and wife before they are father and mother. And as the story is told, that conjugal relation has its own *telos*, its own significance, apart from any possible procreative outcome. Offspring in effect appears as effluent of the conjugal mystery rather than its essential *raison d'être*.

Further, behind this account stands quite unmistakably the shared and equal humanity of the conjugal pair. Sexual differentiation does not entail qualitative difference. We are asked to view their differing complementarity through the prism of their common humanity, and not vice versa. Nonetheless, outside or prior to this relationship, they are incomplete, mere asocial monads. In leaving the unwilling parental dependence for their willed convenantal relationship the pair complete their own humanity. The act whereby the two become one is of ontological consequence.

The marriage and family paradigm thus outlined, challenges our traditional view of the family fundamentally. Not the socialization of the young, but the humanization of the spouses, the parents, who in the establishment of their union move from the unwilling determinism of nature to willed commitment in the realm of indeterminate freedom, is the defining axis of the family. It is not good for the human to be alone. The family is thus not in the first instance a shelter from society, but rather the very germ of society. If family is the social “molecule,” it is not in the first instance because it produces and socializes the young, but because it is the cradle of covenanting freedom. And only insofar as it is that cradle, can it fulfill its procreative destiny.

INTERESTS, VALUES, AND PERSONAL AUTONOMY

As we know, a reduction in the repertory of fixed “instincts,” compared to other species, distinguishes *Homo sapiens*. Included is a neural system that permits our intellection to transcend the bounds of space and time. On the other hand, as creatures of time and space, our world must be ordered. Thus while we are freed to choose among alternatives, that very freedom compels us to choose (cf. Dostoevsky’s *Grand Inquisitor*). In the conjugal union that realization is existentially acknowledged, indeed prototypically or archetypally so. The often life-long trauma experienced by children of divorcees testifies to the germinal (or molecular) significance of pair-bonding in the creation of the human.

A redefinition of marriage and family in these terms, however, is not a call for crusade or draconianism. If, on the one hand, it suggests the possibility and need for a radical transformation and renewal of the family ethos, history and contemporary experience underscore the malleability of the human species. Gender complementariness is a vital ingredient throughout societies. But the unmarried, the widowed or the divorced are not for those

reasons less than human. Nor are all others who find themselves in “deviant” situations simply to be pilloried. Single parents can succeed. Orphans can be brought up by others than their biological parents. Broken lives can be repaired. Nonetheless healthy marriages and families provide the social ambiance within which diversity and compensation can be contained and elevated.

Meanwhile there is plenty of work for all the specialized services that complex societies can provide. Societies, regimes and dynasties undergo cycles of growth, prosperity, and decay. As they collapse, populations settle back on the “safety valve” of elementary configuration, on the primordial cells of human aggregation. This tends to occur as well at other stages when people “fall through the cracks” of larger scale activity.

In effect I here offer a two-step thesis. First, the irreducible, paradoxical social molecule lies in the conjugal, and only subsequently, in the consanguineal tie; and second, that ascent assumes priority over descent in social construction. This second claim is implicit, but also often obscured, in the struggle for human rights now making its way around the world. The attribution of sovereignty to the people rather than to “the divine right of kings” (in all its variations) underscores the derivative, indeed the artificial character, of large scale social organization. This reality appears in the concept of subsidiarity, formulated classically in 1931 the papal encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, which states:

Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and endeavor can accomplish, so it is likewise unjust and a gravely harmful disturbance of right order to turn over to a greater society of higher rank functions and services which can be performed by lesser bodies at a lower plane. For a social undertaking of any sort, by its very nature, ought to aid the members of the body social, but never to destroy and absorb them.⁸

Here, as elsewhere in emergent phenomena, the ascending, larger wholes are more than mere sums of the constituent elements, yet those elements are not to be either destroyed or absorbed. Only insofar as individuals become fully autonomous, fully moral beings, can those larger wholes flourish. When lower level accountabilities abort or atrophy, totalitarian, top-down excesses loom.

NOTES

* Presented at The Transcaucasian Institute, Tbilisi, Georgia, November, 1996.

1 Woodstock Report, Number 47, October, 1996, p.1.

2 *Community and Society* (Michigan State University Press, 1957 [German original, 1887]). Quoted here from the Harper Torchbook edition, 1963, p.65.

3 *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* (New York/Abenel, NJ: Gramercy Books, 1983.)

4 Modernization here is a summary reference to the configuration of revolutions--scientific, technological, industrial, political, etc.--that since the 18th century at highly uneven rates are transforming the material existence of the human species.

5 *Twilight of Authority* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975) p. 260

6 *Ancient Law. Its Connection with the Early history of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas.* Dorset Press reprint, 1986, pp. 139-140.

7 *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

8 Cited here from Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: America Press, 1966) p. 300.

Chapter X

Human Identity in Post-Communism and High Modernity*

Human sexual dimorphism -- anatomical, hormonal and temperamental alike -- is seen to be fundamental in the very formative "hominization" of the species.

-- Weston LaBarre

The purpose of this symposium, as outlined in the announcement, is at once intriguing and revealing. It is intriguing because of the similarity of the definition it gave of the human predicament in post-communism to what is often described as postmodernism in other advanced societies. It is revealing with reference to the shared assumptions behind these two ostensibly opposing systems. If, in terms of the latter, the two systems, communist and noncommunist, differed as radically as the past Cold War conflicts implied, how does it happen that in the post-communist era, the several populations confront the same sort of identity questions?

With reference to these two systems, I recall a familiar pair of antithetical statements--John Stuart Mills' axiom: "Human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from, and may be resolved into, the laws of individual man;" and Karl Marx's declaration: "The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations." "Capitalism," of course, resonated to the former proposition, and "communism" to the latter. This polarization between individualism and collectivism, as we know, emerged in the wake of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Yet may it be that consequences of the reductionism implicit in both of these claims outweigh the half-truth, and hence the apparent polar opposition, that each represents? And if so, does that account for the above-noted similarity between the challenges confronting post-communist societies today and modern societies generally?

FROM THE FAMILY TO THE INDIVIDUAL

In this paper I shall leave this issue unresolved. Instead I shall focus on one of the *revealing* aspects of the outline sent to us in advance of this meeting. In the title of this paper I place the term "high modernity" (Anthony Giddens') alongside "post-communism," in preference to the more common notion of "postmodernity." After all, the present era represents the culmination of industrial modernity, not its abandonment, as the term "postmodern" signifies. The extent to which the important differences between early and later stages of industrial developments lead to qualitative thresholds, requiring the language of contrast, may well be left to historical assessment. The point

to which I call attention here is the fact that the question of identity tends to be addressed in non-familial terms, certainly in the discourse of high modernity and now also in the “postcommunist” language of the present symposium. In both instances, the critical importance of the family in the formation and anchoring of human identity is somehow missing from the calculus.

The reason for this omission is not hard to find. Modernization--the interdependent scientific, technological and sociopolitical revolutions that since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are transforming human existence--means the liquidation of kinship or the “blood tie” in favor what some have called “the rational reconstruction of society” (Coleman). Though such “reconstruction” was incipient in earlier times, for example, in the Greek *polis*, until the modern era, kinship and local interdependencies served as the social primordium, as the glue that held human aggregates in place. Only after “the individual (becomes) steadily substituted for the family” (Maine, 1861), can such reconstruction proceed. To put the matter metaphorically, only when the family *molecule* begins to dissolve into individual *atoms* can the rational reconstruction or resynthesis that we call modernization be undertaken.

Modern polities and economies presuppose the existence of human material deployable as individuals rather than as families or clans. Indeed they further foster the very individuation that they meanwhile presuppose. The polity, above all in its jurisprudence, strives to secure citizenship and the equal rights of citizens before the law. To be sure, in both polity and economy, individuals act in combination or concert, but such combination is always reducible to individual agency. As organizational charts connote, tasks are rationally and instrumentally devised, and individuals are recruited to invest only that aspect of their persons or identity that the task or role requires. The individual as such, or the “core person,” remains outside the role designated by the organizational chart.

The family or other kinship organization, quite to the contrary, unites members in their core identity, along with role differentiations such as husband and wife, parent and child. Family or kinship aggregation is essentially covenantal; that of modern organization, merely contractual. Familial, and by extension tribal, organization has long since proven its incapacity for social complexity and large scale organization. Hence larger scale organization, and above all modernization, has increasingly supplanted kinship and tribalism as modes of social organization. Moreover, the esteem for individual dignity and worth, the acknowledged endowment of every individual with inalienable rights, rests on the rescue of the individual from the totalizing claims of familial identity.

FAMILY RIDDANCE: AN ABORTIVE ENTERPRISE

To make such individuation possible, as Abbott Philip has written, “(a)ttack on the family in modern political thought has been sweeping and unremitting. Although the critiques vary in their intensity, dissatisfaction with the family is nearly universal in modern political thought...” Similarly, the

late Robert Nisbet observed that from “Plato’s obliteration of the family in his Republic, through Hobbes, Rousseau, Bentham, and Marx, hostility to family has been an abiding element of the West’s political clerisy.” Nonetheless meanwhile, familism persists well into the modern era, if only vestigially--on the *micro*-scale in its *nuclear* form; on the *macro*-scale, as ethnicity. In the latter instance, while to be sure, far more than literal familism is at work, in ethnicity familistic roots and inspiration are unmistakable. But except for a further comment later in this paper, macro-scale issues lie outside the scope of the present paper.

Here the focus is on the former topic, the *micro*-scale persistence of family. For hitherto, despite the “the attack on the family in modern political thought,” modernization has led, not to the disappearance of “the family,” but to reduction to its “nuclear” core. Only in recent decades, notably in the United States, has the very survival of family even in its minimal nuclear form, become uncertain. Today nearly half of the marriages consummated end in divorce. Comparable numbers of children grow up in single parent households, either born out of wedlock or because of divorce. And the reasons for this trend are profoundly structural and not merely moral or ideological.

Meanwhile, however, the persistence of the nuclear impulse in the human process deserves far more serious attention than it has yet received. In this brief paper that need and task can only be faintly outlined. By the “nuclear impulse” I mean the propensity for male and female in the human species to bond permanently and exclusively, and to form independent households with or without immediate offspring. Not pair-bonding as such is new, but rather the emancipation of the pair-bonding act from familial, not to say tribal, control. William Goode, though noting the linkage between modernization and the emergence of the nuclear family pattern, nonetheless describes the fit between modernization and the nuclear family as one-sided. While family reduced to the nuclear scale may serve the needs of modern society, that development in turn may not, indeed does not, serve the needs of the nuclear family. I will return briefly to this ambiguity below.

Basically, then, while Maine’s dictum that in “progressive” (modern) societies the individual is steadily substituted for the family as the elementary unit is being historically confirmed, in two respects it has not, or not yet, succeeded. Not only is family still with us, but modernization has not devised an alternative matrix for the creation and the sustenance of the autonomous human agents or persons which it presupposes. Modernization can endlessly reshape humans once created, and vastly enrich their identities, but those reshaping processes cannot create the initial material with which they work. But meanwhile, though unable to eliminate the family, modernizing has seriously crippled the ability of families to fulfill their person-creating and -nurturing function. Only when as these realities are addressed can we come to terms with the problems of identity in our era. Nonetheless, in the jargon of our disciplines, it must be stressed: addressing the family stalemate is a necessary though not sufficient condition for the solution of those problems.

THE SEARCH FOR A NUCLEAR PARADIGM

I shall argue that, while the replacement of kinship by association as organizing principle in human aggregation is writ into the human destiny, the replacement of the core family is not. To the contrary, the substitution of familial kinship for society in pre-societal (pre-”modern”) times twisted and obscured the core familial process in a manner that left the family core, both concretely and institutionally, emaciated and unequipped to come into its own, thus to realize the very possibility that modernization for the first time permits. Given the obvious inadequacy of kinship and tribalism as the organizing principle in social aggregation, on the one hand, and the inadequacies of the newly-isolated nuclear family, on the other, the “hostility to the family...of the West’s political clerisy” (Nisbet) is understandable, though hardly defensible. Indeed that hostility may well be an instance of what Julien Benda describes as *La trahison des clercs*, an intellectual failure of treasonous proportion.

While the dissonance between the family and the modernization project is multidimensional, the key difficulty may well lie in the eclipse of the unitive aspect of the family process by its procreative mandate, and hence the dominance of consanguinity over alliance in any treatment of family systems. Familism and kinship, though always bi-lineal, are descent-oriented, drawing their inspiration from the “blood tie,” from consanguinity, in the end, from the mother-child, rather than from the husband-wife, tie. Incest taboos and rules of exogamy, whatever their genesis, prevented the implosion of family systems in the past. Nonetheless, in pre-societal times, historical conditions effectively secured the eclipse of the *unitive* by the *procreative* energies or “needs” in family systems and in our inherited ethos.

Astonishingly enough, given it’s primitive, still largely tribal, setting--scholars date the origin of this story at about 1,000 BCE--, doubtlessly the most important social story or myth in the formation of the European tradition, the “rib story” in Genesis, chapter two, clearly challenges that eclipse. Here we find a conjugal “paradigm” that has yet to be fully exhumed. In that evolutionary story, *Adam* (the “earth creature”) appears as a solitary being. The Creator acknowledges, however, that “it is not good” for this being, this creature, “to be alone.” So now other creatures are paraded before *Adam* to permit a search for partnership. When that search fails, a surgical procedure effectively divides this solitary creature into two equal but complementary beings, each now incomplete in itself. When thereupon Adam, now a “he,” for the first time confronts Eve, now a “she,” Adam is quoted as saying, “Ah, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...” and the narrator adds, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” Significantly, nothing is said about a procreative expectation or outcome.

What seems implicit in this story is that “the family” is not a consanguineal hold-out against the enlightened alternative of modernity, but rather that the conjugally-based familial primordium is the embryo of the entire social process. For while the procreative dimension of the family does not

appear as its defining *telos*, procreation is profoundly implicit. The unwilled biologically-rooted bond to father and mother is the foundation, just as the shedding of that tie by this step into willed covenanted freedom dissolves the consanguineal claim. Thus in every generation, in every life course, family creates and transcends itself. As the womb to the organism, so the family is the matrix of the human being, the moral agent, who emerges at the end of the process.

The literary setting of this story is cosmogonic. It locates the human in the scheme of the cosmos. Why does it include no further elaboration of the human charter? May it be that this story in fact tells the human story *in nuce*, that it describes the raw material, the primordium, the process, from which humans now construct their collective destiny? Another ancient, though later, dictum affirms forthrightly that *pacta servandum sunt*--agreements are to be kept. Intersubjective understandings and infinitely varied but contractual interrelations make the human "world go round." But according to the Genesis story, the prototype of society is not the mother-child or *consanguineal* but the husband-wife or *conjugal* tie. Ordered freedom is the human *unicum*.

Myths, of course, are problematic. Since by definition they are metaphoric or figurative, what do they mean? Moreover since there are good and bad, true and false, myths, how does one distinguish? Recognizing the nature of mythological discourse, one finds this story remarkably self-authenticating. Here the pair-bond appears as autotelic--it has its own end in the human enterprise. The conjugal covenant appears as the crowning stage in the creation of the human. What is unique about the pair bond in this species is not biological reproduction --all the other species already do that--but covenantal freedom, the quality that Aristotle was later to capture in his description of the human as *zoon politikon*, the political animal. Only on leaving the parental roof in favor of covenanting freedom is full humanity realized. Autonomy means not self-containment or self-sufficiency, but the free actualization of human interdependence. Metaphorically, human reality is thus viewed as essentially *molecular* rather than *atomic*. Thus "the family" is not the rearguard of an obsolete past; to the contrary, it is the vanguard of a future that has yet to find itself.

CONJUGALITY AND SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

Historically Western familism enshrined the subordination of women to men. As we know Western culture is much indebted to ancient Greek thought. Ironically, the sexist paradigm that until recently dominated Western thought is part of that legacy. As the distinction between public (freedom) and private (necessity) space made its appearance in early Greek settlements, the struggle to survive and to procreate still dominated the destiny of women. Early Greek philosophers concluded accordingly, that given that fate, women by nature were intellectually and spiritually less endowed than men. The result was well-captured in the famous saying of Demosthenes, the fourth century (BCE) Greek statesman, "We have mistresses for our enjoyment, concubines

to serve our person, and wives for bearing legitimate offspring.” Women effectively were objects or tools to serve men who alone were seen as fully human. Christianity inherited the shackling of women from the Hellenistic world in which it emerged, though it also possessed contravening impulses that would eventually break through (Brown, Brundage).

Despite positive achievements in early Greek and later Roman times, patriarchal imagery prevailed in Western political thought until the rise of social contract thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, basically the Enlightenment and the revolutions of modernization. Where populations grew, along with technology and culture, kinship was increasingly supplanted by other forms of interaction and modes of organization. Families shrank as functions they previously performed were assumed by specialized, extra-familial agencies. Increasingly, as well, marriages came to be based on the personal interest and choice of the partners and not in the first instance on the interests of the respective families from whom the partners came.

Nonetheless, while marriage constituted the primordial covenant in the human story, as Carole Pateman shows, the pioneer contract theorists were unable to assimilate that reality into their scheme. Whereas contract theory posits the equality of citizens in the public arena, and hence of the partners in the political contract, women were still regarded as unequal, as subordinate to men. “The social contract is a story of freedom; the sexual contract is a story of subjection. ...Men’s freedom and women’s subjection are created through the original contract,” Pateman writes. Unable to recognize the human equality of women and men, women were included in the political contract by the Enlightenment thinkers only through their men, their husbands. Both wives and family were excluded from social contract theory.

Meanwhile the structural changes brought about subsequently by modernization, though in some respects beneficial to women, in other respects reinforced their inherited limitations. In pre-industrial times, economic production was largely household-based. Though there was some division of labor between men and women, scholars believe that such differences were less pronounced than in later times. For example, immediately prior to the rise of the factory system, some manufactures were carried out as cottage industries, activities in which women and children often were the principal participants. The introduction of the factory system meant the separation of work from the household. Initially this took women and children into factories, around which their dwellings clustered. The dehumanizing effects were oft noted, and figured heavily in the origins of modern socialism, and especially Marxism.

The great reforms of the industrial era returned women and children to their homes in housing environments separated from the disruption and pollution of industrial operations. The wage economy presupposed the single income household, with the husband-father earning the livelihood and the wife-mother managing the household. The “nuclear family” now appeared to come into its own. In the United States, by 1926 Ernest Burgess described the family as “a unity of interacting personalities.” By mid-century, Talcott Parsons, then

the leading sociologist, could plausibly argue that the nuclear family and the industrial civilization had reached an accommodation. The family, no longer engaged in economic production, now served the “socialization” of the young and the “stabilization” of the adult. Correspondingly he viewed the husband-father as the *instrumental* leader of the family unit, and the wife-mother as the *expressive* leader. This nuclear family unit, now structurally freed from the hegemony of extended kin, possessed the flexibility and mobility that an industrial civilization required, and yet appeared sheltered from the atomizing dynamics of that civilization. The career status of the working “head” of the family determined the social status of the family, which was thus sheltered from the status conflicts that surged through the society outside the family.

What escaped recognition during the early phase of modernization, however, was not only that women remained in bondage but that modernization in some respects reinforced their plight. In the USA this became evident in the new suburbanization following World War II. Large new automobile-based residential suburbs sprang up around major cities, leaving housewife-mothers, along with children and youth, newly isolated and stranded from community and city life. Already the War had brought great numbers of women into the work-place to fill the gaps by the men who were drafted into the armed services, not all of whom willingly left employment when the men returned. Meanwhile with the wage system oriented to household support by one (male) wage-earner, women had been only marginally employed and paid. Even when working equally with men they were paid less.

Subsequent upheavals, stemming from the 1960s, finally triggered the spread of feminism throughout the society. Though in recent decades important strides have been made in the USA, the end is not yet in sight. In its extreme forms, feminism has charged that marriage as such is oppressive and enslaving to women. The problem thus is deeper than merely the patriarchal legacy in the culture. Marriage as an exclusive bond, “till death do us part,” may well come to inhibit the personal growth of one or both partners. In any case, there has never been a time or a society in which all marriages were “successful.” Without prejudice to the norming significance of the conjugal union, failed marriages must be humanely assimilated in societies, as must human failures otherwise. Where societies find reasonable balance, by the nature of the case, most marriages “succeed.” In any case, building human persons and hence building marriages is a life- long process.

The bonding impulse and its oft-demonstrated fecundity in human affairs places it far beyond the reach of mere cultural manipulation. The universal persistence of the pair-bonding proclivity in our species from its the very beginning, despite the great diversity and pathology of mating and family forms, must give us pause. Yet we tend to attach more importance to that diversity--obviously no particular ritual form can be regarded as definitive--than to the persistence and the durability of the pair-bond. Admittedly, given the dual legacy of the derogation of women and the eclipse of the *conjugal* by the *consanguineal* axis in the family process over the millennia of our Western tradition we are hardly able at this stage to deal objectively with

complementary significance of sex and gender in human affairs. In the end, men and women are different. It is these realities that have yet to be taken seriously in our modern agony over the future of the family.

SOCIETY WITHOUT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY?

If indeed marriage and family were to disappear, what would be the consequences? Obviously, if history is moving in that direction, only history can render the verdict. Even so, history is not, or rather not merely, a blind force. Meanwhile the records of the Utopian “experiments” in recent centuries and decades are instructive. These typically sought to reintroduce familial qualities into larger non-familial groupings, while relativizing familial claims at the primary familial levels. In effect, the family “problem” was to be solved by “societizing” families and “familizing” societies. The most instructive example was doubtlessly the modern Israeli *Kibbutzim*. Originally it was assumed that gender differences could be overcome by removing children from conventional families to be reared in mixed groups, girls and boys, with minimal contact with their biological parents.

But two counter pressures mounted within the *kibbutzim* themselves. Couples, and especially wives, increasingly objected to the limited space thereby accorded to family living. Secondly, at puberty, girls demanded privacy, despite the conditioning they had received in their non-segregated upbringing. Without retracing the step by step developments here, by the early 1990s, family living and child-rearing has largely reasserted itself in most *kibbutzim*. Men and women bond, set up households, share personal living, produce and bring up offspring, to state the matter perhaps clumsily, *because the are made that way*.

Societies without families? A second, less direct, possibly more profound “experiment” in a possibly familyless future was outlined by social psychologist Kenneth Gergen at the beginning of the 1990’s in book which he entitled *The Saturated Self*. As the subtitle--*Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*--indicates, Gergen’s ruminations fall squarely in the ball-park of this conference. He embraces the notion of post-modernity as the reality of our time, radically distinct from the previous modern era. “In the modernist idiom,” he writes, “normal persons are predictable, honest, and sincere. Modernists believe in educational systems, a stable family life, moral training, and rational choice of marriage partners” (6). To come to terms with the “social saturation” of postmodernity he proposes “first to bid final adieu to the concrete entity of self, and then to trace the reconstruction of self as a relationship” (140). One reaches the “final stage” in the transition to “the postmodern... when the self vanishes fully into a stage of relatedness. One ceases to believe in a self in which he or she is embedded.” While he admits that this is not yet “a pervasive condition,” he sees indications that that stage “is imminent” (17). Clinging to the notion of stable self that continues over time in an era in which events and relationships are in continuous flux becomes dysfunctional.

Further: “If it is not the individual ‘I’s who create relationships, but relationships that create the ‘sense’ of ‘I,’ then ‘I’ cease to be the center of success or failure, the one who is evaluated well or poorly, and so on. Rather, ‘I’ am just an I by virtue of playing a particular part in a relationship” (157). “In this era the self is redefined as no longer an essence in itself, but relational. In the postmodern world, selves may become the manifestation of relationship, thus placing relationships in the central position occupied by the individual self for the last several hundred years of Western history”(146f). In other words, Gergen regards the notions of personal and self-identity as first emerging in the “modern” era, only to become obsolete as the postmodern era emerges.

I noted earlier, that as historical developments, the emancipation of the individual and the conjugal union (from extended family hegemony) emerge correlatively. At least initially, far from disappearing, the family as institution was reconstituted on a conjugal rather than a consanguineal basis. When the “individual” is substituted for the “family” as the elementary human unit, by the same token that individual rather than the family that reared him or her now chooses his or her spouse or marital partner. The primary family unit thus turns on conjugal rather than on the “blood” tie. The family retains its procreative function, but the balance between the two energies, the unitive and the procreative, is historically redressed.

Gergen focuses his study on the fate of the self in “postmodernity.” Meanwhile, however, as already foreshadowed in his above description of the “modern” era (“a stable family life...and rational choice of marriage partners”), marriage and family are not exempt from the transiency to which the postmodern “self “ is reduced. Though there are occasional references throughout the volume to family, he does not elaborate. The logic, however, is unmistakable--the fate of the self and the family are inseparable. The historical abandonment of the one entails the abandonment of the other.

Anthony Giddens, an English sociologist unwilling to buy the notion of post-modernity, characterizes our era instead as “high modernity.” Writing likewise in 1991, far from abandoning the notion of the self, proposes instead that in “the post-traditional order of modernity, and against the backdrop of new forms of mediated experience, self-identity becomes reflexively organized endeavour. The reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems... Reflexively organised life-planning, which normally presumes consideration of risks as filtered through contact with expert knowledge, becomes a central feature of the structuring of self-identity”(5) “Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the *self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography*. Identity here still presumes continuity across time and space: but self-identity is such continuity as interpreted reflexively by the agent.... To be a ‘person’ is not just to be a reflexive actor but to have a concept of a person (as applied both to the self and others)” (53).

Reflexivity along with trust become pivotal concepts in Giddens's discourse. His use of the former term is illustrated in the foregoing paragraph. With regard to trust, Giddens refers to the "chaos that threatens on the other side of the ordinariness of everyday conventions." The resulting uncertainty and risk require "a sense of ontological security," a faith in "the coherence of everyday life." "Trust in the existential anchorings of reality in an emotional, and some degree in a cognitive, sense rests on confidence in the reliability of persons, acquired in the early experiences of the infant... As developed through the loving attentions of early caretakers, basic trust links self-identity in a fateful way to the appraisals of others... An awareness of the separate identity of the parenting figures originates in the emotional acceptance of absence: the 'faith' that the caretaker will return, even though she or he is no longer in the presence of the infant..."

These few intimations must here suffice. Far from the chimera sketched by Gergen, Giddens underscores the centrality of self and identity in human affairs, and its rootedness in familial soil. Of course, adoptive parents or other caregivers can replace birth parents, but only if they provide the attention and devotion that we associate with the latter. In that case, why assume that we can replace, much less improve on, the devoted ambiance the traditional family provides? Indeed, much of the predictability of human responses once provided in next of kin settings, now devolves on the individual self. Paradoxically, while *high modernity* demands ever greater personal autonomy, its ever increasing complexity tends to dissolve the communal matrices of the necessary personal identity. Only where both marriage and family are radically reconstituted in the process of modernization can they flourish, while modernization in turn can survive and flourish only on the basis of that reconstitution.

"NATION WITHOUT THE BLOOD LINE?"

Finally, what does this mean for ethnicity, an issue newly troublesome in the postcommunist and high modern era? Several years ago, Professor M. Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma, then a guest professor at George Mason University outside Washington, DC, delivered an evening lecture to a small gathering of scholars in Washington on his grandfather's legacy in India today. In the discussion that followed someone had the occasion to ask Gandhi what he considered to be the distinguishing achievement of the American experiment. Without a moment's hesitation, he answered: "*Nation without the blood line.*"

The term nation, as we know, derives from the Latin *natus*--born or birth. Strictly speaking, a nation is a *gens*, and a nation-state is a *gens* or ethnic community constituted politically as a state. Modern social and political history can be read as a continuing contest between two conceptions, two paradigms, of statehood: in the first, common descent, a preexisting nation, is the foundation of political community. According to the other, descent-based grouping--*ethnicity*--is precisely the obstacle that the state must surmount.

Gandhi's India embraces more than fifty languages and a great variety of religious beliefs and practices. Two religions, Hinduism and Islam, have been rivals for supremacy, a competition, as we know, issued bloodily in two states, India and Pakistan, as the English withdrew earlier in this century.

The implication of Gandhi's above reply is inescapable: the blood tie, from family to ethnic solidarity, is not the stuff from which a viable polity can be constituted. Gandhi's was not the reply of an *Americophile*. Gandhi thereupon appropriately noted the continued failure of American society to realize this ideal with regard to racism or to the displaced native population that made the American territory an ostensibly empty continent. Even so, those failures honor the ideal in its breach. Perhaps no existing society fully attains the ideal that all humans are created equal, that only where all members stand on equal footing before the law can a society full prosper.

In any event, that the United States emerged as a "nation without the bloodline" is due in part to the wealth of the European cultural legacy on which the new country drew, in part as well to an "accident of history." The USA has often been described as a nation of immigrants, of people who chose to go there in search of a new existence, hence a new identity. Ideally citizenship is grounded in the common humanity of everyone, not on secondary traits such as family, gender, language, privilege and the like.

A QUICK CONCLUSION

In recent decades this "melting pot" paradigm has come under the increasing challenge of "multi-culturalism," in effect, demands from a variety of ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities for greater space, provoking anxieties over the fate of the basic model. This challenge may well be a fitting signal that the basic notion of the nation-state that hitherto has informed the modern era is not a panacea. As already noted, linguistically *nation* derives from birth, in effect seeks to replace lesser ethnicities by a greater one. Cynically, one might thus argue, a nation simply bribes the lesser ethnicities into submission by offering a greater one. Whatever the case, today's globalization and the uprooting of peoples profoundly challenges our existing schemes. I here argue that whatever our social contrivances, we ignore or violate the archetypal human significance of the conjugal union at great cost. Admittedly, marriage as well as family can, and often do, stifle the personal development of children and of spouses, despite their archetypal grounding, but particular violations do not constitute general nullification. After all, both institutions, as well as their members, are only human.

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Chapter XI

Leaving and Clinging Conjuality in Modern Societies*

Five years ago the United Nations General Assembly designated 1994 as the “International Year of the Family.” Already in 1948, soon after the founding of the UN, the Assembly had adopted a *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. While the family project responds to family-related anomalies around the world today, the pamphlet describing the “international year of the family” can well be read as an application of the 1948 document to family affairs. Human rights frequently suffer in family patterns and changes, and as the UN document indicates, require remedial attention from other social sectors. An “international year of the family” is thus a timely initiative.

Nonetheless, the UN project is fundamentally flawed, as is much of the current family debate elsewhere. The family malaise that triggered the “international year of the family” stems to a considerable degree from precisely the societal transformations that energize the human rights movement in the first place. To put the matter bluntly: human rights is essentially a political category, an affair of citizenship; family, on the other hand, is a pre-political phenomenon, which politics, or public agencies, can *impair* but alas cannot directly *repair*. The drafters of the UN pamphlet appear to be only dimly aware of this enigma.

To grasp the problem, more patience and subtlety are required than public rhetoric typically permits. The need for the political articulation of human rights arises initially in the kinship-grounded social configuration that modernization, by the very nature of the case, must surmount. Thus the global promotion of the human rights ideal is an important United Nations achievement, a corollary of the growth of global interdependence and global institutions of which the UN is an expression. But what has yet to emerge is a corresponding reconstitution of “the family” in the emerging scheme of things.

As the UN announcement rightly observes, the multi-national, indeed global, scope of that organization precludes its espousal of a particular definition of the family. Cultural diversity around the world rules out such standardization. But then one might well ask: how is it that, despite that very diversity, the UN can define and sponsor a “universal declaration” of human rights? That declaration rests on moral affirmations, on views of “human nature,” that by no means are universally shared.

I do not propose to answer this question here, nor to fault the UN General Assembly for not articulating a family paradigm. Clearly the conditions permitting such action do not obtain. What is needed meanwhile is the beginning of a fundamental conversation concerning the nature of “the family” that thus far has largely been missing. The task of this paper is to sketch an outline of the task to be undertaken.

DESCENT VS. ALLIANCE: THE FAMILY DIALECTIC

Family systems everywhere consist of two organizing principles: (biological) descent *and* alliance, the “blood tie” (*consanguinity*) and the marital tie (*conjuality*), two irreducible proclivities that have always stood in dialectical tension. The former arises from “nature,” the latter foreshadows “culture.” Curiously, though not accidentally, current discourse accepts “ought” language with reference to child care and the “blood tie,” while it is skittish about conjuality and sexual congress. In practice, after all, any public policy discourse possesses “ought” dimensions. Particular situations are defined as undesirable, and ameliorative actions are articulated accordingly.

The term “alliance” refers to what we conventionally call marriage, though extending as well to various forms of adoption and fictive kinship. Marriage is universally conditioned by the incest taboo--the prohibition of sexual congress and bonding between immediate kin. But whence this restriction? Whatever the answer, incest and rules regarding exogamy introduce the contractual element into the human process. The choice of partners from beyond the family circle is the onset of personal contractual action in the human enterprise, and hence the beginning of the “society” that transcends kin and tribe.

Despite the incest taboo, however, throughout history (and pre-history), consanguinity has tended to eclipse conjuality in the family process. Family and clan have functioned rather undialectically as a consanguineal domain over against the world of contract. By the same token, marriage in most family systems has been subordinated to the interests of descent groups, of families and clans, consanguineally constituted. Correspondingly, even to this day, marriage tends to be *procreatively* rather than *covenantally* grounded. To survive, a society needs children. Children are helpless at birth, and require intimate and prolonged care. The female who gives birth and her consorting male are or appear to be the appropriate care-givers, and mating arrangements are regulated accordingly.

What is missing in that scenario is a recognition of the *telos* of the conjugal union in its own right, and of its humanizing significance in both family and society. Because of this deficiency, once the conjugal union is accorded autonomy by modern society, it is unprepared for its exercise. I will return to this problem below. Meanwhile I offer a few, all too brief, comments on the reasons for the historical eclipse of conjuality.

The Struggle to Survive

The eclipse of conjuality by procreative imperatives apparently originated in the human struggle to survive under primitive material conditions. For example, Peter Brown, in a recent historical study, describes as typical, an ancient society that was more helplessly exposed to death than is even the most afflicted underdeveloped country in the modern world. Citizens of the Roman Empire at its height, in the second century A. D., were born into the

world with an average life expectancy of less than twenty-five years. Death fell savagely on the young. Those who survived childhood remained at risk. Only four out of every hundred men, and fewer women lived beyond the age of fifty...

In such a situation only the privileged or eccentric few could enjoy the freedom to do what they pleased with their sexual drives. Unexacting in so many ways in sexual matters, the ancient city expected its citizens to expend a requisite proportion of their energy begetting and rearing children to replace the dead.... young men and women were discreetly mobilized to use their bodies for reproduction.

We meet here a world in which the struggle for sheer physical survival became the organizing axis of existence and culture. Women were vegetatively confined and defined. Pregnancy, the suckling of infants, and scrounging for food dominated their brief life. Activity beyond sheer vegetative concerns, if it occurred at all, was narrowly confined, and limited to men of means and leisure. Under such conditions, marriage, freely covenanted by equal partners, appears to have been a highly improbable achievement. Socially, marriage was primarily a means of inter-group exchange and linkage; biologically, the means of securing offspring.

Conditions of scarcity and abundance, of course, have varied historically with time and place. For the ancient world, the emergence of the Greek *polis*, doubtless represented an advance. The *polis* posited a "public" sphere of "freedom" opposite the "private" world of "necessity." The seeds of what we call modernization were planted thereby. Yet to modern eyes, the Greek achievement was profoundly flawed. Only men of means and leisure were admitted to the *polis* and to the new identity which it bestowed. Women, slaves (and children), excluded from this new domain, possessed only what was their own as organism (Greek *idion*, whence our English "idiot") (Jaeger). Our term, "private," is a Latin derivative (*privatus*) meaning "apart from the state" (Webster). To be deprived is to be denied a political identity. Only political man was free. To be unfree was to be confined to the vegetative level of existence.

From their new pedestal in the *polis*, Greek thinkers concluded that the above inequalities were grounded in nature. Love and friendship, they inferred, are relationships between equals. Women, destined by nature for the vegetative domain, were spiritually less endowed than men, hence unsuited for real friendship with them. Thus, if on one plane, the rise of the *polis* marked a new stage of human freedom, its near-term (actually centuries-long) consequence was to increase the burden of unfreedom for the excluded majority. Women were thus not only excluded from the new freedom of the *polis*, but were further enchained by the newly-expanded powers of a privileged minority.

The consequences of material hardship, culturally interpreted and perpetuated, have been devastating and long lasting. They not only determined the fate of women, but of human sexuality and gender as well. With women denied their full humanity, sexuality was likewise distorted. Demosthenes

(384-322 BCE), the famous Athenian statesman, could write matter-of-factly: “We have mistresses for our enjoyment, concubines to serve our person, and wives for bearing legitimate offspring” (Brundage, 13). Marriage, devoid of a deeper interpersonal meaning, was simply a means to secure one’s offspring and estate. Companionship and sexual pleasure were sought elsewhere. In this extremity, women became chattel, on the one hand, and playthings on the other, in both cases, objects rather than humans. The echoes of that distant past, doubtlessly reinforced by historical experiences of other intervening times and places, still resound today.

Until the modern era, then, both marriage and family were thwarted and distorted by their having to carry the burden of society. Biological and economic imperatives preempted the humanizing and person-nurturing *telos* of the conjugal union and family. As material conditions improved, the lot of women and the quality of marriage were slowly tempered. Nonetheless, residues of the above distortions survive in our culture today. Whatever the role of male chauvinism in the perpetuation of sexism in our time, it is not the root cause of gender-based inequities.

Growing Society, Shrinking Family

Societies--social configurations that stand astride the consanguineal bands that originated with our species--emerged erratically over the centuries and millennia. To speak now of the “Western” world, kinship remained the principal cohesive, at least for the non-urban majority population, until the end of the Middle Ages. Nonetheless crafts and trade were evolving, preparing the way, as it were, for the industrial and political revolutions of the late eighteenth century and the “modernization” that followed. The impact of those revolutions on society and consciousness, as we know, was in many instances traumatic. Scholars scrambled to dissect and to interpret developments and events. The birth of the modern social sciences was one outcome. Writers such as Burke, Marx, Toennies, Durkheim, and Weber variously identified the distinctions between “traditional” and “modern” societies. Attitudes toward modernization, as these transformations eventually came to be called, often were ambivalent. While some scholars heralded the coming of a new day, others deplored the passing of the medieval order or called for its restoration.

Already in 1861, Henry Sumner Maine, a legal historian, identified “the gradual dissolution of family dependency and the growth of individual obligation in its place,” as the critical change that was under way. “The Individual,” he continued, “is steadily substituted for the Family, as the unit of which civil laws take account.” The basis for social placement and organization shifts “*from status to contract*,” from *ascription* by the accidents of birth to personal *achievement*. Correspondingly, marriages came to be contracted by individuals rather than arranged by their families. Thereby the traditional dominance of consanguinity over conjuality in families was increasingly reversed. Families, as distinct from wider kin networks, began and ended with the conjugal union. The modern “nuclear family” emerged.

With modernization, at varying stages, now a world-wide phenomenon, the tendency toward the “nuclear family” pattern has likewise become world-wide (Goode, Popenoe).

Among the aforementioned nineteenth century scholars, some were dismayed at this tilt toward conjugality. Consanguineal systems, popularly described as “extended families,” were seen as providing stability across generations, a stability that conjugally-based, “nuclear families” could not match. In consanguineal systems, the conjugal pair and their offspring are enmeshed in a wider network of supporting kin. Standing alone, a nuclear family survives only till the death or defection of a spouse.

The conjugal tilt, it was argued, endangered not only the family itself, but society as well. The family had always been viewed as the foundation of society. It not only met the procreative needs of society, as a primordially-given social entity, it also served as the building block in the formation of larger social configurations. If the conjugal union was to replace the blood tie as the axis of the primary family unit, primordially as such would be at risk. The family would dissolve into the world of contract which had been seen as dependent on familial primordially in the first place.

The Nuclear Family: the End of an Era?

During the 1950s, Talcott Parsons, then perhaps the most widely known American sociologist, rendered an account of modern industrially-based society and of the “nuclear family” as adaptive within it. “Structurally isolated” from its wider kinship, a family based on the conjugal pair possesses the flexibility and mobility, he argued, that an industrial society requires. Familial primordially survives in the form of the nuclear family household. The role of the husband he regarded as primarily “instrumental,” that of the wife, “expressive.” The husband as sole breadwinner was to provide the necessary links of the family and its members into the society, polity, and economy. Because he alone had to participate in the societal struggle, the family was to be shielded internally from the competitive contractual ferment of society.

Meanwhile, Parsons further observed, this mode of family articulation with society entailed an internal transformation of the family. With the family ceding certain functions to society, it in turn became more specialized internally. Its focus now became the nurture of persons rather than the perpetuation of the lineage; specifically, the socialization of the young and the personal stabilization of adults. To spell out these nurturing processes within the nuclear family system, Parsons drew heavily on Freud and later versions of psychiatry.

Parsons’ family thesis was criticized at once, initially on the ground that kinship beyond the nuclear family continued to play an important role (which, incidentally, Parsons did not deny). It was also argued that the reduction of the family group to the conjugal household meant a psychological overload, leading to family breakdown. Later, and more seriously, social developments

overtook the equilibrium between family and society which he believed had been achieved at mid-century. The gender-based division of labor--the husband is the "instrumental" bread-winner teamed with the "expressive" homemaker wife--rapidly became obsolete as women moved into work and career, increasingly claiming a rightful place in society.

Perhaps the most serious challenge to the nuclear family paradigm comes from the individualism of which that paradigm is a correlate. Already Henry Sumner Maine, as we saw, underscored the shift from family to the individual as the basic unit in society. Individuals are thus poised to *achieve* their own identity and fate in the society, independent of their family of birth, where traditionally identity and fate had been *family-ascribed*. Similarly, however, self-realization and self-fulfillment increasingly take priority over marital covenant. Marriage is reduced to mere contract, subject to dissolution, once its "costs" exceed its "rewards." This diminution is closely linked to the wider sexual revolution in the society. Sex acts between consenting adults are deemed "private," that is, effectively as amoral. The removal of this primal human experience from the moral code clearly strikes at the very foundation of morality in society.

Parsons had maintained (p. 151) that marriage in our (American) society "is an achieved status, but once entered into, it constitutes an ascriptive base for subsequent action." Similarly Robert Bellah describes marriage as "a contract into a non-contractual relationship" (personal correspondence). As both citations suggest, marriage is a uniquely ambiguous and paradoxical relationship in that it possesses both contractual and "primordial" qualities. Given the above changes in the ethos, it is losing its covenantal character. Insofar as that is the case, it can no longer play its familial role.

THE COLEMAN CHIMERA

Meanwhile, at least in (USA)-American society, families continue to shrink, with society expected, or presuming, to pick up the slack. Thus where pessimists might well argue that history is confirming their worst fears, optimists might well celebrate--procreation by means more rational than "the family" are aborning! Either way, the case for the triumph of society over family was recently spelled out by James S. Coleman in his 1992 presidential address before the American Sociological Society. Armed with data-based charts, Coleman sketched the trajectory of modernization across recent centuries, reaching a conclusion that the UN project might well cite in support of "the international year of the child."

Coleman foresees, by the twenty-first century, the completion of a daytime "evacuation of the household," which he describes as "a primordial institution with diffuse and multiple functions," into "narrow-purpose constructed organizations, the workplace and the school." Whereas in the past, the bearing and rearing of children was rewarding, today the costs of parenting outweigh the rewards. As a result, children are at risk, increasingly without family care. Accordingly, the primary interest in the well-being of

the child now falls on the state. To illustrate how this responsibility might be discharged, he suggests a possible scheme of child-care incentives whereby the state would provide “bounties on children.” Motherly care for an infant might thus be secured against the mounting uncertainties of parental and familial care.

Implicit in this arrangement (which I shall call “the Coleman *chimera*,” no disrespect intended) are two highly debatable assumptions. First is the view that nature presents us with a *tabula rasa*; that is, social arrangements are mere social contrivances, infinitely variable. Human aggregates are simply self-organizing, if not rationally, then irrationally. Second, and accordingly, the family is viewed as a replaceable reproductive device. In long-term historical terms, the family can be viewed, in effect, as a provisional means for securing offspring, serving until humans devise a more adequate solution. Arguments to the contrary, whether cast in religious, philosophic, or moral terms, have no standing in positivist scientific discourse.

Coleman’s characterization of the family as “primordial,” hence as “given,” as simply there from the outset, skirts the boundary between social science and morality or metaphysics, and illustrates as well the limits of the reductionist methods of sciences when applied to social phenomena. Despite advancing sophistication in interactive multivariate analysis, “primordial” formations, indeed social “wholes” of any sort, are difficult to manage as “variables.” In any case, social science appears stymied by the moral assessment that social configuration at whatever level entails.

In an unrelated, equally recent study, James Q. Wilson addresses the problem of primordality and morality in a creative manner. Without awaiting a solution of boundary problems between science and philosophy, Wilson, in a trail-blazing work, returns us to the world of daily life. There, he reminds us, “we are bound together both by mutual interdependence and a common moral sense.” Hence we will “get a lot further in understanding how we live as a species,” he maintains, “if we recognize” that fact. By moral sense he means “an intuitive or directly felt belief about how one ought to act when one is free to act voluntarily,” with “ought” defined as “an obligation binding on all people similarly situated” (xii). That “sense is formed out of the interaction of their innate dispositions with their earliest familial experiences” (2), or if one prefers, the interaction of “nature” and “culture.” Thus, however pliable, the moral sensibility is a “given” in human reality. As Wilson notes, his argument is reminiscent of Durkheim’s discovery of the importance of the “non-contractual element in the contract.” Only on the ground of pre-existing realities is contractual negotiation possible.

Viewed in these terms, Coleman’s prediction, though analytically conceivable, becomes highly dubious. In given instances, of course, children have been reared successfully, apart from their birth mothers. It can be done. But the state as nanny to replace the birth parents appears truly chimeric. Yet in the United States we may already have drifted further in that direction than we realize. Critics argue that various public policies, even though designed to meet needs of individual, in fact facilitate single parenting, and by so much

weaken the family ethos. In setting the logic and the force of developments before us, Coleman has sounded to us all, whether parents, professionals, or citizens, a signal warning. Clearly, neither rhetoric about “family values” nor public agency gimmickry will reverse trends that he effectively outlined. But is there a viable alternative? To conclude, I turn once more to the “nuclear family” paradigm.

“LEAVING” AND “CLINGING” IN AN ANCIENT MYTH

A look at a classic myth at this point can be helpful, namely the “rib story,” the second of two creation myths in the Hebrew scriptures (Genesis 2:18-25; cf. also Plato’s myth). Like many other ancient peoples, the Hebrews resorted to myth to account for mystery at the boundaries of human existence. The narrator in this instance recounts one such myth to decipher sexual dimorphism in the human enterprise. First a solitary, sexually-undifferentiated individual appears on the scene. Alone, however, that individual is incomplete. So the Creator constructs a second being, not *de novo*, but rather from the rib of the first being. The result is a sexually-differentiated and paired unity, equally human yet complementarily differentiated. Following this brief sketch, the narrator supplies an interpretation of the myth: “Therefore a man leaves his father and this mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” Much later, another phrase is added: “What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:9).

Obviously we cannot here deal with the larger religious frame in which the story appears, nor with the diversity of family phenomena reported elsewhere in the Hebrew scriptures. The scope here is far more limited. I suggest instead that we reflect inductively on the intent of the story as outlined by the narrator and on the logic of its setting. The procedure is similar to the James Q. Wilson’s treatment, cited above, of the workaday world. So we ask: What is the logic and setting of the myth, according to the narrator?

The context is cosmological. Following a summary reference to the creation of world, the appearance of the human receives special note. Bare essentials, both cosmological and human, have been sketched, climaxing in the “rib story.” The “leaving” and “cleaving” formula, whereby the narrator interprets the myth, assumes both primordial and prototypical significance--the tie to father and mother is primordial, given in nature; the tie to the spouse is prototypical, the beginning of responsible freedom, of action beyond natural determinism. The natural *unwilled* bond of child to parent is transcended by the chosen *willed* relationship of spouse to spouse. Since male and female, standing alone, are incomplete, the resulting union possesses “ontological” quality. Each partner is completed in the other. That being the case, the bond is soluble only by death. This fact is recognized by a phrase in traditional marriage vows, now increasingly regarded in American usage as quaint, “till death do us part.”

Here we reach the critical juncture in our discussion. In this elementary account of the conjugal union, there is no reference to procreation, or in the

vernacular, to “baby-making.” Given the historical context, that absence is striking, even startling. This fragment of the Genesis text is commonly dated at about 1000 BCE, a time when kinship in its various forms was still the dominant social cohesive. Procreative exigencies still dominated the conjugal ethos. Marriage was legitimated by its procreative outcome. Remarkably enough, the logic of this text flows in the opposite direction. Pair-bonding is to be cherished and respected for its own sake, prior to, and apart from, the issue of offspring. The focus is on the humanizing import of the conjugal union in its own right. Offspring is an effluent of the conjugal mystery rather than its essential *raison d’être*.

The consequence of this claim, of this reversal of priority, is colossal. Contrary to the traditional preoccupation with the “blood tie,” with biological descent, the “leaving” and “cleaving” dialectic in human development defines “the family.” The spousal covenant, an agreement between strangers, supplants the bonds of nature, of biological descent. The vocation of parenthood is the eventual emancipation of the child from bondage to the necessities of nature-grounded kinship in preparation for personal participation in the world of responsible freedom. That long, often arduous process, is captured succinctly in the “leaving and cleaving” formula.

But there is more. The human species is introduced by this myth in a general cosmology. Inevitably the question arises: Why is there no further elaboration on the sociopolitical fate of the species, no further instruction regarding human aggregation? Here we can only infer--and speculate. For example, are we to view the “leaving” and “cleaving” process as society in embryo? Can it be that this process, figuratively speaking, becomes the social protoplasm from which other, more complex social forms are subsequently fashioned?

A glance at the effect of divorce on the children of such marriages is suggestive at this point. Numerous studies in the USA in recent years underscore the long term, even life-long, effects of parental divorce on children. Beyond the direct problems that are likely to result--disruption of family life, financial difficulties, loss of contact with one or the other parent and the like--such persons experience difficulties in establishing intimate and trusting relations. Eventually, when they marry, their rate of divorce is disproportionately high (see, e.g., Beal).

Why should this be? Particulars, of course, vary from case to case. If humanization of the human animal is the vocation of the family, first in the fulfillment of the spousal pair, and thereby in the socialization of the young, then divorce strikes at the very foundation of human existence. It is in the conjugal dialogue of the parents that the child is inducted into the covenanting processes whereby society continuously creates and recreates itself. When the parental dialogue fails, the child’s induction into the covenantal world aborts.

Historically, when societies and polities collapsed, kinship has taken up the slack, picked up the pieces. Such, for example, was the rise of feudalism in Europe, following the fifth century collapse of the Roman empire. It would

be presumptuous to predict the fate of modern (and “post-modern?”) societies. Nonetheless it is instructive, at least in the American instance, to observe a certain resurgence of kinship-dependency, in the face of the sharp increase of births to single mothers (roughly 25 percent of all births) and of broken marriages (nearly one out of two). With grandmothers or other next of kin “filling in,” remnants of the “extended family” are being resurrected (or the state as nanny in the Coleman *chimera*). Correspondingly, as indicated at the outset of this paper, conjuality is rapidly disappearing from discourse about family related problems.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have moved rapidly across a vast and difficult terrain. The basic reasoning, however, is relatively simple and clear. Both pair-bonding and the “blood tie,” I argue, must be taken as given, as primordially grounded in the human condition. The inherent logic of this duality, especially when viewed historically, entails the generic priority of the marital tie over the blood tie in the constitution of “the family.” Survival exigencies throughout most of human history have led to a reversal of that order in practice, and hence in culture. The conjugal union became subordinate to consanguinity. The social transformations we describe as modernization both permit and presuppose the redressing of that imbalance. For the most part, however, the conjugal ethos has not been equal to the task that modernity thrusts upon it; first, because of the cultural legacy of blood tie primacy and the resultant conjugal frailty; and second, because the individualism, to which the rise of the nuclear family is linked, has been oriented more to freedom from social constraint than to the responsibility that freedom entails.

The task we thus face is awesome in depth, scope, and complexity. Today’s “open” societies are awash in sensual titillation. The elevation of the conjugal union in the manner here implied may seem as phantasmagoric as what I have called the Coleman “chimera.” At this point the task is one of clarification. What is the relation between the primordially given, and the rationally constructed, configurations in human aggregation? Our humanity arises at the interface of natural and the moral orders, prototypically in the conjugal experience. Confusion at that point reverberates throughout the entire human enterprise.

Governments and public agencies have their tasks, and their efforts will continue. Basically, however, they are dependent on pre-governmental energies. Genuine renewal must come from below, from the ferment of what we today call “civil society”--from families, educators, faith communities, and other associations. As scholars and scientists we must assume the moral responsibilities that we all too often have mistakenly viewed as incompatible with scientific objectivity. Meanwhile we can expect debate between the Colemans and the Wilsons to continue. That debate, carried forward responsibly, can rescue us all from both fatalism and futility.

*This paper was written in the early 1990s for a publication in Moscow that never materialized.

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PART III

**CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGION IN
THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS**

Chapter XII

Constantinian Christendom and the Marx Engels Phenomenon*

Constantinian Christendom must be regarded as a necessary condition in any attempt to account for the Marx-Engels phenomenon. This claim is here presented as a hypothesis still to be tested. This paper will state the hypothesis, indicate its significance, and discuss in an introductory way the evidence bearing upon it. The development of a formal methodology for a test must be left to another occasion. The term "Marx-Engels phenomenon" refers here to the corpus of revolutionary thought which is the joint lifework of Karl Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95), to the exclusion of subsequent developments. What accounts for the appearance and development of these two men is the larger question to which our hypothesis contributes. "Constantinian Christendom," on the other hand, is a summary concept referring to a paradigmatic institutional formation, a millennium and a half in the making, namely, a particular fusion of political and religious reality in historic Christianity.

Outwardly, forms vary over time and space. At the core, Constantinian Christendom represents a synthesis in which religion provides sacred legitimation for the secular order, and the polity secures monopoly and protection for the religious institution. The occasion for connecting the two phenomena, Marx-Engels and Constantinian Christendom, is twofold. First, there is abundant evidence that the two revolutionary thinkers recognized Constantinianism as a particular problem within their larger critique of Christianity and of religion in general. Second, it is equally evident that the Constantinian question, though largely buried, remains a critical, if not indeed *the* critical, variable in the contemporary search for solutions to the religious problem in Marxist lands and movements. Though the second problem is beyond the scope of this paper, it clearly contributes urgency to the inquiry here proposed.

So much has been written on Marxism and religion that additional efforts may seem superfluous. Admittedly, the writer cannot claim familiarity with that vast literature. But certainly in the debates which most frequently surface one senses little awareness, whether the protagonists are Marxist or non-Marxist, that the Constantinian legacy is a problem to be addressed. No doubt that is due in part to the division of labor; scholars who know Marx are unlikely to be aware of the Constantinian problem, and vice versa. More seriously, on the religious side, the Constantinian dream of a "Christian" civilization still casts a long shadow. As recently as 1935 a new journal could still be founded, bearing the name *Christendom*, which presented itself in the initial editorial as an expression of the new creative era in world culture into which, despite powerful counter currents, the broad stream of human

life is moving. It believes that art and science and all social institutions are undergoing radical reorientation, and that the Christian Church is on the point of coming alive once more to the supreme responsibility of Christianity in civilization. And the goal of civilization can be nothing less than literally, a Christendom.¹

In the United States, of course, since independence, "religion" has been formally disestablished. Moreover, numerous Christian movements and groups have emerged here which are not tied directly to the major continental Christendom traditions. Even so, the modern concept of the separation of church and state owes more to the Enlightenment than to authentic theological renewal. The older traditions--Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Orthodox--long clung to Constantinian vestiges, and the newer movements uncritically assimilate much of the prevalent ethos. Though religious scholarship has meanwhile grown more critical, the churches have as yet to address the deeper issues. In a word, there is little on the Christian side to encourage engagement with the Christendom factor in the rise of the Marx-Engels phenomenon.

Turning now to our principal task, we can readily identify three categories of material, and thus three levels of inquiry, which bear on our hypothesis: *biographical*, *intellectual* and *elaborative* components. Here the materials for the first pertain primarily to Marx; for the last, primarily to Engels; and only for the second, to both.

CHRISTENDOM AND THE MARX FAMILY

Apart from Rome it would have been hard to find a birthplace more prototypically symbolic of Constantinian Christendom than Trier, where Marx was born on May 5, 1818. The city of Trier had been founded in the wake of Julius Caesar's conquest of Gaul. At one time or another, eventually half a dozen Roman emperors, including Constantine himself, had their seat in Trier. Today various remnants of the Roman era remain, including the *Porta Nigra* and an amphitheater. On Constantine Square stands a basilica thought to date from the reign of Constantine the Great. For centuries Trier was the seat of archbishops, some of whom came to exercise temporal power as well. Trier also boasts holding the "Holy Coat," ostensibly the seamless robe of Christ, presented to the city by Constantine's mother, Helena.

On the surface it may have appeared that this "Christian" environment "took." Marx was baptized at the age of five, later confirmed, and wrote a rather impressive essay on John 6 as one of the papers required for the *Abitur*. Moreover, since his father had been baptized a year before his birth, Marx even qualified as a second-generation Christian.² Nonetheless, in the minds of most of his contemporaries--and of ours too, for that matter--Marx was viewed as a Jew, and on this fact hangs our tale. Marx's grandfather, a rabbi, had immigrated to Trier from Bohemia. His grandmother's family, from the Lvw (Lemberg) family, had immigrated from Poland. Marx's own mother, Henrietta Pressburg, came from Holland, where her family were recent

immigrants from Hungary. Several of these family trees are traceable at least to the sixteenth century. Consistently over these several centuries the oldest sons became rabbis. Karl was a second son, but his older brother died at three and a half years, leaving him in line for the rabbinical calling.

The post-Napoleonic era for German Jews was particularly difficult. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 had “marked the end of the cultural and intellectual exchange of medieval Judaism and Christianity.”²³ Upon this followed three centuries of dispersion and defensive action for survival among European Jews until emancipation began in the modern context. The checkered career of emancipation brought a new crisis, as nineteenth century Jews struggled with problems of assimilation and identity. From 1812 to 1846, about 4,000 Jews in Prussian lands accepted baptism.

While it lasted, Napoleonic rule in the Rhineland had liberalized the climate. The French Enlightenment in any case had a strong appeal among intellectuals in the German states, which, compared to revolutionary France, remained archly conservative. Heschel Marx, Karl’s father, was an attorney employed by the state. With the end of the Napoleonic era, however, the Trier region, though geographically remote, came under Prussian control. Along with the Austrian and Russian emperors, the Prussian monarch, Friedrich Wilhelm III, was a founder of the “Holy Alliance,” established after the Congress of Vienna of 1815. Accordingly, the notion of a “Christian state” was now enforced with new vigor.

Meanwhile, with Prussian rule established in Trier, the military chaplain, Muhlenhoff, established a civilian Protestant congregation in this deeply Catholic city, a congregation composed chiefly, however, of the several hundred Prussian bureaucrats newly installed in the region. The elder Marx had identified with the ideals of the French Enlightenment and was not, in fact, a practicing Jew. Somewhat incongruously, he also expressed Prussian patriotic sentiments, though on the other hand, as already indicated, Heschel Marx was among those Jews who, in any case, sought emancipation through a form of assimilation into German culture.

Prussian and other German laws, already in effect prior to the French incursion, forbade admission of Jews to the civil service, including also those in the teaching profession. In the areas coming under French rule during the Napoleonic era, as did the Trier region, these restrictions were abrogated. Accordingly, during the French era, Heschel Marx had established himself as a successful and apparently respected attorney in state employ. With the end of French control and the coming of restoration-bent Prussian rule, Heschel Marx, married in 1814 and then father of a young family, saw the handwriting on the wall. The solution was baptism, not as might be expected into the dominant Catholic community, but prudently enough, into the tiny Prussian Protestant community, which was still without a building. The baptism occurred in 1817, the year before Karl’s birth, and Heschel Marx on baptism, became Heinrich Marx. Meanwhile, Marx had written a fawning and, as we shall see, revealing letter to the Prussian king, appealing for the rescinding of

the anti-Jewish regulations. In any case, because the law permitted individual exceptions, he retained his post.

Eventually the Marxes had eight children, and, to secure their admission to the Gymnasium track in the school system, they were all baptized in 1824. The mother, Henrietta, apparently still reluctant, delayed her baptism until the following year. Correspondence preserved from her indicates not only that she did not fully learn German but also that she may not have been a strongly endowed woman.⁴ Reluctance, however, was justifiable in any case, given the consequences of conversion in the Jewish family system and the Jewish community generally.

The year 1830 was marked by new revolutionary turmoil in western Europe, and, in the wake of this, an episode occurred in the club of liberals to which Heinrich Marx belonged. On a festive occasion the members joined in singing revolutionary songs, including the "Marseillaise." The event was politically scandalous, and a state investigation followed. Heinrich Marx was involved, as was the director of Karl's Gymnasium. In the end both men survived, but the latter was humiliated by the appointment of an arch-conservative co-director to serve with him.

Meanwhile, throughout these years, anti-Semitism was rampant in Trier as well as in other German cities. Times were hard. A General Staff report in 1817 said distress in the Trier region was "unbelievable--for four weeks no bread and only frozen potatoes left in the ground after the harvest." Scapegoating for these hardships contributed to the anti-Semitism. During this period anti-Semitic demonstrations broke out periodically in a number of cities. Simon Dubnow in his *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes* observes that "Christianity and *Judenhass* had virtually become synonymous terms."⁵

Kunzli asserts that during his Gymnasium years (he finished in 1835) Karl developed no close friendships. Most of the students came from limited backgrounds. Whereas Karl finished at 17, most others required several additional years. Even so, nearly half of them failed. Furthermore, it was commonly observed throughout his school years that Karl's appearance and demeanor bespoke his origin.⁶ Imagine a Protestant-baptized Jewish intellectual in a proto-Catholic school of non-intellectuals in an anti-Semitic society--hardly a setting for a "well-adjusted," most popular high school valedictorian!

But Kunzli, who writes a "psychography" of Marx, points to a further difficulty. Already Heinrich, Karl's father, was an alienated man, to use one of Karl's later devastating concepts. Obviously his adopted spiritual identities--Enlightenment humanism and Prussian patriotism--clashed not only reciprocally but also with his native Jewishness. His attempt to cope produced, or more likely revealed, a weakness in his character. The baptism resulted in at least a partial break with his family, his brother Samuel being the chief rabbi in Trier. Jewish writers like Werner Sombart and Isaiah Berlin see him as weak and vacillating. The latter, referring to the above club affair, observes that "the cowardly and servile conduct of his father made a negative impression on Karl, then sixteen years of age, leaving behind a smoldering

resentment.”⁷ Kunzli, citing Isaiah Berlin, observed, “There is hardly any doubt that Karl Marx was possessed, *inter al.*, though largely unconsciously, with a deep contempt for his father, perhaps even to the point of some elements of hatred.”⁸ This judgment is based not only on the general setting here briefly described, but also on specific records which include Karl’s writings and conversations with his sisters. “Self-hatred” phenomena of this sort have, of course, been more widely reported among Jews and other stigmatized groups.

To summarize, the young Karl Marx was a sensitive and intellectually gifted youth, on whom descended “an almost crushing legacy of centuries-long, intensively-lived Jewish piety and Jewish intellectual culture and learning.”⁹ But equally unbearable were the social and political antinomies in his environment. With the father partly twisted by the experience, the son’s lot was even more perplexing. Surely young Karl poses a challenge to the behavioral sciences! Obviously the making of Karl Marx, the graduating student, was a complex process, and any reductionist, single-factor explanation of his personality should arouse skepticism. That said, the hypothesis must still be hazarded *and* tested:-that Constantinian Christendom, together in its Meuse Valley Roman Catholic and in its Prussian Protestant forms, must be regarded as a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for the development of the young Marx into a revolutionary intellectual.

MARX’S INTELLECTUAL ODYSSEY

The same incongruities of Constantinian Christendom that molded the young Marx also shaped his intellectual development once he entered the university and his search for a career had begun. More important, the fierce energy generated in his adolescent anguish poured intensely into his subsequent intellectual quest. Passing his school-leaving examinations in late summer 1835 he entered Bonn University that fall to study law. By the next autumn he transferred to Berlin. His beginnings were typical--debts, a one-night sentence for a drunken brawl, poetry writing, and a secret engagement to his childhood sweetheart, Jenny von Westphalen, the (non-Jewish) daughter of a privy councillor in the Prussian government.

Correspondence between Karl and his father during these years sheds important light on their relations. Naturally the father was concerned when he had to pick up the tab for a reckless student’s debts. Marx senior was concerned, too, about the early engagement since Jenny was four years Karl’s senior. Assuming that Karl was not yet ready for marriage, the father thought the situation put her in an unfair position: “I repeat,’ he writes, ‘a man has no more sacred duty than that which he assumes in the interest of the weaker sex.’”¹⁰ Either that concern was effective--or unnecessary--since they eventually married and the marriage was strong and happy.

The post-Hegel ferment was at its height when Marx arrived in Berlin, Hegel having died in 1831. By the summer of 1837 he was attending lectures in philosophy and history as well as law. He had also joined the group

known as the *Doktorclub*, a group composed of recent graduates and young writers. There he became a friend of Bruno Bauer, who, before they parted ways intellectually, contributed significantly to Marx's emerging intellectual orientation.

As Marx and Engels eventually came to interpret Hegel, Hegel's enormous appeal provided an intellectual surrogate for the political and economic retardation of the Germanies between the Congress of Vienna and the Revolutions of 1848. Despite perhaps hidden revolutionary potential in Hegel's thought, his positing of the state, notably the Prussian state, as the highest embodiment of spirit, enabled him to hold court, as it were, in the highest post in academic philosophy in Berlin. At the same time, the French July Revolution of 1830 gave some impetus, however slight, to the critical forces already at work in Hegelian circles. Following the master's death it became the historical calling of the "Hegelian Left" to embody this criticism in philosophical reflection.¹¹

Marx, who had had thorough training in the classics and possessed a powerful mind, was well-qualified to participate in the fray. Soon after his arrival in Berlin he began to make jottings on metaphysics and began writing "a philosophical-dialectical analysis of the concept of *Gottheit* (divinity) manifested as religion, nature and history."¹² By 1839 he began work on his dissertation, which was eventually entitled "The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature," to which was appended a "Critique of the Plutarchean Polemic Against Epicurus' Theology." Only parts of the dissertation are extant. More important than these fragments are the notes he made in the preparation of this opus. These were analyzed in the early 1970s in a two-volume set of the Gifford Lectures by the eminent Dutch scholar, Arend T. van Leeuwen.¹³

Soon after Marx began work on his dissertation, his theologian friend, Bruno Bauer, transferred to Bonn, where he hoped Marx would join him to assume a post in philosophy. But Bauer's thought meanwhile had taken a critical turn, first in the publication of a *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte des Johannes* (1840), and then followed over the next two years by three volumes on the synoptics. The Gospels, Bauer sought to show, are fabrications without historical foundation. By the time Marx finished (1841), Bauer had lost his position because of his views, and Marx stood no chance of an appointment. In fact, his own situation in Berlin had become so precarious, that in order to get out of the heat he submitted his dissertation to and received his degree (in absentia) from the provincial university of Jena. But with this Marx's hope for an academic career was shattered. He turned to journalism, the only profession he was ever to engage in. Once more he had experienced the benignity of the "Christian" state!

But 1841 was to be a decisive year for Marx in another way. It was the year that Feuerbach published *The Essence of Christianity*. This book set Marx on the road that rapidly led to the "inversion" of Hegel. Feuerbach's message is familiar. "Theology is anthropology, that is in the object of religion which we call *Theos* in Greek and *Gott* in German, nothing but the essence of

man is expressed.”¹⁴ God did not create man, but man created god. On some readers the effect of this book was electrifying. More than forty years later Engels was to reminisce that in one blow Feuerbach had placed materialism back on the throne. ...the spell was broken. One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get a real idea of it. The enthusiasm was universal. We were all for the moment Feuerbachians. With what enthusiasm Marx greeted the new conception, and how much he was influenced by it--despite all critical misgivings--one may read in *The Holy Family*.¹⁵

At any rate, Marx's writings soon echoed Feuerbach. His critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1843) asserted that “man makes religion; religion does not make man. ...Religion is only the illusory sun about which man revolves as long as he does not revolve about himself.”¹⁶ Marx soon observed that Feuerbach stopped too soon. In the sixth “thesis” on Feuerbach, he wrote (1845): “Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. ..[but] does not enter into a critique of this real essence.” By then, with Engels' help, Marx had supplied that critique, with the result that we shall note in a moment.

This fragmentary sketch aims only to provide a framework within which we can look briefly at the Christendom factor in Marx's intellectual development, to which we now turn. Here the best documents doubtless are Marx's discussion of Bruno Bauer's *Die Judenfrage* and *Die Fahigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen frei zu werden*, both published in 1843. Bauer, we noted above, had been a friend of Marx in Berlin, and Marx embraced his critique of the gospels. Later in *The Holy Family* (1845), Marx and Engels turned satirically on Bauer and other “Young Hegelians.” Here we are interested only in Marx's view on religion, particularly on the “Christian state,” as it emerges in his discussion of Bauer's two essays.

“The German Jews seek emancipation. What kind of emancipation do they want?” Marx began. Bauer looked to the French precedent for a solution. Church and state should become separate, as should religious adherence and citizenship. Marx concedes that such a solution, though not yet fully realized in France, represents an improvement. The best example of this solution, he points out, is to be found in the North American states. But Marx's own solution is radical rather than reformist. Bauer, he holds, ends in contradiction.¹⁷

Marx first criticizes the Jewish demand for emancipation. Here he accepts Bauer's argument as far as it goes. Since in Germany no one is free, the argument goes, the Jews in effect are asking for special treatment. Thus where they should be interested in human emancipation for all, theirs is an egoistic request. “Or do the Jews want to be placed on a footing of equality with the Christian subjects?” And if so, are they not acknowledging the “Christian state?” “Why should their particular yoke be irksome when they accept the general yoke? Why should the German be interested in the liberation of the Jew, if the Jew is not interested in the liberation of the German? ...In demanding his emancipation from the Christian state he asks the Christian state to abandon its religious prejudice. But does he, the Jew, give up his religious prejudice?”¹⁸

But a further question must be asked: “What kind of emancipation is involved?” That question takes us beyond the “Christian state” to a critique of the “state as such.” Religion is “a defect,” Marx declares, and if religiosity persists after the state becomes “secular,” which is the case in North America, “the source of this defect must be sought in the *nature* of the state itself. The question of the relation between political emancipation and religion becomes for us a question of the relation between political emancipation and human emancipation.”¹⁹ That is, “a state may be a free state without man himself being a *free* man.”

When the state abolishes distinctions of birth, of rank, or property or religion with reference to citizenship it does not eliminate or dissolve these elements, indeed, it presupposes their persistence. But that precisely is the problem. To solve it, Marx fuses categories borrowed from Hegel and Feuerbach, namely, “universality” and “species life.” “The perfected political state,” he proposes, “is, by its nature, the *species-life* of man as *opposed* to his material life.” The latter is manifest in “*civil* society,” the former in the state. “Civil society” represents the vitalities of “differentiation,” when men are in their particularity; “species-being” is the embodiment of “community.” But it is precisely in the latter, in community, that our humanity consists. “The human essence is not an abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations,” Marx was to write two years later in his long unpublished “Theses on Feuerbach.”²⁰ The real task, he continues in the Bauer discussion, is to overcome the dichotomy between civil society and the state, “The members of the political state are religious because of the dualism between individual life and species life, between the life of civil society and political life.”²¹ Religion is not an autonomous phenomenon, or in effect, a reality *sui generis*. It subsists only secondarily by virtue of deeper defects in the human world.

Later that year or early the following (1844) Marx wrote, “For Germany, the criticism of religion has been essentially completed, and the criticism of religion is the presupposition of all criticism.”²² Clearly, to this point in his intellectual development, philosophy as theology and theology as philosophy dominate his interest, or rather they represent the intellectual plane on which Marx is seeking to solve the human problems that stir him. By the time he completed his doctorate (1841) he had become an atheist. And this view, as is clear from his dissertation, was profoundly philosophic and not merely a rejection of a conventional deity.

The conclusion is inescapable: Marx’s existential plight--the prudential if not compulsory “conversion” of his Jewish family under an ostensible “Christian state” and all the pain and human ambiguities which this complex situation entailed once he embarked on a university career--quickly crystallized into his principal intellectual agenda. As if to add insult to injury, once he had completed his training and was ready for profession and marriage, the “Christian state” once more fell athwart his path. Seen from the standpoint of the finished Marx-Engels corpus, this final crisis was critical. It drove Marx to the root of the matter--religion as such. The economic question--private

property, class and class conflict, and the proletariat--was yet to come. In the discussion of Bauer's treatment of the Jewish question, private property is noted, but as yet rather peripherally. Marx incorporated Bauer and Feuerbach, and it takes only the encounter with Engels, who brings a first hand experience with the plight of the worker in the industrial revolution, for the "scientific" theory to emerge.

The Holy Family (1845), the first joint effort of the new team, was a settling of the account with the Young Hegelians with whose way the pair parted. While some of the above criticism of Bauer is carried forward in *The Holy Family*, the essay on Bauer ended Marx's discussion of religion. By 1851 he told Engels that he found religion to be "a boring theme."²³ Once he believed that he had penetrated to the root of the problem, it could be dropped. Occasionally thereafter, as a journalist he reported on as many current religious issues and events as on any other public topic. Or he might refer to a Biblical text as an illustration on a secular topic. But once he became convinced that religion is only a symptom of a deeper problem, his energy went into the solution of the latter.

ENGELS THE ELABORATOR

The intellectual partnership of Marx and Engels was by all accounts a rare achievement. Adherents of Marxism, of course, see in it a token of their genius and of the geniality of their conceptions. Chronologically they belonged to the same generation--Engels was two years younger than Marx--and intellectually they became part of the same movements of thought and emotion. Their point of departure in family and education, however, was profoundly different. Even so, some similarities in alienation and rebellion emerged.

Friedrich Engels (1820-95) was one of eight children born to a prosperous Protestant Pietist family in Barmen, one of the rising industrial cities in the Wupper Valley. Young Friedrich had academic aspirations, but his father wanted him to join the family's textile business. A year before Friedrich completed the Gymnasium his father sent him to Bremen as a business apprentice, carefully arranging for him to live with the family of a Pietist pastor. Differences over the apprenticeship and over religious views had already led to friction, though this was hardly unusual.²⁴

Engels senior, however, had voiced concern over Friedrich's restlessness by the time he was fifteen. The Pietism of the time not only tended to rigorism, but was also exercised over the literal inspiration of the Bible. Given the developments in critical scholarship noted above, this, too, was hardly surprising. But as Engels' correspondence amply demonstrates, the father's stern inflexibility was self-defeating. Already as a teenager in Barmen, Friedrich took note of the contradiction between the plight of the industrial workers and the Pietism of the manufacturers.

Bremen broadened young Engels' experience and gave him access to a wider literary world. To a considerable extent he had internalized the faith of

his parents, and as letters to his friends attest,²⁵ a deep inner struggle ensued. But resolution came early. By the spring of 1839, before his nineteenth birthday, and under a pseudonym, Friedrich Engels published an article entitled “Briefe aus Wuppertal” in a Hamburg paper, *Telegraph für Deutschland*. The article pilloried the religious mysticism of the Wupper Valley and etched sharply the distress of the factory workers in the area.

The article generated a “frantic uproar,” though no one suspected the real author.²⁶ Already by that time he had become a “Straussian” (a follower of David Friedrich Strauss). A year’s military service permitted him to go to Berlin, where he gained access to the same intellectual circles that were stirring Marx, though the youths did not meet until later. By now, as Friedrich’s views began to surface, visits and stays at home became increasingly difficult. His letters are spiced with derogatory references to “der Alte.” Devotion between mother and son remained strong, however, and attachment to his siblings as well.

Despite these difficulties, Engels came to terms with his father’s business interests and for many years successfully managed the Manchester branch of the enterprise, providing thus not only for his own support but often for that of Marx as well. Lifelong direct contact with the plight of industrial workers in the crude early stages of the industrial revolution was the source of the Engels contribution to the Marx-Engels *corpus*.

Engels felt particularly indebted to Hegel, whom he had read avidly, and to Ludwig Borne (1786-1837), a one-time Frankfurt-am-Main police official, removed from office in an anti-Semitic purge, who became a revolutionary publicist and journalist. In addition to Strauss, he also read Ludwig Feuerbach and other writers. But if Engels provided the access to the world of the working man that Marx lacked, Marx provided the philosophical grasp which Engels, lacking a university training, did not have the opportunity to develop. Similarly, though Engels early threw off the Pietism on which he was reared, and while he became and remained atheistic, on the existential plane the Christendom problem was primarily Marx’s. Nonetheless each so fully assimilated the other’s deepest assessments and affirmations that remarkable identity of views emerged. However, Engels, who outlived Marx by a dozen years, developed a passion to expand the “historical materialism” which they shared into a general world view.

The German Ideology--which Marx and Engels produced jointly along with, and finished shortly after (1845-56), *The Holy Family*--constitutes the basic document outlining “scientific socialism.” But when the writers failed to come to agreement with the publisher, it was left “to the gnawing criticism of the mice,” as Marx was to write in 1859. Remarkably enough, this classic, intended primarily as self-clarification, did not see the light of day until it was published in Moscow in 1932. Even if both writers viewed it later as still “incomplete,” it is the fullest extant treatment by Marx of “the materialist conception of history”²⁷ In his preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx summarized the basic conception at which they arrived in the following (famous) paragraph:

The general result at which I arrived and which, once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies, can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the coexisting relations of production, or--what is but a legal expression for the same thing--with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.

Engels, rather than Marx, explicitly treated the Constantinian era, though at numerous points one senses that Marx is fully aware of the significance of that era in history. But Engels comes to the topic in his later elaboration of the edifice, and that by way of exploring the antecedents of the rise of the oppressed classes. That is, Engels addressed the fourth century for the same reason that he much earlier wrote *The Peasant Wars in Germany*.²⁸

For our limited purposes the opening paragraph of his little essay on primitive Christianity summarizes the essential:

The history of primitive Christianity provides some remarkable parallels to the modern workers' movement. Like the latter, Christianity was initially a movement of the oppressed. It appeared first as a religion of slaves and freedman, of the poor and those without legal rights, of the peoples subdued or uprooted by Rome. Both movements, Christianity and worker socialism, proclaim an imminent deliverance from bondage and misery. Christianity locates that deliverance in the life beyond death, in heaven; socialism, in the hither world, in a reconstitution of society. Both are persecuted and hounded, the adherents outlawed and placed under emergency sanctions. One is treated as enemy of the human race, the other as enemy of the empire, of religion, of family, and of the social order. And yet despite persecution, indeed furthered by it, both advance victoriously, inexorably. Three centuries after its origin Christianity has become the recognized state religion of the Roman world empire, while in scarcely sixty years socialism has already achieved a position which guarantees eventual victory.²⁹

In another context, in the year of his death (1895), Engels, taking note of the last great persecution of Christians and the vigorous Christian response to it at the turn of the beginning of the fourth century, observed that “within seventeen years the army consisted primarily of Christians, and the next autocratic ruler of the whole Roman empire, Constantine, named ‘the Great’ by the clerics, proclaimed Christianity as state religion.”³⁰ With that observation we pick up the critical new argument in Engels’ history of primitive Christianity. Having embraced Bauer’s interpretation of the Gospels, he regards Christianity as the “product” of the Graeco-Roman world, rather than an import, as the Gospels would have it. That point he had made, however, three years earlier in his own essay on Bauer. He is quite prepared to accept Bauer’s argument that religion rests on deliberate fraud, but only for the great “artificial” imperial religions. Even so, they would never succeed were it not for basic popular misery. “One can only solve the question by asking how it came that the masses of the Roman Empire preferred this nonsense (*Unsinn*), especially since it was preached by slaves and outcasts, to all the other religions, so much so that in the end the ambitious Constantine saw in the acceptance of this nonsensical religion, the best means to promote himself to the autocratic rule of the Roman world.”³¹

To resume the fascinating parallels which Engels drew between early Christianity and the Socialist workers’ movement, one wonders whether Engels today would be willing to pursue the analogy. Is the fate of both movements, once coming to power, likewise similar? As Christianity went from persecuted heterodoxy to persecuting “orthodoxy,” has “Marxism” in power undergone the same perversion? Here, of course, that can only be a vagrant thought!

CONCLUSION

In an explanatory scheme of the Marx-Engels phenomenon, Constantinian Christendom (a summary concept, needing specification) is a necessary condition. Three clusters of data are particularly relevant to this hypothesis: Marx’s childhood and youth, his intellectual career until *The German Ideology*, and Engels’ elaboration of the historical origin of Constantinianism. The purpose of this essay has been to outline and to document the hypothesis and thus to develop a case for its investigation. Obviously, hypotheses of this sort are difficult to prove or disprove, even once they are accepted. Certainly much additional material as well as other theories must be taken into account. If this sketch can stimulate both debate and further inquiry, its goal will have been met.

NOTES

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1 C. C. Morrison, Editorial, *Christendom: An Ecumenical Review* I, 1935.

2 For this and the following section see Arnold Kunzli, *Karl Marx: Psychographie* (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1966; Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of His Life* (New York, 1935); Saul Padover, ed. *Karl Marx on Religion*, McGraw Hill, 1974.

3 Arthur A. Cohen, *The Natural and Supernatural Jew* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1957).

4 Kunzli.

5 *Ibid.*, 67.

6 *Ibid.*, 68.

7 *Ibid.*, 46.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*, 43.

10 Maximilien Rubel & Margaret Monole, *Marx Without Myth* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975).

11 Arend T. van Leeuwen, *Critique of Heaven* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1972).

12 Rubel & Manole.

13 van Leeuwen, *Critique of Earth* (New York: Scribners, 1972).

14 Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York: Harper, 1957).

15 Saul Padover, ed., *Karl Marx: On Religion* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974).

16 Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*, 24f.

19 *Ibid.*, 29.

20 *Ibid.*, 109.

21 *Ibid.*, 37.

22 "Toward a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy. Introduction," in Tucker, 35.

23 Padover, xxv.

24 For this section, see Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engel: A Biography* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969; Heinrich Genkow, et al., *Friedrich Engel: A Biography* (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1972).

25 These letters are contained in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Werke: Ergaenzungsband II* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1967); see also Kate Schwank, *Zwischen Bureau u. Barrikade: Ein Leben in Briefe* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1970).

26 Genkow.

27 Tucker, 110.

28 Abraham Friesen, *Reformation und Utopie* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1974).

29 MEW, XXII, 449.

30 *Ibid.*, 527.

31 *Ibid.*, 298.

Chapter XIII

Personal Autonomy in the Radical Reformation Biblical Religion and (Post)modernity*

Our concern here is to explore the moral and religious dimensions of the human personality, a topic in the symposium series on the place of the person in modern societies. Morality and religion, as we well know, are highly complex and dynamic phenomena. The assumptions and concepts preliminary to our explorations could well engage all our time and energy, and the qualification, “in modern society,” vastly complicates the endeavor. For the modern achievement invites, perhaps compels, us to ask once more: Is the religious proclivity intrinsic, or merely accidental, in “human nature”?

The present paper, however, takes Christianity in particular, rather than religion in general, as its focus : Christianity viewed primordially as biblical faith. The reasons for this definition will emerge. Secondly, this paper addresses the interface between Christianity and modernity, here understood as “societal modernization” as it emerged in the Western experience. Thus the topic of this symposium, “the moral and religious dimensions of personality,” will be treated in the specific instance of Christianity and modernity in the West. In effect, the various ‘churches’ of “Christendom” will be questioned by “primordial biblical faith,”² on the one hand, and the pluralizing of human experience by modernity, on the other.

Christianity was a necessary though not a sufficient factor in the development of Western individualism. Thus for historical, as well as for intrinsic reasons, relationships between Christianity and modern individualism are burdened with ambiguities. Modernization, as we shall see, tends to “individualize” personality. Historically, a defining moment in the unfolding of Western individualism was the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation in the West. In the following pages I offer some reflections on the Reformation “prism” of Western individualism, and its bearing on the jeopardy of the self in “postmodern” society.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

It is useful at the outset to distinguish broadly the three elements comprising religion: its social and cultural forms; its personal, subjective intuitions; and finally the religious object (Deity or the ultimate). Analytically, thus sequenced, these elements might be ranked on a scale extending from the material and empirically observable to the Ineffable. Religious social forms as forms are observable like any other social behavior and subject to the “laws” that govern social life. Personal behavior, overtly expressed, is likewise observable, but intuitive prehensions are not. The Ultimate, the Holy, the Divine is ineffable, beyond empirical observation.

All humans are religious in the sense that as humans we confront Mystery at the boundaries of our existence. Regarding these boundaries we are compelled existentially to make judgments that shape our life and destiny. Whether theistic, agnostic, or atheistic, such assessments, are all “religious:” i.e., they must be made without the benefit of the evidence and proofs that we rely upon in the visible world. To be sure, uncertainty pervades the empirical order as well, while various forms of evidence operate in the domain of belief and unbelief. “O taste and see that the Lord is good,” a Psalmist (34:8) recommends.

Analogies, metaphors, symbols and myths are the modes of religious apprehension, of “God talk.” With the ineffable lying outside the domain of the empirical observation that informs human experience otherwise, “faith” and “witness” are the basic biblical idioms of religious experience and communication. Nonetheless, biblical writers at times argue that the “invisible” is to be inferred self-evidently from the “visible.” Only the “fool” says in his heart, “there is no God” (Psalm 14:1). Yet, surprisingly enough, these writers, at other times accord an honest agnosticism a validity of its own (cf., e.g., Romans 2:14). Thus, a broad, rather than a restrictive, definition of “religion” is implied.

The “subject” or “agent” in religious experience is the individual human being. Strictly speaking, groups are not “subjects” of religious experience. William James, the American psychologist/philosopher, held that religion is “the experiences of individual men in their solitude.” The experiences of mystics can be invoked in support of this definition. On the other hand, the human “person” is socially constituted, as are the symbols and language of religious experience. Even the hermit, who withdraws from society, is nonetheless a social being. Accordingly, Emile Durkheim viewed religion as essentially social. Indeed, he proposed that the very object of religion is none other than the human collectivity. There is no effect without a cause, he reasoned. Cult clearly has a strengthening effect on the worshippers. Given the nonexistence of the Deity in Durkheim’s scheme, the object, the “cause,” operative in the cult is the force that the collectivity exercises on the consciousness of the worshippers.

In historical practice, tension between the mystical and the social elements in religion have been endemic. The sociocultural manifestations are acutely vulnerable: to idolatry, on the one hand, and to political abuse, on the other. In the former instance, the symbol tends to replace the Ineffable as the object of devotion. In the latter, political rule invokes the legitimation of the Ineffable. Invoking the divine or cosmic order inspires awe, thus reinforcing the claims of the ruler. Arend T. van Leeuwen describes this proclivity of rulers to invoke the divine order as the “ontocratic temptation,” the notion of the state as “the embodiment of the cosmic totality.” He describes the four earliest “centres of Eurasian civilization” as ontocratic. Historically he traces “the irresistible power of the ontocratic ideology.” Even the West, where this conception was challenged by the modern democratic movements, “has only with great difficulty contrived to escape its blinding spell.” Religiously

reinforced ethnic and nationality conflicts around the world today illustrate the “radio-active” power of autocratic deformations.

THE TRAJECTORY OF BIBLICAL FAITH

Here we focus on the turbulent interplay of the personal, the social and the ineffable in the saga of biblical religion. “Man shall not see me and live,” Yahweh declares at a critical revelatory moment (Exodus 33:20). The battle against idolatry, that yearning to materialize the Deity, the effort, in effect, to circumvent the uncertainties of faith, became a central feature of the Hebrew experience. Yet, on the other hand, Yahweh’s rule creates and is somehow embodied in the life of, the Exodus community. The vision materializes in temple and monarchy. Land, people, sovereignty become the ideal, the goal--to be a sovereign people among the nations, secure in its own polity.

But as Walter Brueggemann, a noted Old Testament scholar recently pointed out, “The temple-royal-prophetic model of the people of God is not the only model evident in the Old Testament, nor is it self-evidently normative. The Davidic monarchy lasted only 400 years (until 587 B.C.E), never to be replicated thereafter. There had been the prior period, from Moses to David (1250-1000 B.C.E.), when a different model obtained. Indeed, Brueggeman might be asked, why not reach back to Abraham for the beginning of the first period?”

But then, after 587 B.C.E., a third model emerged in the Exile and the Dispersion (*diaspora*), with the latter condition continuing down to our own time. The “collapse and failure” of the royal model “generated in ancient Israel enormous pluralism and vitality, as the community searched for new and viable models of life and faith” (131). But as Brueggeman notes further, “Christians know very little about this period, pay little attention to it, and care little for it” (133). And as we shall see presently, this is due to factors that are significant, though hardly flattering. Nevertheless, the *diaspora* experience contributed importantly to the experience of the Christian movement (cf. 1 Peter)

Exilic and post-exilic Judaism, reduced to marginality and cultural pluralism, had to forge a new, and spiritually more profound, identity. This meant a “recovery of memory and rootage and connectedness,” as well as “the intense practice of hope.” The post-exilic community became “an intensely textual community, ... busy formulating the text; so it is widely believed that the period around the exile is precisely the period of canonization, the making of normative literature”. Hence a “textless Jew is no Jew at all, sure to be co-opted and sure to disappear into the woodwork, and my sense is that a textless church is increasingly no church” (135). Thus Brueggeman and the church of which he speaks is the church in America.

As John Bright points out, there is a further corollary, important to us here. The collapse of the Jewish state, followed by exile, “cleared the way for the possibility that faith, divorced from state and state cult, might live on in the hearts of *individual* men. “The notion of the elect people thus becomes

far more individualized a matter than it ever had been before. *Individual* men of the humiliated residue of the nation who at all costs hear the Word of God and obey his will--these are the people of God" (123). Bright here echoes the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, recalling especially the latter's espousal of individual responsibility. Ezekiel in effect, announces a new era, versus earlier traditions of corporate guilt. Hereafter "the soul that sins shall die" (18:14). Nonetheless Bright, at the same time, cautions against an understanding of individualism that ignores the corporate nature of Israel's faith.

Christian Analogues: Christianization as Nation-Building

The Hebrew experience unfolds in three stages: pre-political, political, and post-political. Suggestive parallels appear in the histories of Greece and Rome. Monarchies and empires arose out of more primitive tribal fragments. These flourish for a time, and with their decline, cosmopolitan outlooks emerge (Stoicism) that look with apathy at royal particularism. Historians have traced the rise, prosperity, and decline of nations and empires. The decline of imperial rule may result in the collapse of order, and historical examples can be cited accordingly. But it is also the case that imperial pacification generalizes experiences, symbols, and values that in turn foster the growth of the personal autonomy that tends to undermine coercive order.

In a footnote, Brueggeman observes that "an analogue exists between the royal temple establishment in ancient Israel and the Constantinian establishment of the church." George Mendenhall, another Old Testament scholar, in a slightly earlier work, effectively elaborates Brueggeman's footnote. Mendenhall sees King David as the "Old Testament Constantine." Where Brueggeman elaborates on the post-monarchic developments, Mendenhall, echoing the discomfort of the Prophet Samuel when Israel demanded a king, sees in the rise of the monarchy "the dissolution of religion into politics." Deity, he argues, is manifest, not in the exhibitions of power, as in the ancient monarchies surrounding Israel, but "in the qualities of personality."

In the Jewish experience, the dominant tendency has been to treat stage two, the political, as normative. This is evident not only in the Hebrew canonical texts, but also in the assimilation of the royal imagery by the figure of the Messiah who is to come. But both the prophetic vision and history move definitively beyond the national to the universal, and by the same token, from the corporate to the personal. At best, then, spiritual confusion surrounds the creation of the modern state of Israel. Whatever that state's claims to political legitimacy, within the tradition itself theological appeal appears anachronistic.

The parallels between Judaism and Christianity as historical phenomena are striking indeed, and presumably instructive as well. Both began as scattered, marginal movements and eventually achieved sovereign nationhood. The most dramatic example in the latter instance was the fourth century establishment (Constantine/Theodosius) of Christianity as the imperial religion. Of greater consequence, however, may well have been the royal

adoption of Christianity by one European chieftan after another, from Armenia and Georgia in the East to Britain in the West. From the fourth through the eleventh century, C.E., the peoples of Europe developed into nations under the aegis of Christianity.

In some instances, where the church became the symbol of the nation in the face of alien political rule, this amalgamation has remained politically potent to this very day. In other instances, however, notably in Western Europe, where politics have come of age, so to speak, Christianity has become largely a spent force. In the United States, described by Seymour Lipset as the “the first new nation,” Christianity still displays greater vitality. But there, too, it is becoming increasingly privatized, and correspondingly displays public uncertainty.

Thus the three stages through which Judaism passed appear paralleled, perhaps indeed recapitulated, by Christian history: pre-political, political, and post-political. Analysts increasingly note the similarities, but also the differences, between stages one and three in Western Christianity. In important respects, Christians in modern, pluralistic societies, have more in common with the pre-Constantinian era than with the many centuries of medieval Christendom. Among Western churches, however, the tendency has been strong to cling to the trappings of establishment, consciously, and, even more, unconsciously. But if ancient Israel, nurtured by the hope of a “Promised Land,” understandably clamored for monarchy, there is nothing in the Gospel that anticipates, or warrants, a politically corporate Christendom.

Pacification and Mental Imagery

Reality-construction and institution-building are fundamental processes in human experience. As populations grow, activity scales extend, and interdependencies multiply, how is the pool of the common pictures and expectations that we carry in our heads, and that alone make common action possible, to be reconstituted accordingly? Between the tribalism characteristic of the childhood of our race and the democracy and personalism we cherish in the modern world lie centuries of coercive pacification and institution-building. Hence the question: must societies, like children, pass through a coercive stage of reality construction, to prepare them for autonomous action in adulthood? Were the Hebrew monarchy and the royal/imperial establishment of Christianity in that sense inevitable as stages of growth and development.

Exploration of these fascinating hints lie outside the scope of this brief paper. It is enough here to note the parallels between the three-stage unfolding of Jewish and Christian history, despite the differences in historical detail. Thus, whereas captivity, exile and the destruction of temple and monarchy mark the end of stage two in the Jewish experience, the break between the second and third stages in the Christian instance is more difficult to tie to a single decisive event. Nonetheless in both instances the transitions between stages and “models” entailed periods of historical development. The sixteenth century Protestant Reformation in Europe signaled the (beginning of the) end

of medieval Christendom, the period here seen as the Christian equivalent of the “royal-temple establishment” of ancient Israel. And so I turn now to the stirrings of personal faith and agency in that epoch.

THE REFORMATION

Generations of Western historians have thought in terms of ancient, medieval, and modern historical eras. Renaissance and Reformation were the transformations that marked the transition from medieval to modern times. More recently, empirically-minded scholars have taken the revolutions of the eighteenth century as the initiation of the modern era--the political, industrial, scientific, and technological revolutions and their interactions. On the other hand, one can extend the perspective in the other direction, to explore the origins of both Renaissance and Reformation in the developments that led to them.

Whatever the perspective, societal differentiation and personal individuation are the correlative processes that increasingly dissolve and supplant the ancient solidarities of blood and soil. Neither process advances far without the other. And both arise in the continuous and complex interplay of ideas and events, likewise neither without the other. And by any reckoning, the Protestant Reformation was indeed a defining moment in the rise of Western individualism, and if we were to evaluate, we would have to add, for better and for worse. Here we are interested in the light that the Reformation sheds on our exploration of the moral and religious dimensions of personality in the modern era.

Individualism in the Reformation is associated most dramatically with Martin Luther, the pioneer reformer. As the late Roland Bainton, a leading Reformation historian, pointed out, Luther’s individualism consisted simply in the insistence “that every man must answer for himself to God.” Contrary to the widespread view that the sacraments of the church were intrinsically effective, Luther declared that “the sacrament depends for its efficacy upon the faith of the recipient.”

Thus Luther’s individualism is not “the individualism of the Renaissance, seeking the fulfillment of the individual’s capacities; it is not the individualism of the late scholastics, who on metaphysical grounds declared that reality consists only of individuals, and that aggregates like Church and state are not entities by simply the sum of their components” (Bainton, 141). Indeed, when the German peasants translated Luther’s message of Christian liberty into actions of overt rebellion, Luther took a conservative position, calling on the princes to suppress them. Rather Luther’s individualism was essentially religious.

A dramatic moment in Luther’s emerging individualism was his famous appearance before the *Reichstag* in Worms in April, 1521, the assembly of the Emperor and prince electors of the Holy Roman Empire. Summoned to recant his ostensibly heretical writings, he replied, “Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason I do not accept the authority of popes and councils,

for they have contradicted each other--my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen" (Bainton, 185).

Like other reformers, Luther set out to renew, not to divide the Church. But once the originally unintended break with Rome occurred (his papal excommunication came in 1520), he confronted a new situation. Where in the church is authority now to be vested? Indeed, what and where is the church? Those questions had political connotations as well. Political order in medieval times presumed religious uniformity as its foundation. But while Luther's theology pointed toward religious disestablishment, to Luther, and his contemporaries, disestablishment was not an option. In a sense, then, Luther was a tragic figure. His appeal to conscience at Worms was a leap, as it were, into the twentieth century. In his "ontocratic" view of society and polity, on the other hand, he remained thoroughly medieval. It is hardly an overstatement to suggest that his subsequent career was shaped by his efforts, in the end inevitably unsuccessful, to harmonize his individualism with his ontocracy.

The Swiss Reformation

The problem came into even sharper focus in the early Swiss Reformation, led by Luther's contemporary, Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich. Though the capital of the canton by that name, Zurich belonged to the diocese of Constance, some thirty miles to the northeast, in German territory. Zwingli was installed as the pastor of the Great Muenster, the central church in Zurich, on New Year, 1519. Less grounded in medieval theology and more of a Renaissance humanist than Luther, in his preaching, teaching, and writing he emerged as an advocate of reform. Public controversy over the new Reformation preaching in Zurich broke out in the early 1520s. At the urging of Zwingli, the mayor and city council convened a public colloquy in late January, 1523, to determine whether the new preaching could be tolerated.

Normally, of course, the convening of such a gathering was an episcopal prerogative. And while churches and regions found themselves at various positions and stages in relation to the growing unrest, in some places to the north the break with Rome had already occurred. The Bishop of Constance, who not surprisingly declined the invitation to attend this canonically irregular assembly, did send his vicar. Early in the proceedings, the latter intervened to challenge the legitimacy of the event. Only a duly convened universal Christian council, he argued, could authorize changes in church order.

Zwingli was ready with his answer: "Here in these rooms," he argued (there were six hundred people present) "is a Christian assembly. For I hope that most among us, moved by the will and love of God, wish to hear, to promote and to know the truth, which God Almighty will not deny us, insofar as we desire to honor him in genuine faith and heart. For the Lord says,

‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them’ (Matthew 18:20.)” (495; tr. mine).

Never mind the fact that Zwingli’s appeal to this text is exegetically dubious! This was a political, not a religious gathering. Ecclesiologically, however, in citing this text, Zwingli was somehow appealing to the neglected primordial conception that the church in its fullness, the “whole church,” is fully present where people gather with Christ in the midst. In that sense, the church is realized existentially from below or within rather than sacramentally from above.

Zwingli, like Luther, was a tragic figure, and for the same reason. Confronted with political instability after the break with Rome, he, like Luther, yielded the church’s public order to government control. Zwingli died in the Battle of Cappel in 1531, a battle between the Catholic and Protestant forces in the Swiss Confederacy. However, it is analytically useful to compare these two scenes, Worms and Zurich. In the former instance, the focus is on the autonomy of the individual; in the latter, on the “autonomy” of the “autonomous” assembly of individuals, under Christ. Both perspectives, however, appear in the projects of both reformers.

Individualism and the Free Church

The reformers’ conceptions did not emerge at once, and in advance, as a detailed blueprint of the future. Rather, as is typically the case, insights and events advanced dialectically. The Renaissance preceded, and in important respects prepared the way for, the Reformation. The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century facilitated lay participation in the public discourse. Pamphleteering became a powerful medium. Bible reading and discussion groups met among urban craftsmen. Debates once confined to clerics and academics spread more widely among the populace. Peasants were in motion, and the stirrings of early nationalism had begun.

While historians stress the urban nature of the Reformation, and Luther was born into what we today call an “upwardly mobile” family (Erikson), the north and central German lands were still largely feudal. By contrast, the Reformation milieu in Zurich was rather more urban. Zwingli’s collaborators included lay humanist scholars, who in turn were in dialogue with Bible reading circles among the city’s artisans. Zwingli’s appeal to the self-authenticating character of the disputation assembly in February, 1523, was thus more than empty rhetoric. As doubts concerning papal claims grew, other possible modes of church polity had obviously been considered. Much like developments in eastern Europe today, after the first steps were taken in the 1520s, events rushed forward in unanticipated ways. Religious and political institutions, as we noted, had been closely intertwined. A challenge to the authority structure in the former domain threatened social and political order as well. Accordingly by late 1523, Zwingli submitted the manner and rate of church order reform to the city government. And while the city-state of Zurich, the Mayor and bicameral City Council, was eager to defend its

independence from Pope and Emperor alike, church autonomy appeared clearly to jeopardize the political order. In effect, Zwingli, like Luther, remained medieval in his view of society and church. Accordingly, by 1525 he came to defend and perpetuate practices (briefly even the Catholic Mass) which in his earlier preaching he had challenged.

At that point, as so often in revolutionary movements, disagreement broke out in Zwingli's own camp. As we saw, Zwingli himself for a time entertained the possibility that the church consists of believers, ready to commit their lives accordingly, and thus does not automatically embrace a whole populace. Thus the faith community must be self-governing, independent from the political community. When it became clear that Zwingli opted to retain the medieval model of compulsory membership in a universal, state-maintained "church," a circle of his collaborators concluded that the time had come to act. On a January night, in 1527, fourteen persons met in a dwelling behind the Great Muenster in Zurich to decide what to do. A chronicle of the time describes the scene:

And it came to pass that they were together until fear (*angst*) began to come over them, yea, they were pressed (*gedrungen*) in their hearts. Thereupon, they began to bow their knees to the Most High God in heaven and called upon him as the Knower of hearts, implored him to enable them to do his divine will and to manifest his mercy toward them. For flesh and blood and human forwardness did not drive them, since they well knew what they would have to bear and suffer on account of it. George Cajacob (a former monk) arose and asked Conrad (Grebel, a young Zurich patrician and humanist scholar, till then a coworker of Zwingli) to baptize him, for the sake of God, with the true Christian baptism upon his faith and knowledge. And when he knelt down with that request and desire, Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no ordained... (*diener*) to perform such work. After that was done the others similarly desired George to baptize them, which he also did on their request (Williams, 1957, 43f).

This scene, to people reared in the great churches of Christendom, whether Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic, must appear scandalous if not sacrilegious even today. In medieval perspective the above action meant not mere sacrilege but social and political subversion as well. Thus Steven Ozment, a contemporary Reformation historian, observes: "To the people of Reformation Europe no specter was more fearsome than a society in which the desires of individuals eclipsed their sense of social duty" (Ozment, 177). Indeed the response of the ruling authorities to this initiative resembled the response of totalitarian regimes of the present century to autonomous action in what we now call civil society.

This scene in Zurich in 1525 was rapidly reenacted elsewhere, from the Alps to the North Sea and from Vienna and Moravia to the Atlantic, sometimes by contagion, at other times spontaneously. Nor was the fear of insurrection an idle one. The peasants were in revolt, and in one instance, in Muenster (Westphalia) a rebaptizing urban commune seized power militarily. Europe was in ferment. Regimes felt threatened. Conflict was breaking out between regimes that accepted and regimes that opposed the Protestant cause. Regimes that accepted the Reformation felt threatened by the radicals, not only because these challenged their authority, but also because the appearance of these movements on their terrain put the reformers on the defensive vis-à-vis their Catholic challengers.

In Zurich, the municipal government quickly outlawed the new movement described above, and banned its leaders. When this did not suffice, harsher measures, namely executions, followed. Indeed, though with differing arguments and measures, both Protestant and Catholic authorities moved against the radicals--“Anabaptists,” they were called--and in the following decades many hundreds were executed throughout northwestern and central Europe--drowned, beheaded, burned at the stake, often following brutal torture.

In recent decades these martyrs for the faith have been exhumed (symbolically) as the archival records of the sixteenth century in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and the Czech lands have been systematically published for the first time. Thus, likewise for the first time, historians are “listening” to the radicals in their own words and terms. Since World War II literally hundreds of dissertations and other monographs have mined these materials. As a result the history of the sixteenth century Reformation era is being rewritten.³

What did the Zurich radicals seek? To begin with the above account, two important affirmations, common among Protestants, are readily evident in their actions: first, is the disavowal of papal and sacramental authority, enunciated by Luther; and second, the (correlative) highly personal nature of religious reality. Here the radicals stood on common Reformation ground. But with the baptisms that January night in Zurich, the ways of the “magisterial” (Luther, Zwingli, et al.) and the “radical” Reformation (Williams) parted. Having made the above two affirmations, they proposed, in effect, that the church is *experientially, existentially* rather than primarily *sacramentally* mediated; that the gathering in Christ is therefore self-authenticating; that membership is voluntary, limited to believers; that correspondingly the church is free from civil control; that baptism follows confession of faith, and hence is not administered to infants; that accepting Christ means commitment to radical discipleship, including renunciation of the sword.

This is merely a listing of some salient features of this scene in Zurich, not a creedal inventory. Clearly the movement that grew from this event was a fragmentary endeavor, organized around issues of dissent, hence truncated; moreover, because quickly driven underground, soon isolated, impoverished, ingrown. Even so, for decades, the radicals repeatedly sought to be heard, and

indeed dozens of colloquies between establishment clergy and the dissenters were held from the Alps to the North Sea. Though many of these movements were suppressed or died out, an unbroken historical line survives in our own era, in three versions--Mennonites, Amish, and the communal branch known as the Hutterites.

Historically the Zurich event signaled the emergence of what has come to be known as the "free church" movement in the modern world, movements such as the Pilgrims, in part, the Puritans, the Baptists and Congregationalists, indeed the principles of religious voluntarism and the separation of church and state, the "free church" in a "free society," increasingly enshrined in modernizing state constitutions around the world. And beyond this, as historians like A. D. Lindsay and Franklin Littell have shown, the dialogical form of free church life was of seminal importance in the rise of Anglo—Saxon democracy. The dialogue that characterized the life of free churches blazed the trail, as it were, for dialogue in local political assemblies.³

FROM OBJECT TO SUBJECT

In medieval times monarchs or rulers had "subjects." Without political voice, people were simply the objects of political rule. When the "subjects" of autocratic rule become citizens in a democratic order, the term is inverted to take on an active meaning. The following anecdote illustrates the point. On June 4, 1989, the day of the first-stage election on Poland's contemporary road to independence, I happened to arrive in Poland, along with colleagues from my university, to participate in a conference. *Solidarnosc* candidates, as we know, won handily in that election. Days of exuberance in Poland followed. The people were arising from decades of political subjection, of being voiceless objects of alien political rule. "We've become political subjects!" our hosts exulted, as we gathered around the TV nightly for the evening news--subjects in the modern active, participatory sense.

Something analogous occurred in the religious domain in that little conventicle in Zurich in January, 1525. Medieval society was not without its virtues. But in neither the political nor the religious spheres were people conceived as active subjects, as autonomous agents, sustaining the common life. Indeed, as the Roman Catholic Vatican II Council implicitly and belatedly recognized (see esp. the *Council Documents*, "Dignitatis Humanae" and "Gaudium et Spes," Abbott) the church had lagged behind the political process in recognizing their members as fully participating "subjects." Repeatedly the Council documents note and affirm the growth of individual personal dignity and the claims of conscience in the modern world. The church is the whole believing community, not primarily the hierarchy.

Meanwhile, however, the "free church" itself has been flawed in the opposite direction, in its sometimes unrestrained subjectivity. This is evident in the loss of authoritative, salvific "substance" in the churches; in schismatic sectarian excess; in vulnerability to social fads. We already met Walter Brueggeman's *cri de coeur*--"a textless church is increasingly no church."

Kirche. Sekte und Mystik

Persons familiar with our western sociology of religion will readily recognize, in this contrast between the “high churches” and the “free churches” of Christendom, Ernst Troeltsch’s seminal distinction between *Kirche* and *Sekte*. In the former instance “the “Church is an institution which has been endowed with grace and salvation as a result of the work of Redemption, it can afford to ignore the need for subjective holiness for the sake of the objective treasures of grace and redemption.” The sect, on the other hand, “is a voluntary society, composed of strict and definite Christian believers bound to each other by the fact that all have experienced ‘the new birth.’”

To these two forms of Christian association, Troeltsch added a third modality, namely mysticism. In this mode, “the world of ideas which had hardened into formal worship and doctrine is transformed into a purely personal and inward experience...” But he then maintains that from the beginning “these three forms were foreshadowed, and all down through the centuries to the present day, wherever religion is dominant, they still appear alongside of one another, while among themselves they are strangely and variously interwoven and interconnected” (Troeltsch, 993) Or as he says earlier in the same work (733) the “germ” of each of these forms is to be found in the New Testament itself. The “future task,” Troeltsch concludes, specifically for Protestants, but surely for all three expressions, lies in “the mutual interpenetration of the three chief sociological categories, which must be united with a structure that will reconcile them all.”

Published originally in 1911, this work has been importantly surpassed by events and scholarship. Yet it retains its seminal significance. Troeltsch rightly perceived the emergent importance of individualism in the modern world, and in the end directly addressed the problem confronting us here. “The Christian Ethos alone possesses, in virtue of its personalistic Theism, a conviction of personality and individuality, based on metaphysics, which no Naturalism and no Pessimism can disturb. That personality which, arising above the natural order of life, is only achieved through a union of the will and the depths of being with God, alone transcends the finite, and alone can defy. *Without this support, however, every kind of individualism evaporates into thin air*” (p. 1004f, emphasis added).

The “Postmodern,” “Saturated Self”

The “evaporation” of the individual self is precisely the “postmodern”⁴ experience and concept that we now confront. The story is told vividly by Kenneth Gergen, a social psychologist, in a book entitled *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*, published this year. Gergen proposes that the older “romantic” (passionate) and more recent “modern” (rational) conceptions of the self-being supplanted by the “postmodern” (relational). Gergen addresses the fragmentation of modern life, the multiplicity of roles and relationships in which we find ourselves.

These overtax our ability to order and to integrate. This “fragmenting and populating of self-experience” results in what he calls “multiphrenia,” that is, “the splitting of the individual into a multiplicity of self-investments” (Gergen, 73f).

Suggestions of this sort, of course, have been appearing for some years. Students of the modern industrial and political revolutions long since described “the rise of a new type of society, one in which moral egoism and social atomism were the dominant qualities” (Nisbet, 43). In the mid-1970s, Ralph Turner reported on a shift from *institution* to *impulse* as the focus in self-definition. “The articulation of *real selves* with social structure,” Turner still held, however, “should be a major link in the functioning and change of societies.” Nearly a decade earlier, near the end of the turbulent sixties, Bertram Brown, then Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, observed:

Personal identity among American young people is becoming far less a function of family or membership in traditional groups as church, community, or occupation. It is rather being shaped by self choice and action through assimilation of direct experience.

What distinguishes Gergen’s “postmodern” view, however, is the claim that our conventional conception of “a self independent of the relations in which he or she is imbedded” is *passé*. Instead this “social saturation brings with it a general loss in our assumption of true and knowable selves. . . We come to be aware that each truth about ourselves is a construction of the moment, true only for a given time and within certain relationships. One ceases to believe in a self independent of the relations in which he or she is embedded” (16f). Individuals, he writes later “themselves cannot ‘mean’ anything; their actions are nonsensical until coordinated with the actions of others” (242). Most consequential of all, for “the postmodern there is no transcendent reality, rationality or value system with which to rule between competitors” (253).

As the justification for belief in the notion of “voluntary decision-making” deteriorates, “the concept of the individual who chooses ‘wrong’ loses tenability. To be sure, individuals break the law, but from the postmodern perspective, such actions should not be attributed to the individual alone but to the array of relationships of which he or she is a part. The crime is but a manifestation of these relationships--the ordinary complicities of daily life” (244).

Troeltsch or Gergen

Without the support of “a union of the will and the depths of being with God,” Troeltsch concluded, as we saw, “Every kind of individualism evaporates into thin air.” Did Troeltsch thus implicitly anticipate and preempt Gergen’s phantasmagoria, or was he obsoletely mired in a “modern” or

“romantic” (pre-modern) world view? Obviously his language and idioms are no longer fully current. But what of his basic postulate?

Descriptively, even analytically, Gergen’s diagnosis is hardly to be gainsaid. Great numbers of Americans (and others in advanced societies) doubtless struggle with the identity diffusion that he poignantly describes. And the dissolution of traditional communal solidarities is in many respects irreversible. Thus the integrative functions formerly provided by solidary groups fall increasingly on the individual “ego” or “self.” And for this our culture is poorly prepared. Moreover the very transformations that permit and facilitate the emergence of this personal autonomy tend to weaken the communal matrices that nurture such autonomy.

Since the “postmodern” situation is unprecedented, rational conceptions of personal autonomy, inherited from pre-modern social stages, provide only limited guidance. Ironically, on the other hand, as the human “spirit” has triumphed over the determinisms of nature, our concept of human being has become increasingly deterministic. And the more deterministic our views, the less we resonate to the metaphysics of a Troeltsch. Thus we become fair game for Gergen’s nihilism. Gergen’s scenario of the “post-modern saturated self” is reminiscent of Jesus’s parable of the swept room. An evil spirit leaves its victim, journeying forth in search of a new abode. Finding none, it returns, and finds its former room empty and swept. The spirit reenters, invites seven other spirits more wicked than itself, to join. “The final condition of that man,” Jesus concludes, “is worse than the first.”

THE TASK AHEAD

As academics and intellectuals we doubtless are fated to expect more of intellect and reason in human affairs than they can deliver. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the great social and political transformations--and dislocations--of our era have been “spiritual” in origin. For this we must accept responsibility and make amends. Even a bare outline of the tasks ahead will require a treatise in its own right. But to add a bit of closing specificity to this already too lengthy and rambling account, I note the following.

Until recent centuries, in Western thought, some version or semblance of Platonic idealism prevailed: appearances were judged to be imperfect renditions of reality. Reasoning, speculative thought, contemplation--these modes of inquiry therefore were thought to be superior to sense observations in the quest for truth or for insight into the nature of things. On the surface this comported well, with both the “ontocratic” conception of sociopolitical reality (see above) and the “sedimentation” of Biblical faith in priestcraft and sacrament.

As we all know, in recent centuries, the above order has been reversed. We are now instructed to take as “real” only objects or events that can be observed, measured, and counted. The emancipation that we call modernity (and post-modernity?) is the result. The “common people,” to use a colloquial idiom, intuitively sense “on which side of their bread is buttered.”

Metaphysicians and believers increasingly appear to be anachronistic. Taking “this world” seriously has done far more to improve “the human condition” than millennia of dreaming about an “other world.”

End of history? Hardly. To the contrary, both the grandeur and misery of the human being has become more acute. Much is drastically redefined when we come to terms with the distinction between husk and kernel in Biblical faith. The inner thrust, the “kernel,” in fact precedes and illumines, but also transcends and judges, the modern experience. We desperately need a creative dialogue between the explosive vision of *Biblical Faith* and the empirical disciplines regarding both human being and the cosmos planes.⁵ The confusion of the historical, cultural husks for the living kernel of both Bible and “church,” a confusion to which both protagonists and antagonists of “religion” have contributed profusely, must be penetrated.

The parable of the swept room, to which I referred above lays bare the modern (and postmodern) experience. The “scandal” of faith (I Corinthians 1,23) will not, cannot, disappear, nor the need for believers and unbelievers to collaborate respectfully in the human enterprise. But the ground on which they now meet is needlessly encumbered, and in the era before us, we must clear the field. We can then address the paradigm choice, Troeltsch or Gergen, in its real saliency.

NOTES

* Symposium on The moral and religious dimensions of human personality, Institute of Philosophy, Tbilisi, October, 1991.

1 “Societal modernization,” as employed here, is a nominal category, referring to the transformations of traditional kin- and locality-based social systems since the eighteenth century into the highly differentiated, Large scale societies of the twentieth century. Efforts to define modern and modernization in realist terms, though informative, have been unsuccessful. The literature is vast. For a recent informative survey see Turner.

2 I am uncertain as to the provenance of this expression, “primordial biblical faith.” The concept is to be distinguished from the notion of “primitivism” that has haunted Christian renewal endeavors. Primitivism, in those contexts, implies that the early church was somehow pure, and that that purity can and must be somehow recovered. Primordial refers to “something original or fundamental.. .a first principle” (*Webster’s Third International Dictionary*), hence to the primal energy of the faith, experienced directly by the believer.

3 The literature is too vast cite here. A seminal essay, by a leading promulgator of this research enterprise, was “The Anabaptist Vision,” a presidential address to the American Society of Church History in 1943 by H. S. Bender. A classic survey of the early yield of Anabaptist studies was Williams’ *The Radical Reformation*. Durnbaugh’s *The Believers’ Church* links the early history to the broader variety of free church manifestations. My own acquaintance with the radical reformation stems from my sociological study

of radical reformation origins in sixteenth century Switzerland, a doctoral dissertation submitted at the University of Zurich in 1953 (Peachey).

4 Whether the distinction between “modern” and “postmodern” is useful in terms other than nominal remains to be seen. Admittedly the differences between social corollaries of the early industrial revolution and today’s technology are enormous. Here, too, the literature is vast. The Gergen study is sufficient for the purpose of this paper.

5 For a beginning, see Moulyn; but cf. Konner.

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Chapter XIV

The Third Millennium: Christendom or Diaspora?*

In 1935, a new quarterly review, entitled *Christendom*, was founded in Chicago. It succeeded *The Christian Union Quarterly* which had been published during the preceding quarter of a century. *Christendom* in turn yielded to the *Ecumenical Review* in 1948 when the latter appeared as the organ of the newly formed *World Council of Churches*. Charles Clayton Morrison, the well-known editor of the ecumenical weekly, *The Christian Century*, served the new journal, *Christendom*, as editor *pro tem*. In his opening foreword, Morrison announced that this venture thought of itself “as an expression of the new creative era in world culture into which, despite powerful counter currents, the broad stream of human life is moving,” and that “the Christian church is on the point of coming alive once more to the supreme responsibility of Christianity in civilization.” Indeed, “Christianity is itself nothing less than a civilization.” And then follows, what I shall here regard as, the “punch line”--“*the goal of civilization can be nothing less than, literally, a Christendom*” (emphasis added).

For reasons to be made clear as we proceed, I shall adopt this effusive yet ambiguous vision of Morrison as the frame of reference for this paper. Ours, too, is “a new creative period in world culture,” though judging from Morrison’s experience, we had better be modest in our predictions! We confront the question: what is the meaning, that is, what is the content and the shape, of Christian identity in the world today? To what extent is that identity everywhere the same? To what extent is it situation specific? One of the most obvious situational variations arises between the lands where Christianity has long been a dominant faith, and lands where it is barely or newly introduced. The context of this colloquy, of course, is the former--Europe, and by extension, the European peoples, once known as Christendom. And the specific occasion is the collapse of the Soviet challenge to the course of European history. Given Soviet global projections and the corresponding superpower rivalry (the “Cold War”), the collapse, like the challenge, has global repercussions.

Poland, of course, was engaged far more directly by the Soviet enterprise than was the USA. Nonetheless both countries share in the global repercussions of the Soviet era and its collapse, as well as in the legacy of Christendom. Each of us, Poles and USA-Americans, have our particular Christian identities and tasks. Our task here is to assess those particularities in the frame of our wider commonalities.

In addressing here our common and respective futures in the post-Soviet era, I have been asked to profile the “free church” paradigm. I gladly do so, not, however, to advocate the “free church” as such, but rather to articulate this poorly understood facet of the story of Christendom. For while in the view of the established churches of Christendom--Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and in some instances Protestant--and often in disestablished, free-church

self-understanding as well, the established and disestablished churches are mutually exclusive entities, together they constitute the Christendom story. Both “paradigms” of church emerged historically, from lived experience, rather, it may be added, than from externally reproducible blueprints.

Christendom as Liability

As we move, as faith communities, into the post-Soviet era, the European Christendom legacy is at once our major asset and our major liability. But alas, it is more comforting to celebrate the assets than to confront the liabilities. Yet failure to confront the liabilities of that legacy may well result in our squandering the assets as well. The assets are familiar, and we need not tarry here to detail them. I refer simply to the sedimentation of Christian energies in the culture and civilization of Europe, and of the peoples of European origin.

The liabilities of the Christendom legacy, on the other hand, are less readily evident. Liabilities often appear in the guise of asset. But in any case the era of Christendom, the era in which political and religious institutions ruled conjointly among the European peoples, has passed, passed beyond recall. The era of “established” churches has ended. *Diaspora*, not *Christendom*, lies before us. Our awareness and assimilation of this reality appear to lag well behind the march of events. Many of the assumptions and idioms of Christendom, whatever their validity in the past, still imprison us, either positively or negatively, and by so much tend to inhibit our responses to our own era. For historical reasons the halo of ecclesial establishment lingers somewhat more brightly on the eastern than on the western horizon. Numerous people in central and Eastern Europe, still find it difficult to conceive the church and its faith in other than in established or national form.

Given the tutelary role of (establishment) Christianity over many centuries in the rise of the nations of Europe, the fusion of church with nation is readily taken for granted. But the resulting Christendom is not the gospel. Like any other historical era, Christendom stood (stands) under the judgment and grace of God. Ours, I here argue, is a very different epoch. Whatever the validity of the establishment and disestablishment paradigms of Christendom in their own time, neither is reproducible or normative today. But before I pursue the argument further, a few comments on definitions may be helpful.

DEFINITION AND ISSUES

The earliest appearance of the term, Christendom, cited by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is 1389. Christendom, according to the Dictionary, refers to “the countries professing Christianity, taken collectively.” Above I used the terms “established” and “establishment” to characterize the Christianity of Christendom. “Established,” and correlatively “free” or “disestablished,” are concepts that arose in English history. The Church of England developed its linkages to monarchy and state following the break with

Rome, and was therefore described as established: the monarch became “the Supreme Head of the Church in England.” Subsequent religious movements gave rise variously to “free” churches, such as Baptist, Quaker, and Methodist, churches permitted to exist along-side the Church of England, but without state linkage or support. A corresponding term, *Freikirche* emerged in 19th century Germany, with one group of churches naming itself *evangelische Freikirche*.

Disestablishment language, however, refers primarily to the external status of churches in societies, that is, to their relationships to other social configurations, especially the political order. It has no necessary reference to the church intrinsically or theologically. Accordingly, as Durnbaugh observes, “believers’ church” is a more adequate term. In fact, use of the term “free” at times been applied internally or intrinsically as well--“free” understood as the absence of theological or creedal affirmation. Meanwhile, on the other hand, formerly established bodies--Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant--have been increasingly disestablished outwardly, without also, for that reason, having adopted a “believers’ church” ecclesiology.

What, then, is at stake in the two ecclesiologies, established and free/believers’? Without presuming at this point to provide a concise definition, I offer several definitional comments. Ernst Troeltsch, to whose classic study I will return later, contrasted the “*objective*” concerns of the *Kirche*-type ecclesiology (sacramental, established) and the “*subjective*” preoccupation of the *Sekte*-type (free, believers’). Whereas the former sees the integrity of the church secured *sacramentally*, the latter sees it realized in *existentially*, that is, in the gifted faith experience of the believing community. The contrast between the two ecclesiologies is analogous to the distinction drawn in organizational language between “top down” and “bottom-up” dynamics. This latter contrast was captured dramatically in the concept of subsidiarity, set in orbit by Pius X in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). It is “a gravely harmful disturbance of right order to turn over to a greater society of higher rank functions and services which can be performed by lesser bodies on a lower plane” (quoted here from Abbott). Creative energy in social life, in other words, flows upward. These contrasts, of course, are conceptual devices, not real entities.

THE CAREER OF CHRISTENDOM

European Christianity, as we know, passed through three historical stages: first, the early pre-establishment centuries, then a millennium of establishment, and finally, the post-establishment era in which we find ourselves today. Transitions, of course, were gradual, and the distinctions between the stages were relative rather than absolute. Perhaps the most dramatic shift came during the fourth century, C.E., under the Roman emperors Constantine and Theodosius, when Christianity evolved from being a *persecuted* minority to a *persecuting* majority in the Empire. For more than a millennium Christianity was imperially established.

Disestablishment, the third stage of European Christianity, came far less abruptly and more unevenly than did the fourth century establishment. Symbolically the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation can be taken as the beginning of the disestablishment era. Initially, however, the Reformation, as far as it reached, merely replaced the imperial (quasi universal) establishment of the church by national establishments.

National establishment, it will be recalled, however, did not originate with the Reformation. Virtually all the peoples of Europe, beginning already in the fourth century with Armenia and Georgia, emerged as nations in the course of a millennium under royally-sponsored Christian tutelage. Indeed, for more than a millennium, the contest between the national and imperial “paradigms” was an important factor in European history. In the end, as the familiar formula of the Peace of Westphalia (1648) signified (*cuius regio, eius religio*), the national paradigm prevailed.

Despite the momentary triumph, national Christianity as the disestablishment of the Roman church and the rise of the modern believers’ church movement were rooted in the Protestant Reformation, the former indirectly, the latter directly. The story, of course, cannot be told in any detail here. I will merely identify two salient aspects of the Reformation era, as indicated, one indirect, the other direct. Indirectly, in the long run, Protestantism hastened the secularization and pluralization of modern society, thus setting the stage for disestablishment. Directly, though marginally, it gave rise to the first modern “free church” (Blanke).

First, *secularization*. Martin Luther, informed by the medieval conception of the religious unity of society, set out to reform and renew the one universal church. Contrary to his intention, the interaction of events and ideas in the early Reformation led quickly to a break with the papacy, and the eventual repudiation of much of the Roman religious practice, including monasticism. Outwardly this meant the transfer of monastic properties to “secular” auspices, a transfer described later as “secularization.” Meanwhile the erstwhile-cloistered ascetic energy of medieval Christianity was redirected into what Max Weber (1958) was much later to describe as *innerworldly asceticism*.

Secularization, as the term is most commonly used today, has primarily a negative connotation, signifying the decline or loss of religious belief and practice, and/or of religious influence in culture and society. But as a socio-cultural process, secularization is far more complex, with both positive and negative dimensions. Biblical faith, as Max Weber emphasized, resulted in the “disenchantment” of the world; that is, in the displacement of animistic or magical conceptions of nature by the conception of transcendent Deity, a loss no less for the ancient traditions involved.

Meanwhile, religious beliefs, insofar as they become socially or culturally embodied, are subject to the “laws” of society and culture. A hospital, informed initially by religious motivation, may increasingly assume a life of its own, governed instead by technical and administrative logic, without

further recourse to the originating vision. Indeed, only by some degree of such “secularization” can the vision be implemented.

Secularization is linked to a continuous increase in the number of social agents, acting autonomously, both individual and group, and in the range and scale of social action. Some degree of secularization, and pluralization, is implicit as well in biblical ecclesiology and eschatology, as is the rise of what in our time is called *civil society*. Both numerically and qualitatively speaking, there is always a “world” outside the “little flock,” which is the gathered, believing community. This reality was obscured, if not denied, by the medieval synthesis of church and society, and despite their break with Rome, retained by the leading reformers. The recovery of the church/society disjunction may well have been the most important plank in the free/believers’ church platform. Secular pluralism is in any case implicit in the free church paradigm (Peachey, 1976). Despite the reformers’ retention of the medieval conception social unity, in the long term their action contributed importantly to the dissolution of the medieval synthesis, and to that extent contributed to the rise of the free church. I turn now directly to the free church story.

The “Radical” vs. the “Magisterial” Reformation

Here there is a relatively new story to be told. In recent decades the archival source materials on sixteenth century religious dissent in western Europe have been systematically published. Voices from that distant time, then suppressed by the major reformers as well by the Roman Church, can now be heard. Admittedly, those were turbulent and confused times, and dissent was by no means always wholesome or authentic. Nonetheless, on the basis of these materials, important chapters of Reformation history are being fundamentally rewritten. A coherent free/believers’ church alternative to both the Roman and the Protestant “paradigms” emerged, and though small, survived into our own time (Mennonites, Hutterites, Amish).¹

It was through later independent religious movements, however, chiefly in the Anglo-Saxon lands, that the free church made its impact in the modern world. Historians labor to trace the filiation of ideas from movement to movement, and debates continue. There were borrowings by the English Baptists and Independents in the seventeenth century from the continental Anabaptists. Yet there and eventually in North America these movements and other free and believers’ churches developed their own genius. Though the halo of Christendom still lingers over the continent, the (USA) American ethos bears a “free church” stamp.

Before proceeding with this very brief sixteenth century account, a thought experiment may be helpful. Confronted with the break with the papal monarchy, where might the Reformers have turned to ground the church? What were the options? Here I refer only to the early reformers, Luther and Zwingli. One possibility would be to establish a new papacy. Another would be to move radically in the opposite direction and to posit the autonomy of each faith community. A third possibility would be to seek the help of civil authorities.

Perhaps there are other possibilities? If you, the reader, were a Luther or a Zwingli, what would you do?

But let us turn to the events. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk in Wittenberg, Germany, nailed a paper to the door of the Castle Church. On that paper he had inscribed 95 theses describing the need for church reform. Outwardly, that act marked the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Controversy ensued at once. By 1520 the Pope Leo X sent a decree of excommunication, which Luther burned in public. For the next few years, Luther temporized. From the outset he expected dramatic results from the new gospel preaching. The renewal of faith communities would result. Zwingli in Zurich, though in a different setting, proceeded similarly. During those years, both reformers accordingly toyed with the second option above, a church polity based on the early Christian view that the church is fully present in each assembly (“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” Matthew 18:20).

Meanwhile events overtook deliberations, notably the peasant uprisings of the mid 1520s. The expected results from the new preaching did not materialize. Already in a 1523 sermon, Luther admitted that significant steps toward believing assemblies effect, would have to wait until “God makes Christians,” (Pelikan, 67). Meanwhile, despite the break with Rome notwithstanding, Luther retained the medieval vision of the organic unity of society (later termed the *corpus christianum*). As the emergency became acute he turned to his territorial prince, the ruling authority in the land. While retaining the inner freedom of the life of faith, Luther yielded the external affairs of the church to temporal control. Baptism thus became important as a civic symbol. As Pelikan notes, Luther, in his treatment of baptism, worked with analogies from the order of creation (p. 87). Accordingly, religious dissent, action outside the prevailing order, became in effect, civic subversion and insurrection. Steven Ozment, a contemporary Reformation historian, observes: “To the people of Reformation Europe no specter was more fearsome than a society in which the desires of individuals eclipsed their sense of social duty” [Ozment, 177].) Not surprisingly, then, the response of the ruling authorities to dissent, to autonomous action in what we now call civil society, resembled the response of totalitarian regimes of the present century.

Events in Zurich took a similar turn, though there the government was urban and republican. Perhaps partly for that reason, Zurich, rather than Wittenberg, was to become the cradle of the “believers’ church.” Taking the reformers’ call for faith and commitment seriously, several groups discontinued the baptism of infants, arguing that baptism should follow repentance and faith, acts of which only adults are capable. Thereupon, in January, 1525, baptism of all unbaptized infants was ordered by the government, under penalty of law, within eight days. The hour of decision had come. On a January night, in 1527, fourteen persons met in a dwelling behind the Great Muenster (church) in Zurich to decide what to do. A chronicle of the era describes the scene:

And it came to pass that they were together until fear (*angst*) began to come over them, yea, they were pressed (*gedrungen*) in their hearts.

Thereupon, they began to bow their knees to the Most High God in heaven and called upon him as the Knower of hearts, implored him to enable them to do his divine will and to manifest his mercy toward them. For flesh and blood and human forwardness did not drive them, since they well knew what they would have to bear and suffer on account of it. George Cajacob (a former monk) arose and asked Conrad (Gebel, a young Zurich patrician and humanist scholar, till then a coworker of Zwingli) to baptize him, for the sake of God, with the true Christian baptism upon his faith and knowledge. And when he knelt down with that request and desire, Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no ordained *Diener* (minister-Williams translates deacon) to perform such work. After that was done the others similarly desired George to baptize them, which he also did on their request (Williams, 1957, 43f).

Awareness of the gravity of their action--the violation of an express law--clearly sets the tone for this event. But as the chronicler indicates, and as numerous other reports of that era confirm, hesitation sprang also fundamentally from the extraordinary nature of their action. To act without priestly sanction was obviously a more daring act in a medieval setting than it would be in today's more secular cosmos. Meanwhile a new order, to replace the one stemming from Rome, is already inchoate in the above definition of the situation--baptism is to be administered by a designated leader. Order is implicit in human action.

Meanwhile autonomous Bible and Reformation-tract reading circles had sprung up in many localities in northwest Europe, and the late night scene in Zurich was reenacted in many places, usually by traveling missionaries from previously established groups. While the movement represented a rediscovery of the self-authenticating power of the gospel ("where two or three are gathered in my name..."), it must also be said, from the hindsight we have of believers' church history, that a general or "satisfying" alternative to the claims of the Great Traditions (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, etc.) did not emerge. However authentic the act of the little band in Zurich, it was incomplete.

How is the continuing common life of the gathered believers to be ordered, internally, by assembly, and among assemblies? Again and again, in the centuries that followed, when new conditions, new movements, or disagreements and rivalries emerged, new groups and groupings have been formed. Nor is an end in sight. New denominations erupt more rapidly than the older "main line" churches can consolidate ecumenically. Are we dealing with human frailties or historical inevitabilities? Or were these (and later) early "radicals" still too imprisoned in establishment imagery to elaborate the full logic of their position? Is the endless creation of miniature, sometimes rivalrous, Christian fiefdoms really a viable alternative to the Great Traditions?

Liabilities in the Free Church Tradition

In the above introductory remarks I underscored the liabilities inherent in the legacy of Christendom. The liabilities are most evident in places where

we hanker after the external advantages inherent in religious establishment, or seek their restoration. Here, however, we direct our attention to the liabilities inherent in the free church tradition. As already indicated, that tradition is more deeply imbedded in Christendom than distinct from it. It both rested upon the Christendom legacy, and rose in criticism, indeed in opposition to it, perhaps like an adolescent in rebellion against a parent.

The intertwining of establishment and disestablishment in the career of Christendom is exemplified in the opening citation of this paper, namely Charles Clayton Morrison's vision for the renewal of Christendom. Morrison, as well as the other journal he edited (*The Christian Century*), was rooted in the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church), a uniquely American, free church denomination, a product of the American frontier. As the future beckoned to Morrison, however, despite his believers' church heritage, like Luther, he still clung to the eschatology of Christendom.

Free church rootedness in, or dependence on, Christendom is evident in the ensuing polemics. The dialogue between the "established" and "disestablished" churches often became a contest over who has, or is, the "true church." On the disestablished side, this led to a definition of faith that turned on the points of criticism of the established ecclesial communities. Ironically at times such criticism focused on liturgical forms or symbols, with the dissenters, in effect, thus conceding the point that they thought they were criticizing in the first place. More serious are the imbalance and the deficiencies resulting from a theology or creed organized around, or based upon, a polemical issue: other aspects of the gospel, of divine truth, are ignored.

Free church indebtedness to Christendom becomes the most tangible in the rise of the denomination. To be sure, in the United States we have a great number of independent congregations, groups that disavow formal ties to any denomination. But "no man is an island," an English curate wrote, and so it is with bands of Christians. Most groups (congregations) establish links to other groups, and particularly where they emerge from controversy, such groupings tend eventually to form "churches," that is, quasi-universal, self-contained ecclesial bodies, paralleling thus the older catholic traditions.

One can thus readily construct a bill of particulars in criticism of free/believers' church ecclesiality. It has not been my task here to detail the flaws in the Christendom tradition. Instead I refer to the above paragraph on definitions and issues. Basically, just as free and believers' church movements have been prepared to jeopardize the "objective" dimensions of religious expression in order to restore the "subjective," so the established traditions have sacrificed the "subjective" appropriation to guarantee the "objective" dimensions. And while the distinction between the traditions is relative--each in some measure embraces a both/and position--the differences between the relative emphasis is real and critical.

BEYOND CHRISTENDOM: TRANSCENDING THE SCHISM

The theological and ecclesiological issues at stake in the interface of traditions here adumbrated are not to be trivialized. Nonetheless, at this juncture, history in effect drowns out much of the older controversy. The three-stage progression noted above (pre-establishment, establishment, post-establishment) likely has a deeper significance than such conceptual contrasts imply. In any case, it is instructive to observe that this three-stage sequence parallels the Israelite/Jewish experience and history. There, too, we confront an establishment era, an era challenged prophetically, that eventually miscarried. That, too, is followed by an era of disestablishment, whose positive content is captured, and to some degree sanctioned, by the concept of dispersion (*Diaspora*), the seeding of the Chosen People among the nations.

At least one New Testament writer senses the ecclesial significance of that development. Though with the call of Abraham the formation of a people apart, a Chosen People, is initiated, the goal is universal. That goal is more effectively realized in a people dispersed than in a territorial people that has become a nation like others. "Christendom" is an eschatological, not an historical, possibility. Within "history," the People of the Covenant can only witness; as People of the Covenant, they cannot rule. (Isaiah 43:8-13; Acts 1:8).

In the beginning paragraphs of this paper I illustrate the power of imagery of Christendom in the establishment, as recently as 1935, of a journal by that name. Ironically, that journal sprang from all-American, disestablished, free church soil, announcing that the goal of civilization must be nothing less than a "Christendom," the very illusion that had provoked the free church reaction in the first place. Meanwhile, the inaugural number of that journal contained also an article by John A. Mackay entitled, "The Adequacy of the Church Today." Mackay, a well-known Presbyterian churchman, and long-time president of Princeton Theological Seminary, acknowledged in this article that in some few lands the churches can still make "a real contribution toward a corpus Christianum." Basically, however, he argued that the church must more and more "concentrate upon persons and personal change in all classes of society. Its corporate witness will always be in direct relation to the number of twice-born men and women who make up the Christian community."

The disestablishment of the churches within Christendom is everywhere accompanied by the fear that this reduces the faith into a mere private interest. Simplification of the evangel by free churches and televangelists, at least in the USA, contributes to that fear. Mackay's dictum, however, must be taken with utmost seriousness. Public pronouncements by church officials, though important in certain situations, carry little of the real impact of the churches in society, whether for good or ill. Caught, as we are, between repetitious Christendom ritual (the great churches) and the individual salvation rhetoric (free/believer's churches), our churchianity is all too often impotent.

This observation, however, is not intended as either condemnation or as self-flagellation. And certainly it is not intended as an assessment of Christendom past. To the contrary, the contribution of Christianity to modernization is far greater than most of us, whether critics or devotees, realize. A year ago, in an international symposium in Munich, Professor Hans Buchheim of Mainz, observed:

A new species of freedom, freedom as *we* understand it, was brought into the world by Christianity. According to the Christian faith, every individual human must give an account as a person before a personal God in the last judgement. Thereby this now individual person is fundamentally freed from the “ethos” of society, since decisive final instance (of authority) is no this personal God. The decision thus required can require the person not to follow the custom of society but indeed to decide against it. That is the source of the innerworldly autonomy of the individual (tr. mine).

And Ernst Troeltsch, whose monumental work on the *Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, written early in this century, wrote near the end of his treatise:

The Christian Ethos alone possesses, in virtue of its personality Theism, a conviction of personality and individuality, based on metaphysics, which no Naturalism and no Pessimism can disturb. That personality which, rising above the natural order of life is only achieved through a union of will and the depths of being with God, alone transcends the finite, and alone can defy it. Without this support, however, every kind of individualism evaporates into thin air (1004f).

Troeltsch’s statement, though reflecting an earlier intellectual ambience, is remarkably prescient. Since he wrote, differentiation and the technicizing of life has continued apace. The individualization and (potential) personalization of existence may well be the most profound revolution to occur in human history. Purely positivist analysis leads increasingly to nihilistic conclusions in which the person as ontological entity disappears--the very outcome that Troeltsch foresaw (see, e.g., Gergen; Rorty). Troeltsch’s own prognosis led as we know to individual mysticism. Yet he also asserted that *Kirche, Sekte and Mystik*, and all three, are equally grounded in the gospel. The “future task,” he then concluded, lay in “the mutual penetration of the three sociological categories, which must be united in a structure which will reconcile them all.” The outcome, I would hazard, will more resemble *Diaspora* than *Christendom*.

NOTE

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1 For a benchmark overview of these developments see George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (1972). Though much has been published since then, this work admirably serves our present purpose. Williams distinguished the “radical” (Anabaptist) from the “magisterial” (Lutheran, Calvinist) Reformation. His study is additionally relevant here, because in it (as he does elsewhere), he elaborates on the remarkable tolerance of the Polish polity in the sixteenth century, when elsewhere in Europe, religious dissent was harshly suppressed. For a briefer “radical Reformation” introduction, see Little.

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Chapter XV

The “Free Church?” A Time Whose Idea Has Not Come*

Fritz Blanke, church historian at the University of Zurich in the early 1950s, defined sixteenth century Anabaptism as the first modern “free church.” The concept of the free church, of course, was formulated in contrast to the state and folk Christianity that had prevailed in Europe for more than a millennium. Reviewing the price paid by the radical reformers for abandoning that tradition, Blanke ended his Anabaptist research seminar with the comment, “Their only error was that, historically speaking, they embraced the free church prematurely.” The unspoken implications: first, the radical proposition was valid; and second, though premature then, the “free church” was destined nonetheless to be the wave of the future.

In this essay I offer some reflections on Blanke’s free church thesis. These reflections, however, will be my own, and thus are not intended as speculations as to what may have been in my esteemed teacher’s mind. For the purpose of this essay I accept the notion of sixteenth century prematurity as a descriptive tool; that is, the sixteenth century was not ready to listen to the “free church” project, and thus all but crushed it. Our own century, to the contrary, is cupping its ears, but, I shall argue, the churches, now free, are stuttering.

In part the mission of the “free church” has been realized, and this fact alone can give rise to uncertainty. Church and state have been separated, Christianity has been disestablished, states have become “secular,” and freedom of religion has come to be recognized as a basic human right. In any event, the ecclesiological idioms available in the religious marketplace are mostly establishment and sectarian vestiges from the past, and these have relatively little to offer to this age. The task of this essay is to critique these idioms, and then to address our current situation. It will be necessary thus to recall rapidly some salient though familiar facets of salvation history.

BIBLICAL FAITH AS AN APORIA

Biblical faith, beginning with the call of Abraham and climaxing in the (New Testament) age of the Spirit, entails a conundrum, perhaps in the end an *aporia*, a set of contradictions for which there is no logical solution. On the one hand, Old Testament people encountered God in a qualitatively new mode, and with this came a new definition of humanity. At the same time, however, this Creator God, Yahweh, disclosed himself through a specially chosen people, the Israelites, and eventually through Jesus and his followers, the Christians. Something had gone wrong--the “Fall,” “original sin,” or whatever--so that action, supplementary to the creation covenant, became necessary.

Thereafter things seem to move on two tracks, one for all humanity, the other for the chosen people (Hebrews, later Christians). There seem to be two orders, one of creation the other of salvation, one of nature the other of grace. The chosen people, however, move on both tracks, and matters become rather complicated in all directions. At times the chosen people appear as the center or end of all things, and thus as recipients of special blessing. At other times, however, and fundamentally, they appear as means to a larger end, the salvation of all humanity. They are called apart, with a special identity, but only as a means to a larger end, an end beyond themselves. They are constituted an "eschatological" community, rooted in a reality beyond time and space. They are yeast destined to "leaven" the entire "lump" of all humanity. Two impulses, one centripetal, the other centrifugal, stand in unrelieved tension, always shifting in the flux of history, never at rest.

We thus face a series of quandaries. How are the sociabilities of "nature" and of "grace" related among the people of the covenant? How are the covenantally chosen people related to the rest of humankind? And growing from these two questions, how is an eschatological community, a manifestation of a kingdom that "is not of this world" (John 18:36), to express itself historically? Thus far, over the course of more than three millennia of "salvation" history, this problem has been manifest as an *aporia*. A faith community that is merely "spiritual" possesses no reality. A faith community, organized historically, as other groups are organized, perpetually tends to debase itself. This *aporia* is the subject of the present essay.

Israel and Christendom

The problem arises with the Israelite Exodus, the Sinai covenant, and the formation of the nation of Israel. The interplay of theocratic vision and primitive (elementary) tribalism in the emerging Israelite social organization is not readily decipherable. Did the covenant in fact contain a blueprint for decentralized self-sufficiency without a central state? Was the monarchy simply the result of the lack of faith or a loss of nerve? Or did the subsequent assimilation of the royal motif in the figure of the Messiah imply a more positive dimension as well? Whatever the answers, we know that the uniquely Hebrew prophetic tradition emerged in juxtaposition to the monarchy (monarchies). The covenant became an ellipse with two foci: the royal institutions, with their corrupting tragedy of power, in ever-heightening tension with the prophet-championed theocratic vision. There are cycles of apostasy and partial repentance, but the general direction is down, leading eventually to the captivity of the monarchy. In the end, only Diaspora remains, a phenomenon to which I will return.

Remarkably enough, a parallel mutation occurred in early Christianity, specifically in the fourth century, when the new faith was first recognized and tolerated by the Roman Empire (Constantine) and then late in the same century was made the exclusive state religion (Theodosius). This mutation however, was not limited to the Roman empire. From Armenia and Georgia

in the East to Britain in the West, Christianity “triumphed” in nation after nation as princes embraced the faith and harnessed its energies to state-building. A mutation of this sort, moreover, has not been limited to Judaism and Christianity. Other “founded” religions,¹ notably Islam and Buddhism, have been similarly employed. It may also be noted in passing that in modern times Christian missions have gained hearing mostly where other “founded” religions have not previously entered.

Here, then, an acute question arises. What does it signify that historically Christianity has been a civilizing energy, that it has afforded the spiritual resources for state- and society-building? Roland Bainton, in effect, addresses our above *aporia* when he distinguishes the two methods by which the Christian faith can be (has been) promulgated. One is “the way of individual conversion with a goodly period of instruction prior to baptism. The disadvantage of this method is that the Christian converts in a pagan culture become, by reason of their change in faith, deracinated from their own culture and compelled to move into an alien conclave. The other method is mass conversion, and it was this method which converted Europe. Kings like Clovis (early 6th century) embraced the faith. The disadvantage of this method was that it entailed the paganizing of Christianity.”²

The former method, Bainton observes, was characteristic of the nineteenth century Protestant missionary movement.

George Mendenhall, an Old Testament scholar, notes the parallel between the rise of the Israelite monarchy and the Constantinian turning point in Christianity. Describing King David as the “Old Testament Constantine,” he extends the canvass to include a similar mutation of the original message of Zarathustra by the later Achaemenids (7th, 6th centuries, B.C.). He writes, “All three cases are entirely analogous, illustrating (to put it as provocatively as possible) *the dissolution of religion into politics*. At the same time, the basis of solidarity was no longer the covenant, but the myth of descent from a common ancestor.”³

More than politics was involved, or rather, this “dissolution” itself was a multidimensional process. Apparently princes espoused the founded religion when it demonstrated sufficient power to appear politically useful. On the other hand, in both the Israelite and the Christian instance, the faithful had “good” reason to accept a political embodiment of the faith. The Israelites thought they needed a king to enable them to cope with surrounding hostile powers. Christians, for their part, had suffered under persecution. A reversal of imperial policy was understandably welcome.

These externally triggered anxieties, however, had deeper roots as well. Though our common human life is materially rooted and determined, our very humanity consists in our capacity and vocation to transcend those determinisms in thought, in choice and action. We construct tools, buildings, and spaceships first in our minds, and then translate our mental pictures into material constructs. Similarly our perception-based actions give rise to the social cultural order that shapes our existence.⁴ But we also visualize possibilities and realities that cannot be thus materialized. We espouse visions

and ideals that spur us forward even when they are not directly attainable. Religious faith pertains to the unseen, the "otherworldly"; and the faith experience is profoundly personal, never fully communicable. But religious prehensions are mediated and validated intersubjectively, and this brings them into the world of symbolic culture.

By their very nature, however, religious prehensions are highly precarious. Unexpressed or unembodied, they tend to evaporate. Once culturally embodied, however, they are exposed to other energies and readily assume a life of their own. In any event, authentic "otherworldly" quests have profound "this-worldly" consequences. Christian monasticism, for example, is an example of withdrawal and otherworldliness. At its best it has profoundly impacted events in the world. On the other hand, monasticism has often been corrupted by the very historical processes which it set in motion. This, in the end, may be the root problem. Both the Hebrew and the Christian prophetic visions were so powerful that in effect they generated entire civilizations. Once institutionalized, however, and subjected to the vitalities of nature, they assumed a life of their own, thereby losing contact with the originating vision. It was as if the burning bush which Moses saw was in fact consumed.

If the emergence of Christendom may be viewed as analogous to the rise of the Hebrew monarchy, the rise of Christian monasticism and of medieval sect by the same token, may be seen as analogous to the rise of Hebrew prophecy. Just as there were false prophets, there were monastic and sectarian perversions. Similarly instructive parallels can be drawn between the decline of the Hebrew monarchies and the decline of Christendom, though these parallels may be less direct. More particularly, the resulting Jewish dispersion (Diaspora), as we shall see, has ecclesiological significance.

Ancient Israel and medieval Christendom both succumbed to the illusion that their respective covenants could be, and in fact were, historically embodied and secured. In the former instance the cult and the temple seemed to make this explicit. The subsequent establishment of the monarchy reinforced this notion. Nonetheless, from the outset these material embodiments tended to suborn the covenant. With advancing apostasy, tension between the prophetic vision and both cult and monarchy mounted. Finally the full truth dawned. The word of the Lord came to the prophet, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6). Once the prophetic vision climaxes in Jesus, the veil in the temple is rent, and all doubt is removed (Mark 15:38). The kingdom is simply not of this world (John 18:36). On the material plane it employs neither altar nor throne! Altar and throne were provisional didactic measures, leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24). Not Moses (though he, too, had his prophetic side), but Abraham is the prototypical figure!

Given the historical and cultural context of ancient Israel, and the vulnerability of its tribal polity to surrounding military intrigue, the materialization of the covenant in Hebrew history is at least understandable. But how, without fundamentally misreading the gospel, does one get to imperial Christianity, whether of the Roman or of the Byzantine variety? The

path traveled was doubtless complex and cannot be pursued here. Obviously the same human impulses and needs asserted themselves in both instances, the Hebrew and the Christian. Political rule and religious establishment would reduce the insecurities and risks inherent in faith. But there were important differences as well. Whereas the Hebrew state was organized from within the faith community, in the Christian case the state came from the outside. While for that reason one might view the fourth century establishment of Christianity as the rape of the church by the empire, church life had already become diluted by that time. In the ensuing era many churchmen were only too ready to invoke imperial power in support of their cause.

Less than a century after embracing Christianity, however, the empire, inwardly decadent, collapsed under invasions from the North (476 CE). For more than a millennium thereafter, the notion of empire as a spiritual entity was to haunt European rulers, as one after the other vainly pursued the imperial purple. The problem was to surmount a chaotic tribalism with wider, more stable political configurations. Christendom, the civilization that arose thereby, was a dazzling, though ruthless, achievement. Meanwhile, the struggle to surmount intertribal chaos and conflict that dominated Europe during the Middle Ages has gone worldwide, and in our era is far from resolution. The brutality of society- and state-building processes, of course, is not to be blamed directly on Judaism or Christianity, or for that matter, on any of the founded religions that energized the building of civilization. The scandal is rather that these religions all have been prostituted in the process.

REFORMATION: FREEING THE CHURCH?

The medieval vision of a universal church, united under one head, admittedly has enormous aesthetic appeal. But it rested on premises, both at the point of departure and of subsequent development, that are far from explicit in the Gospels. Moreover, historical evidence, both in the biblical era and since, speaks against such a project. But if not by such organizational and hierarchical means, how is the covenant or faith community to become historically real and manifest?

This question arose acutely in the Protestant Reformation. The “magisterial reformers,”⁵ for their part, presupposed the unity of the church universal as they embarked on their journey. Luther in particular remained thoroughly medieval in his mystical conception of human unity, a conception later known as the *corpus christianum*. He, and others like him, wished to reform, not to divide, the church.

That, however, was not to be. The controversy with the papacy that followed, as we know, ended in a complete break between Rome and the Reformers. Once out of fellowship with Rome, the latter acutely faced the problem, theologically as well as practically: Where in the church is authority vested? Indeed, what and where is “the church”? Luther, it has long been noted, toyed with the vision of a believers’ church, a gathering of people who wished to be Christian in earnest.⁶ But for this, Luther opined, he did not have

the people. In any case, concerned as he was for civic order and for the fate of the whole society, such a church was hardly an option.

Zwingli’s brush with the free church idea was more serious. Not only was that conception beginning to dawn among his associates, but on precipitating the first disputation in Zurich in early 1523, he found himself on the defensive. Zurich belonged to the Catholic diocese of Constance, and obviously, according to church law, only the bishop could convene the clergy. But in the early 1520s, as reform ferment in Zurich mounted, the city council, at Zwingli’s prompting, convened a public disputation to consider the first reforms. Zwingli, needing to justify the procedure, invoked the promise of Christ’s presence where two or three gather (Matt. 18). The logic, of course, was strained. A meeting of a city council is hardly a meeting “in my Jesus’ name.” Lamely Zwingli appealed to the fact that council members were Christians, doubtless a claim nominally true, but malapropos. In any case the meeting was not an ecclesial gathering.

For both Luther and Zwingli, given their assumptions, the “free church” was not an option. In the sixteenth century, social and political cohesion was seen generally as dependent on religious uniformity. Moreover, had Luther been seriously tempted by the “free church” model, the Peasants’ Revolt would quickly have disabused him of the notion. In the end, he divided the temporal and spiritual spheres, ceding the public activity of the church to the temporal sphere” thus to the jurisdiction of the territorial prince, and retaining matters of faith for the church. While this was intended as an emergency measure, German kings were to carry the title *Notbischof* for four centuries. Swiss reformers, though with different reasoning, followed the same course. In their setting, however, the rule was municipal rather than royal.

In passing, it is instructive to observe that sixteenth century political conceptions and policies strikingly paralleled important features of Marxist-Leninist rule in the Soviet Union today, the atheism of the latter notwithstanding. Marxist-Leninists, Soviet-style, perhaps in part as heirs of the Byzantine tradition, at least until recently could no more conceive of civic and political unity, and hence stability, without ideological uniformity than could the sixteenth century reformers. In the Soviet system the party and its dogma occupy a place similar to that held by the church and its creed prior to the October Revolution (1917). Doubtless this displacement of the church by the party accounts at least in part for the severity of the pressure on the churches during the period since 1917.

Radical Reformation: The First Free Church

H.S. Bender’s “Anabaptist Vision” (1944), and revisionist reinterpretations meanwhile, have provided a fruitful point of orientation in sixteenth century Radical Reformation studies in recent decades. Unresolved disagreements in those studies need not distract us here. However turbulent and confusing that now distant era may have been, a distinct movement, surviving into our own time, crystallized around the seven articles drawn

up by a group of “radicals” in 1527 in Schleithem, a village on the Swiss-German border.⁷ Not only did this statement shape the original ethos of that movement, the Mennonites, the Amish, and originally the Hutterites, but it offers classic formulas on the issues before us here, namely, those arising from the two-track mode of divine action in human history. These articles, of course, are the source of Bender’s “vision.”

These articles, compiled under the leadership of Michael Sattler, a former Benedictine prior, were written under great stress. Felix Mantz, the first martyr of the new movement, had just been executed in his native Zurich. Decrees had been passed prohibiting the activities of the radicals, who later were to be dubbed Anabaptist. The issues they raised now suddenly took on life-and-death significance. Focusing on issues in dispute, the Schleithem Articles deftly laid bare the fallacies that underlay the medieval synthesis of Christianity as civilization. On the other hand, these formulations clearly presupposed a common body of Christian tradition and understanding that did not need to be spelled out. In no way, then, did the Schleithem Articles presume to offer a complete theology. In fact, their fragmentary nature was to haunt, in subsequent times, the communities gathered around them.

Schleithem radically redefined salvation, church, and the fallen created order. Though order and symbolic observances remain, sacrament and hierarchy disappear. The church, now a voluntary assembly, consists of believers, prepared to submit to the disciplines of the gospel. Understood as the dialogical assembly of believers, the church is defined in this document in radically congregational terms. Structures beyond that are simply not contemplated. In a remarkably pregnant yet succinct phrase, the “sword” (magistracy) is viewed as “divinely ordained, outside the perfection of Christ.” Overall, the articles are important, not only as an incisive and coherent paradigm in its own right, but also because of their paradigmatic power in the perpetuation of the communities formed around them.⁸

Though the statement appears sharply dichotomous, church against world, ambiguities remain. For example, how does this dualism compare with Luther’s famous “two-kingdom” doctrine? Further, as has often been observed, the “sect” is a first-generation phenomenon. The children of parents who have left the host society to form the new community reach maturity under very different circumstances. This fact, of course, the Schleithem Articles do not address. Nor do they address the problems of wider church polity: How is life beyond the congregation to be structured? In fact, while momentarily reopening the two-track dualism addressed at the beginning of this essay, the articles hardly sense the full consequences of what they are about.

Remarkably enough, until the Amish schism a century and a half later, the communities gathered around the Schleithem Articles, at least in the Swiss-Upper German region, survived with a merely informal congregational polity. Visits and informal gatherings of leaders sufficed to nurture the common vision. Withdrawal from the surrounding society and persecution by it, however, abetted the ethnicizing impulses that inhered. Once encysted

subculturally within the surrounding society, this faith community tended to mutate into an ethnicity.

Those impulses, everywhere incipient among Mennonites, reached full bloom under the unusual conditions offered in 18th/19th century czarist Russia. Catherine the Great, in the second half of the eighteenth century, included Mennonites in the extensive colonization by Germans which she undertook to develop her vast lands. Meanwhile, Mennonites living under privileged military exemption in Prussian lands, found their privilege jeopardized for other reasons. As a result many were responsive to the czarina's overtures. The charter given to Mennonites in Russia made them a self-governing colony under the crown, responsible for their own civic as well as religious affairs. Under these circumstances, in less than a century, Mennonites in Russia evolved into a new, albeit miniature, Christendom. Baptism, for those who failed to embrace it by choice, became a compulsory, hence civic, ceremony. Because of the accompanying--and resulting--spiritual laxity, a revival broke out, which, like the sixteenth century before it, led to schism and persecution (1860 ff.).⁹ The original Mennonite community had effectively become a state church. Its response to revival in its midst was similar to the responses of the established churches, Catholic and Protestants, to the sixteenth century radicals. This revival was triggered by the preaching of a German pietist evangelist, who also happened to be an immersionist in his view of baptism. Baptized Mennonites, born again in the revival, were now rebaptized, this time by immersion, an irony, indeed!

Modern Free Churches

If the sixteenth century radicals were the first free church, other free movements were to follow independently in other lands in subsequent centuries. These, such as Baptists and Congregationalists, championed freedom in the minimal sense stipulated above--religious liberty, separation of church and state, and typically, believer's baptism. Most, however, did not embrace the maximal severity included in the Schleithem paradigm. The distinction between the minimalist and maximalist free church paradigms, though important, need not detain us here.

With minor exceptions, free churches in the Western world won toleration only with the eighteenth century Enlightenment and political revolutions. Meanwhile, many establishment conceptions and practices persisted well into the twentieth century even when minimalist freedoms were introduced. In some countries, England and Sweden in the West, for example, and Hungary and the German Democratic Republic in the East, institutional vestiges of establishment remain today. Churches once established have been slow to yield their privileges, or to tolerate, much less to recognize, free churches within their domains.

Many immigrants to the New World came in search of religious liberty. Nonetheless several of the colonies originally had established churches. When it came to American independence, however, and the new constitution,

diversity of traditions and churches in the various colonies precluded the favoring of one denomination over others. Hence the famous First Amendment clause: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The grounding for this solution was chiefly practical and political. There was little theological preparation for this revolutionary step.

Theological justification was to come only gradually, in Protestant thought earlier, in Roman Catholic thought, only since Vatican II. Today religious liberty and separation of church and state are defended, no longer merely on pragmatic grounds, but fundamentally. But do we have a full-blown conception of the "free church" in Christianity in America? In fact, do we possess an adequate ecclesiology at all? I will discuss this question briefly in the final section below. Here, by way of illustration with reference to these questions, I shall note only the denominational problem.

"Free churches," including Mennonites, while repudiating the Roman hierarchy, assiduously construct "denominations," vague replicas of what they ostensibly left behind in the break with Rome. Protestants built denominations after the breakup of Christendom in the same way that kings built ostensibly sovereign realms with the breakup of the "Holy Roman Empire." The medieval Catholic claim enjoyed a degree of plausibility that is lacking in any Protestant case (here I use the term "Protestant" in its loose modern, rather than its technical sixteenth century, sense). Catholic appeal to historical continuity and universality possesses a certain logic. These claims, coupled with a conception of organic growth that permits the articulation of new doctrine from mere hints in the gospel text, make of the Roman formula a formidable force. Yet the premises themselves, to any but the devout, are implausible.

But what about other "churches," i.e., denominations? To be sure, many can appeal to the renewal movements out of which they arose, and thus, in effect, to the self-authenticating presence of Christ among the two or three gathered in his name. But if that, rather than historic succession, is the basis, whence the mandate for denominational empires? To sense the problem, one need only recall the verdict when the first hint of the denomination arose in New Testament times (1 Cor. 3). *Sola scriptura* was an early, and abiding, Protestant principle; but on those grounds precisely, denominations are ecclesiological nonentities.

In recent years "mainline" churches, denominations all, have declined numerically, while "Bible" and other "independent" churches have burgeoned. No single "cause," of course, can be identified. Some significance attaches nonetheless to the distance between denominational and congregational structures and the primary level of religious experience. If "Jesus saves," why all the other baggage? If we receive salvation *sola fidei*, does it help, or does it rather hinder, when one comes to faith, to be expected at the same time to buy into a particular historical tradition? How does one biblically justify the need to become a Lutheran, a Calvinist, or a Mennonite in order to be a Christian? In practice, to be sure, "Jesus saves" turns readily into a reductionist

slogan. Responsible denominational witness is likely to present a fuller and more robust message than do many freewheeling gospel hucksters. But does that fact of itself constitute a foundation for a denominational ecclesiology? Protestants object to doctrinal accretions by papal fiat, but how does the erection of denominations by non-Catholics differ?

What Time Is This?

It was in retrospect that Professor Blanke described the Anabaptist “free church” as a premature proposal for the sixteenth century. Conventional wisdom today regards it as self-evident that church and state should be separate, and that religious commitments are intrinsically free. At least to the people whose views prevailed in sixteenth century Europe, these notions were anything but self-evident. The change in perception meanwhile does not necessarily mean that people today have grown better or wiser--that is not ours to judge, in any case--but that historical circumstances have changed. Now that other bases of social cohesion have emerged, churches can be independent, and religion can be free, without threat to public order. Thus one can argue that the “free church” is an idea whose time has come.

Before finally assessing that claim, we must take note of several features of the modern free church environment. What specifically has transpired that makes conceptions viewed as seditious in the sixteenth century, axiomatically self-evident today? Events and developments during this period of history, and the records and literature about them, of course, are far too vast for any meaningful summary here. Two broad generalizations only, and their consequences, will be noted. First, social systems (groups, associations, organizations, and the like) have grown too vast, too complex, and too diverse to be forced into homogeneous and centrally controlled configurations. Modern societies are “active,”¹⁰ participatory, and pluralistic. They comprise numerous actors, interests, and values. Only crushing totalitarian force could achieve religious uniformity, and that only in superficial, external terms.

Second, and by the same token, the stabilities sought in the sixteenth century by enforced symbolic consensus are being achieved far more effectively by other means. Specialization, exchange, communication, and hence realized interdependence among vast and diverse population aggregates, are proving to be far more effective as social stabilizers than was compulsory religious uniformity in earlier centuries. In a word, modern societies have outgrown the need for religion as political legitimation and integration. This is but a special case of a general evolution in the course of which science and a variety of empirical disciplines, by virtue of their greater practical effectiveness, supplant appeal to religion and the supernatural.

Yet, contrary to the conclusion that many people mistakenly draw, the religious dimensions of human existence do not disappear. Nor is “human nature” altered fundamentally by these social transformations. Quite to the contrary, the age-old question of the meaning of existence appears in heightened intensity. For the transformations in complexity and scale just noted entail the

attenuation of the primordial solidarities of blood and soil that in the early epochs of our race hemmed in and determined our existence. Modernization means the pluralization, at times almost the atomization, of our communal solidarities. From these emerge, on the one side, the modern “autonomous” individual, on the other, the organization and the vast, role-based systems of contractual exchange. As a result we experience unprecedented freedom and at least potential rootlessness.¹¹

A Time Whose Idea Has Not Come

I began with a dual question, posed by four millennia of Hebrew and Christian salvation history: How are the sociabilities of “nature” and those of “grace” related among the people of the covenant; and how are the covenantally chosen people related to the rest of humankind? In effect, how is the theologically posited tension between the centripetal (“come ye apart”) and the centrifugal (“go ye into all the world”) to be worked out historically? The faith community, supra-historically grounded, enters history, as it were, only to succumb to the forces of nature. This occurred, as we saw, in the rise of the Hebrew monarchy(s), of European Christendom, and of the miniature Mennonite Christendom in Russia.

Is such sedimentation inevitable, or are we missing something in the way we handle our sources, the biblical materials? The reformation upheavals of the sixteenth century remain a fruitful context for reflection on these questions. In this respect, important Radical Reformation research has yet to be undertaken. Retrospectively we can say that the Reformation generally signaled the beginning of the end of Christendom, and was thus analogous to the end of the Hebrew monarchies in Old Testament times, and to the split among Mennonites in Russia in 1860. The break of the Reformers with Rome raised the above question acutely, not merely theologically, but above all existentially and historically. Where, and what, is “the church”? These questions were debated in the sixteenth century intensively, extensively, instructively--and inconclusively.¹²

The notion that the “free church” is an idea whose time has come has a bracing ring to it. History appears to have vindicated, at least in some measure, the courageous act of the little band in an obscure village (Schleitheim) in 1527. Those who consequently gave their lives, rightly join the “cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 11) who spur us onward. Yet as our era engages its inherited battery of ecclesiastical idioms, serious misgivings arise. Instead of an idea whose time has come, we confront *a time whose idea has not come*. Prevailing churchdom repels many people in our time, and leaves many who still hang on, dissatisfied. If with this history as background we turn attentively and critically to our biblical sources, our anxiety can only mount. We can find there no grounding for much of today’s “churchianity.” And I refer, not to the absence of proof texts, but rather to the “tenor of Scripture,” to the entire narrative.

A claim as sweeping as this must be carefully qualified. It neither implies nor presupposes judgments of church or denominational programs nor of persons who serve in denominational or other ecclesiastical posts. Likewise it is not directed against the faithful in denominationally united congregations. One of the liberating aspects of our faith is the relative indifference of the Spirit to "earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians. 4:7) in which the waters of salvation are conveyed; "The word of God is not fettered" (2 Timothy. 2:9). In any case, the denominational forest is not about to disappear, perhaps least of all the mighty oaks of Rome, Constantinople, or Antioch. From what we can see, church life tomorrow will closely resemble the church life of yesterday. But none of these qualifications relieves us of the responsibility to confront the profound obsolescence and errors of our ecclesiastical ways. The prevailing forms of church life are neither faithful to the gospel, nor do they engage the social configuration of our age. Sinful consequences, to be sure, calling for repentance, may flow in specific instances, and these will need to be dealt with accordingly. But those do not directly concern us here.

No, the problem lies far deeper. The ecclesiological idioms that shape the corporate experience of Christians today still hail largely from establishment times. Church bodies, both Catholic and Protestant, with establishment pasts, largely maintain the traditional establishment-engendered institutional and liturgical modalities. Free church denominations, if and when their sectarian fervor cools, gravitate toward "mainline" liturgical modes. Institutionally neither group, established or free, is responding directly enough to either the new situation or the biblical materials. Past ecclesiological idioms, whether formed to integrate populations and to legitimate power, or in defiance of such adaptations, are little-suited to the psychic needs of modern autonomous but fragmented and rootless individuals. At best, the reification of these earlier idioms distorts our perception of both texts and events.

Looking for the Tender Shoots

Given the sweep of this claim, it would be presumptuous to propose *the* or even *a* solution in one short essay. Indeed, our problem is profoundly human and spiritual, hence inaccessible to external blueprints. But it would be irresponsible to offer this critique without some clues as to the kinds of responses needed. I shall first note several vital signs among Christians today, and in scholarly inquiry, and then list several areas that call for critical reflection and action. Despite our ecclesiological helplessness, many tender shoots of new growth are evident. Throughout this century there has been a growing "ecumenical" awareness in the churches, expressed concretely in developments such as the World Council of Churches (founded in 1948), consisting of "communions" other than Roman Catholics, and in initiatives from the Roman Catholics as well. These developments are accompanied by conciliar movements in many lands and at lower levels as well. More important than organizational advances, however, is the fact that many earlier barriers among Christians are softening. Though conflict and schism

still inflict the Christian community, Christians are joining hands across boundaries that once seemed insurmountable. Admittedly, the critique offered here questions whether merger is panacea for the denominational malady. Summing illegitimacies will not legitimize. But this critique also entails, as already indicated, a responsiveness to the freedom of the Spirit whenever and wherever, and the Spirit is not bound by or to denominations.

Paralleling these “from above” stirrings is the ferment “from below”- “base communities,” “house churches,” and the like, in many lands and forms. Generically these have much in common with the sixteenth century “free church” movements, though they possess their own dynamics. Some of these occur within existing churches, others at greater remove. Beyond this, creative energy continues to burst forth in existing churches and denominational agencies. Thus it must be emphasized: initiatives seeking “end runs” around existing churches, even with their troubled history, must be treated with utmost suspicion. Much of the brokenness in the history of the church stems from separatist attempts to reestablish the “pure church.” No, we must stay together, within our broken heritage, but with bags packed for the new trek.

Ernst Troeltsch, in 1911, published a monumental work, eventually translated as *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*.¹³ The work was monumental because it shaped or influenced the ways that scholars approached such questions as those raised in the present essay. Spanning the centuries of Christian history, his work identified three social embodiments of the Christian faith, the *Kirche* or church, the *Sekte* or sect, and mysticism (sometimes spiritualism). Against the prevailing view that made the *Kirche* (the folk- or state-church) of Christendom normative, and the other two expressions, especially the sect, mere deformations, Troeltsch argued that all three motifs appear side by side in the New Testament. “It has become clear,” he wrote, “how little the Gospel and the Primitive Church shaped the religious community from a uniform point of view.”¹⁴

Troeltsch’s project took him through the eighteenth century, following which Christian history entered “a new phase of existence.” The “unity of civilization controlled by a State Church” has disintegrated. Modern, scientifically reinforced individualism is fusing with the individualism of the older mystics to become “a refuge for the religious life of the cultured classes.”¹⁵ As other writers were to point out later, Christian values had become institutionalized and, in this manner, secularized. These values, now culturally embodied, live on, as it were, without necessary reference to their Christian origin.

This work is cited both because of its fecundity and because of its influence on modern scholarship. It has led the way, for example, in the rehabilitation of the sixteenth century radicals. One of the promising developments in our own time is the reencounter of the *Kirche* traditions with the *Sekte* legacy of the pre-Constantinian era. This is seen dramatically in the relegitimizing of the pacifist option (World Council of Churches, 1948; Vatican II), and numerous corresponding actions by various church bodies

meanwhile. The importance of these developments becomes evident when we consider that as recently as World War II, pacifists in many churches received no “official” or even pastoral support in the stand they took. Here, however, I am concerned with the ecclesiological rather than the ethical import of these breakthroughs.

Recognizing the disestablishment of the churches generally, George Lindbeck, a Luther scholar, anticipates “a sociological sectarian future in which the exclusivist claims of the orthodox mainstream of the Christian tradition and maintained, even if reinterpreted.” Lindbeck follows Rahner¹⁶ in distinguishing the “sociological” from the “ecclesiological” concept of the sectarian. “The mainstream of early Christianity was sectarian,” he continues, “in the sense in which we use the term. It consisted of a small, strongly deviant minority, unsupported by cultural convention and prestige, within the larger society. This was true even though it was also ‘catholic’ in the ecclesiological sense of embracing a wide variety of classes, races, theologies, liturgies and styles of life, and of being unified, rather than splintered into competing groups.”¹⁷

What of reencounters in the opposite direction, free churches with the “catholic” of the *Kirche* traditions? This will mean something more than the reassimilation which sets in among many sects as they cool off. And what of Troeltsch’s third category, the spiritualist “refuge for the religious life of the cultured classes”? Was Troeltsch right in emphasizing “how little the Gospel and the Primitive Church shaped the religious community itself from a uniform point of view?” Or are these themes unified at a deeper level, ever available when we are able to respond at that level?

As Karl Ludwig Schmidt observes, the New Testament distinguishes the local *ecclesia* (we translate “congregation”) from the total *ecclesia* (we translate “church”). He notes also the scholarly uncertainty as to whether the generic reference is to the totality, locally manifested, or to the totality of all those dispersed.¹⁸ There is, of course, no doubt concerning the central significance of the *ecclesia* in the Christian scenario. But it is also of signal importance that numerous other metaphors for the covenant people appear in the New Testament. Indeed 1 Peter, perhaps the most important ecclesiological treatise in the New Testament, does not even use the term *ecclesia*.¹⁹ Even in the Gospel of Matthew, where the term does occur, as a recent study emphasizes, the Christian assembly is household-based. This fact adds to the poignancy and urgency of the hard sayings of Jesus in the same Gospel concerning the challenge of kingdom loyalties to the ties of nature (e.g., Matt. 12:46-50).

When these teachings are properly read against the backdrop of the developmental thrust of Hebrew prophecy, climaxing as it did in the ministry of Jesus, it is evident at once that we move far too quickly and glibly from the biblical materials to our own religious institutions. We must take far more seriously the “iconoclastic” ecclesiology of the primordial New Testament materials--the Gospels, 1 Corinthians, 1 Peter. In the context of Reformation studies, the debate concerning the “invisibility” of the church will have to be re-addressed. In New Testament terms, obviously the Christian person and the

assembly of Christians are “visible” and “real.” Both, however, exist in and by faith. But is this reality subject to social organization--bureaucracy, legal personality, real estate ownership, professional careers and ambitions, and the like? Can the Presence who appears where two or three are gathered (Matt. 18) be thus organized? What, in fact, is the object to which the term *ecclesia* refers? Have we extended, enriched, or promoted it when we build tabernacles to trap the transcendent (Matt. 17)

Modernization, as I noted above, disengages us from the ascriptive solidarities of kinship and place, and both permits and compels us to achieve our own identity and place in the world. This development, though in part a fruit of the gospel, when responsible communally anchored selves are absent, degenerates into acquisitive self-interest. In the gospel the emancipated and autonomous person is a communal being, self-giving rather than self-promoting. The burden of our detached subjectivity may well be the most acute of our personal problems today. Contemporary modes of “church,” however, are little suited to respond to these needs. The machinery runs, whether or not people believe.

Michael Crosby (1988) regards the acquisitive consumerism of our society as “addictive,” addictive in the sense that we are powerless to cope with it individually.²⁰ Hence he concludes that “only by turning over our lives to a greater power (through the religious experience of God’s presence in *exousia*) and by creating alternative, house-type communities will we be able to provide the necessary environment for a new order of justice in our lives and that of society.”²¹ The epistle of 1 Peter²² makes the same point, by means of the Diaspora metaphor. The faith community, as transforming reality, shines through all the configurations of nature, but can never be incorporated by them. That is the good news.

NOTES

*This essay was published in *Anabaptism Revisited*. ed. Walter Klaassen. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992:173-188.

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2 Roland H. Bainton, *Christendom: A Short History of Christianity and its Impact on Western Civilization*. Vol. I (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964) 147.

3 George Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation; The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Christian Tradition* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) 16 f. Cf. Paul Peachey, “Europe as a Missionary Field? Some Socio-historical Reflections,” *Mission Focus* 16 (Sept. 1988), 43-47.

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5 George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957). 6 “The German Mass and Order of Service,

1526) in *Selected Writings of Martin Luther 1523-1526*, ed. T. G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967) 387-426.

7 John H. Yoder, tr. and ed., *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1973), 28-54.

8 For example, Beulah Hostetter, *American Mennonites and Protestant Movements: A Community Paradigm* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1987).

9 E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonite of Manitoba* (Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen, 1955).

10 Amitai Etzioni, *The Active Society* (New York: Free press, 1958).

11 Cf. Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper Row, 1985).

12 For the Anabaptists, the classic contemporary study is F. H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964). For a recent comparative study of Luther, Calvin and Menno Simons, see John R. Loescher, *The Divine Community: Trinity, Church and Ethics in Reformation Theologians* (Kirksville, Mo: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1981).

13 Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960, orig. German 1911).

14 *Ibid* II, 993.

15 *Ibid*.

16 Karl Rahner, *The Christian of the Future* (New York: Herder 7 Herder, 1967).

17 George Lindbeck, "The Sectarian Future of the Church," in *The God Experience*, ed. Joseph P. Walen (New York: Newman Prss, 1971).

18 Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "Ekklesia," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament IV*, Ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 1967) 501-536.

19 Cf John H. Elliot, *A Home for the Homeless* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).

20 Michael H. Crosby, *House of Disciples: Church, Economics and Justice in Matthew* (Maryknoll, NY: Oris Books, 1988).

21 *Ibid*, 212.

22 Cf. Elliot, *A Home for the Homeless*.

Chapter XVI

God: The Redeeming Creator*

The distinction in the Christian story between God's action and identity as Creator and God's action and identity as Redeemer is in some measure enigmatic.¹ Is there divergence between these two personas? Was or is God's creation either flawed or incomplete, hence requiring revision or completion? What of the clash, potential or real, between Christianity and other monotheistic faiths? Wars have been fought, not only between ostensibly Christian and non-Christian nations, but even between nations informed by differing versions of Christianity. Why? Is such conflict inevitable, somehow intrinsic in this duality? Whatever the "final" answer to questions as these, practically the creation/redemption duality is experienced as a unique dialectic in Christian history.

In our own time this enigma of God's creative and saving presence has intensified. First, there is the increasing evidence that humans have somehow begun to disrupt the environmental harmony of our planet. It is argued by some that this disruption arise from a human arrogance that flows from biblical religion. Second, the technologies that lead to that disruption increasingly also separate us from the natural world of which after all we are part. Growing numbers of us live in wholly artificial surroundings, with consequences not yet fully understood. And finally, on another plane, the globalizing dimensions of these processes are commingling the earth's peoples and their religions in unprecedented ways. The case for a definition of deity, common to all religions and peoples, has never been stronger, nor to the contrary, as I shall argue, more vulnerable!

A clash between Christian and other prevailing world views is seen as inevitable in the gospel story, but as persecution, not as war. Jesus announces, in the final beatitude in the series with which he begins his Sermon on the Mount : Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account (NRSV). Loving, rather than striking back, is doubly blessing. It brings healing inwardly to the persecutee and reaches outward to the persecutor. What is of note in the context of this essay is the fundamental significance of God's two modes, and hence the need for clarity regarding it.

Across the centuries, in many times and places, including underground churches even in the twentieth century, Christians have drawn persecution. Meanwhile scholars have grappled variously with the relation between the two modes of divine action, often under the terms of nature and grace. For example, 13th century Thomas Aquinas argued persuasively that *grace fulfills nature*. In the 20th century, Karl Barth likened grace as a stream flowing within the stream of nature (creation). Yet as we shall note in a moment, every generation confronts the challenge of responding directly to the gospel, good news, the *kerygma*.² And while the orientation of biblical story is historical, it

is equally sensitive to our propensity to idolize the idioms of the past. “Woe to you!” said Jesus to the teachers of his time, “For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed” (Luke 11:47). Alas, it is often easier to recite a creed or enact a ritual than to hear and embrace the *kerygma*.

It is the task of this volume to wrestle directly with the *nature/grace* dialectic in our own time. Both utilizing our past, and extricating ourselves from it, are necessarily part of that dialectic. In the section immediately following I utilize an influential environmental essay as an introductory case study. Following this I comment on *nature/grace* discrepancies embedded in the legacy of Christendom. In the end I hope to arrive, not at a blueprint for our time, but at markers for the path we must take in our own era.

BIBLICAL FAITH AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

In December, 1966, early in the rise of the modern environmental movement, historian Lynn White delivered a lecture before a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science entitled, *The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis*.³ In this benchmark essay, White threw down the gauntlet to the Christian community. “The victory of Christianity over paganism,” he proposed, “was the greatest psychic revolution in the history of our culture.” Graeco-Roman mythology held to a cyclical notion of time in contrast to which “Christianity inherited from Judaism not only a concept of time as nonselective and linear but also a striking story of creation.” Creating the cosmos stage by stage,” White continued, “God planned all this for man’s benefit--and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man’s purposes. . . . Man shares, in great measure, God’s transcendence of nature.” But by thus “destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.”

White acknowledged the complexity of the Christian faith from which flows “consequences (that) differ in differing contexts.” He cited differences that arose between the Latin and the Greek Churches as an important example. From the outset, Christians held not only that God created the world, but that in that creation he revealed himself. Different readings of the Christian story evolved, and in 1054 a lasting schism between the East (Greek) and West (Latin) broke out. The Greeks believed that sin was “intellectual blindness” and thus that salvation required “clear thinking.” The Latins, on the other hand, viewed sin as “moral evil,” with salvation to be found in “right conduct.” Correspondingly, where the Eastern tradition inclines to *contemplation* as the thrust of the biblical story, the Western reading points more to *action*.

By the 13th century, however, a “very different bent” emerged in the Latin West. Whether God acts in nature or in revelation, the focus in the human response shifted from “decoding of the physical symbols of God’s communication with man” to “the effort to understand God’s mind by discovering how his creation operates.” Thus modern science was aborning. Moreover, in this Western development, science and technology, intellect and action, effectively became conjoined--“a functional unity of brain and hand,”

says White. By the late 18th century, however, “the hypothesis of God became unnecessary to many scientists.”

White offers a robust account of the biblical account of creation and its impact on civilization. He credits the biblical story for energizing the scientific and technological revolutions in modernity, yet blames it as well for the human arrogance toward nature that led and leads to our environmental crisis. In drawing his conclusions, White observes that both *science* and *technology* are blessed words in our contemporary vocabulary...viewed historically, modern science is an extrapolation of natural theology and second, ... modern technology is at least partly to be explained as an Occidental, voluntarist realization of the Christian dogma of man’s transcendence of, and rightful mastery over, nature...What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship. More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecologic crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one.

Since White wrote in the 1960s, he noted the appeal of Zen Buddhism to the beatniks of that era, as nearly the “mirror image” of the Christian view, but as too deeply conditioned in Asian history to become viable in the USA. So he opted instead for his second alternative, the rethinking of the “old” religion, embedded in our culture. In so doing, he turned to the example of St. Francis of Assisi, “the greatest radical in Christian history since Christ.” He cited examples from the historical record of this monk’s well-known reverence for animals. He proposed that “the key to the understanding of Francis is his belief in the virtue of humility--not merely for the individual but for man as a species.” Thus Francis might well serve “as a patron saint for ecologists.”

White rightly highlights the foundational significance of the shift from a cyclical to a linear reading of time in the biblical story. But is it correct to blame Christianity almost single-handedly for the environmental crisis of our era? There are two problems with that claim. First is the absence of an evidential basis. Second is the reading of Christianity on which White’s claim rests. While he rightly sees “humility” as the heart of the piety of St. Francis, yet he attributes the “arrogance” that leads to disdain of nature to the biblical saga. Effectively missing from White’s reading is the redemptive heart of the Christian story.

Whether consciously or not, White’s prism for reading the Christian story is the prism of Christendom. That reading, though fundamentally flawed, is all too true! Western civilization indeed has all too often moved “arrogantly” upon the world, and all too often that movement has carried “Christian” overtones. For when conjoined with political and civilizational hegemony, Christianity serves rather more to sacralize the human condition in its fallenness than to witness to its transformation by the grace of the gospel. Moreover, as we shall see, the “conversion” of the Roman Empire in the fourth century was accorded an end-time significance that was unwarranted.

Christendom: a Premature Fusion of Nature and Grace

As the fourth century of our era began, Christianity was still a *persecuted* minority in the Roman empire. By the time that century ended, Christianity had become part of the *persecuting* majority. For the next millennium, among the principalities of the Mediterranean region and northern Europe whole peoples came to be labeled as Christian without personal choice, conversion, or understanding. Undoubtedly genuine conversions among the diverse peoples included in that empire continued, much as had taken place in the earlier decades and centuries. Nonetheless the mutation the Christian idiom from *persecuted* to *persecutor* was real, and over time the consequences for Christian faith and life, were fundamental.

Within a few decades, early in fifth century, Boniface, a captain in the Roman army in North Africa, sought the advice of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. Count Boniface apparently had qualms about the military crusade under consideration to crush the Donatist schism. While the schism originated in a dispute over local church leadership and strictness in church discipline, there were sociopolitical overtones as well—African opposition to Roman rule. While Augustine elsewhere enunciated a nuanced distinction between the “city of God” and the “city of man,” under the pressure of the Donatist “threat” he apparently faltered. Replying in a lengthy letter,⁴ Augustine argued that early Christians did not invoke the power of “the kings on earth” because at that time there “was no emperor who believed in Christ.” “But after the prophetic words began to be fulfilled, as it is written: ‘And all the kings of the earth shall adore him; all nations shall serve him (Psalm 72:11),’ what serious-minded man would say to kings: ‘Do not trouble to care whether the Church of your Lord is hampered or attacked...’” Augustine sees a sovereign serving God “one way as man, another way as king; ...as man by living according to faith,...as king by exerting the necessary strength to sanction laws which command goodness and prohibit its opposite...”

Elsewhere in the treatise Augustine elaborates further. He notes that in the case of “Saul, a dread destroyer of the Church, and afterward its great builder, (Christ) not only compelled him by words, but used his power to strike him prostrate and in order to force him to leave off the savagery of his dark unbelief... If it had not been for that punishment, he (Saul) would not have been healed of it afterwards.” Similarly the good bishop invoked the parable of the marriage feast, wherein, in the absence of the invited guests, servants were sent to gather by-passers on the highway, and when that wasn’t enough they were sent a second time to “compel them to come in.” From this parable Augustine extrapolated a two-stage strategy: first the carrot, but if that is not enough, then the stick. Dutch Catholic historian, F. van der Meer, while describing Augustine as generally a conciliatory Christian bishop, says nonetheless that he “must be regarded as the true father of the Inquisition.”⁵

The apostles, he argued, did not invoke the power of “the kings on earth” because at that time there “was no emperor who believed in Christ.” “But after the prophetic words began to be fulfilled, as it is written: ‘And all the

kings of the earth shall adore him; all nations shall serve him,' what serious-minded man would say to kings: 'Do not trouble to care whether the Church of your Lord is hampered or attacked...'" Augustine sees a sovereign serving God "one way as man, another way as king; ...as man by living according to faith,...as king by exerting the necessary strength to sanction laws which command goodness and prohibit its opposite..."

In a word, in the transition from *persecutee to persecutor*, Christianity underwent several profound "paradigm shifts" whereby the realms of Creation and Redemption (nature and grace) became fundamentally muddled. First, political power was grounded in nature, and not first introduced by grace, God's salvific intervention. As we have yet to note here, the redemption of all things, thus the whole creation, will be realized only eschatologically, in the hereafter. There is no warranty in our biblical sources for the Augustinian claim here sketched that historically the polity is already transformed salvifically. What happened instead, once that assumption is made, is rather that grace is subsumed in nature, and insofar diluted. A Dutch historian long ago aptly described the fourth century Constantinian achievement as "the fall of Christianity."⁶

The Protestant and "Free Church" Reform: Miscarried or Unfinished?

Both before and after this fourth century mutation in the reading of the Christian story there was disagreement and dissent among Christians. Given the inaccessibility of the Transcendent to human thought and word, how can we make sense of the claim that the human is made "in the image of God," not even to mention the much later proposition that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us?" Ironically we owe the "Nicene Creed," the formula most widespread among the diverse Christians even today, to a gathering of bishops at Nicea (in today's Turkey) in 325 CE, convened by the Emperor Constantine, with order maintained by his troops. He had adopted Christianity in order to consolidate his rule, only to find to his dismay that Christians were quarreling among themselves!

But we now leap forward some 1,200 years from the time of Nicea, to the 1520s. Europe was in convulsions. Corroding institutions were challenged by cells of renewal, with confusion in the ferment between them. Reforms were demanded and underway. Momentum was a-building. Unintentionally and unexpectedly by the early 1520s, mutual excommunication had arisen between Rome's Holy See and the reformers, Martin Luther in Germany and Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland. These reformers, now without papal warrant, recalled the ecclesial archetype, set forth by Jesus in Matthew 18:20--*where two or three are gathered in my name among them, I am there among them*. But social and political unrest was already aborning. Soon the peasants marched--the Peasants' War (1524-1526). Both reformers quickly turned back from the notion of congregational primacy, and called on political authorities to suppress the rebellion and maintain church order.

Effectively, they now spiritualized their message by drawing a line between the visible and the invisible aspects of the church. The external affairs of the church--the buildings, the clergy, the ritual, all came under political control. The spiritual or "invisible" dimensions were to be reserved for the clergy. Constantine was suddenly back, more fully in control than ever, but on a royal or city-state, rather than an imperial, scale. Effectively, in order to salvage one pole of their state/church ellipsis, the Reformers sacrificed the other.

Mere decades earlier, the printing press had emerged. Popular literacy was growing. Both translations of Scripture and reform pamphlets were reaching an ever-widening public. Bible reading circles--today we might call them house churches--were emerging. Associates of the reformers communicated with the responding laity. A few of these associates pressed forward with these lay circles, even as the leaders, Luther, Zwingli and others, called an "official" halt. Participants in these circles no longer had their children baptized, even as they themselves were rebaptized (hence the term Anabaptist) upon their own personal confession of faith. The line between these circles and socio-political uprising more generally was not always readily drawn. Hence this movement was suppressed, often brutally, along with the marching peasants. It survived only marginally, generally as a negative "sectarian" stereotype.

Only in the twentieth century, partly through the first-time publication of original 16th century records, has the story appeared in more positive light. Thus that movement can now be seen as having heralded what has come to be known the "free church" paradigm. A 20th century historian's characterization, "Radical Reformation,"⁷ (along with the term "Magisterial" for state-sponsored Reformation) communicates more readily in our time than does the polemical Anabaptist label of the 16th century. The radicals acted on the belief that the politically-established ecclesial systems, in both Constantinian and Protestant form, were at odds with the New Testament creation of faith communities in *diaspora* among the peoples of the earth. With history having moved decisively, especially in the USA, toward political disestablishment of Christianity, toward "free churches," the "Radical Reformation" now appears in a rather different light.

Given the purpose of this essay, I suggest that, contrary to common practice, we treat the general Protestant and the Radical Reformations as a single movement. With the historic apostolic link in both instances lost already in the earlier separation from Rome, as political disestablishment of the church developed apace, the distance between the two Protestant ecclesial paradigms, *magisterial* and *radical* narrowed. Both are now without either papal (apostolic) or political support. For a time, the respective traditions provided ballast, but historical memories for denominational particularity increasingly recede.

The disestablishment of Christianity as state-sponsored in the USA, however, as historian Perry Miller⁸ points out, was something we "stumbled into" rather than fundamentally informed. Confusion resulted and persists. We are at once very secular, yet pour religious zeal, in external "Christian" garb,

into the pursuit of national self-interest. Here, the basic issue was well captured by the gauntlet thrown by a 16th century radical named Michael Sattler, formerly prior of the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter in the South German Black Forest. Troubled by the plight of the peasants and the relative luxury of his monastery at their expense, he left. Later he discovered and eventually joined the radicals, and in a defining declaration of a small gathering of radical leaders, penned the classic phrase: *the sword is an ordering of God, outside the perfection of Christ.*⁹ Again, two streams. An echo, of monasticism, to be sure, but uttered by one who has fully re-entered the world as it is.

Important for us in this context is the sharp articulation of the Creator-Redeemer dialectic--God's ordering in Creation and Reclamation in Christ--in the above formula. Several months later, Sattler was burned at the stake by Christendom's sword-bearers. With martyrdom *at stake* in raising the issues at that time, the radicals never finished their task. With Christendom no longer there to silence dissenters at the stake, can Protestants, Magisterial and Radical, complete their unfinished task today? If not by way of a global hierarchy, how is the unity of God's redeemed people to be made manifest? We return to this theme below.

The People of God as Diaspora

The people of Israel, from whom the Christian movement eventually emerged, at a critical moment a millennium and a half earlier, underwent a transformation resembling the fourth century Constantinian change in Christianity. The story,¹⁰ beginning with the call of Abraham, is familiar. The tribes of Israel, named after the twelve sons of Jacob, Abraham's grandson, after exodus from enslavement in Egypt, became a covenant people under God at Sinai. Their *nature*-based identity as a people was surmounted by a *grace*-based grounding. To be sure they had leaders, later seers, but these were mandated by God. But making their way among the surrounding peoples as they settled in their "promised land," a time of crisis arrived. With their external survival threatened, they demanded a king, a *nature*-based arrangement. Recognizing the seriousness of their external peril, God yielded, to the consternation of Samuel, their Seer, who had been commissioned otherwise (I Samuel 8)!

Saul, the first king, was a fiasco. But then came David, and initially more idyllically, Solomon. The grant of monarchy came with dire warning of possible consequences. Two outcomes resulted. On the one hand, royal imagery entered the spiritual vocabulary of the people of Israel. On the other hand, dire consequences in fact did follow. There were ups and downs. Already with the son of Solomon as royal successor the country split into two, ten tribes to the north, two to the south. Particularly in the north there were more downs than ups. Eventually the kingdom and people of the north imploded. The south too imploded ultimately, with the elite exiled to Babylon, several centuries later, and a remnant left behind in Canaan. In exile, their identity was reconstituted, and came to be known as *Judaism* (from the tribe of Judah). Some eventually returned to Canaan, yet permanent restoration did

not survive. *Diaspora*, it turned out, was the definitive identity and vocation of the people of God in history.

According to Genesis 12:3 “all the families of the earth” were to be blessed by Abraham’s response to God’s call to him to leave fatherland, clan and family for an unknown destination. Abraham went. And while he arrived in what came to be known as the “promised land,” he did not live to see the full realization of the promise he received. Nor would blessedness of the “chosen people” in the land of promise, idealized in royal Davidic-Solomonic imagery, endure. It was succeeded instead by exile and dispersion. Meanwhile, in the prophetic movement a more profound spiritual vision was unfolding.

Exile, loss of the land of promise, obviously was and is profoundly traumatic. “How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land” (Psalm 137)? Yet Jeremiah, the prophet who chided the apostasy that led to exile, nonetheless cheered: Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel to all the exiles whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon... Seek the welfare of the city where I (God) have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare (29:7). Exile--expulsion from one’s native land--may or may not result in dispersion.

Meanwhile, over these same centuries, there had been dispersion through migrations. And as Erich S. Gruen, a contemporary Jewish scholar emphasizes, voluntary Jewish dispersion (*diaspora*), was far more extensive in scope than involuntary or exilic settlement.¹¹ Effectively he chides the modern Zionist movement for fanning guilt over *diaspora*, whether voluntary or involuntary. Modern Jews, by reclaiming Palestine, by thus taking control of their destiny, would deal with that guilt. Whatever the verdict or outcome, this entire history is vast and complex, far beyond recounting and assessing here.

What Gruen underscores, however, is the seminal dynamic of the Jewish settlements dispersed throughout Mediterranean world over the period of more than two millennia, and of the Christianity which arose from it. Fredriksen in her review of Gruen’s work summarizes:

The God of Israel, through the Septuagint, conquered the West. No Greek-speaking diaspora, no Septuagint. No Septuagint, no Christianity. No Christianity, no Western civilization. This Hellenistic Jewish community has been invisible to all but historical cognoscenti, in part as a consequence of its cultural success. Was, or is, this historically-leavening process the blessing to “all the families of the earth” that Abram’s heeding of God’s call would bring?

Let us return now to the Christian story. The Reformation, whatever its contribution otherwise, may have repeated the sagas of Davidic monarchy in ancient Israel and the fourth century co-opting of Christianity by the Roman Empire. Would ancient Israel have survived without incorporation as monarchy? Would early Christianity have survived without incorporation into the Roman Empire? And now would the Reformation have survived without incorporation as state churches in the German and Swiss territories? In all

three instances, did not the covenantal process continue in some remnant form? Does the visible/invisible distinction, however inadequately, reflect the two streams of divine agency?

IDOLATRY IN THE BIBLICAL SAGA

Idolatry is a seductive perplexity that the Abrahamic cause relentlessly exposed from beginning to end. True, idols in their crude form--hand-carved figures, likened by the prophet Jeremiah to "scarecrows in a cucumber field" (Ch. 10:3-5)--have long since been discredited. As variously defined aids in worship, however, images are still widely used, and caution is indicated, whether one approves or questions the practice. Far more vitiating and persistent are the oft disguised forms of idolatry--the creeds, rites, or rules to which we cling, even schismatically.

What does Jesus mean when he answered the question as to where to find the kingdom of God: "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among (within) you" (Luke 17: 20-21). This is not an isolated proof text, nor on the other hand, is it merely an early and vacuous "postmodern" utterance! To the contrary! Otherworldly reality cannot be captured, contained, or trafficked in this-worldly constructs. "The wind blows where it chooses," Jesus said on another occasion, "and you hear the sound of it, but you know not where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8)!

These are remarkable words indeed! How much churchly or sacramental "pomp and circumstance" can these pronouncements bear? Yet Jesus surely cannot be promoting a pure spiritualism here. After all, he uses words to advocate a seeming wordlessness! Yet somehow the intention is clear enough. The reign of God is beyond our capture, control, or embodiment. The gospel is God in search of humans (Heschel¹²), not humans in search of God! "Church-planting" is not social engineering! And as we have yet to note, these pronouncements bear incisively on the nature/grace issues here before us. For at some point, kingdom manifestations, once merely culturally residual, may lose their salvific quality, effectively dissolving into the natural order--or disorder.

God begins with us where we are. But meanwhile, altar and sacrifice, these all too readily mutate into the idolatry they were meant to supplant. Prophets begin to say ever more bluntly that God was never interested in sacrifice in the first place (e.g., Psalm 40:6-8). Second, while the human enterprise is indelibly communal, salvation becomes individually personal (e.g., Ezekiel 18:4 The soul that sins shall die). Third, and by the same token, dispersal among the earth's peoples--living *witness* rather than sacramental collectivity-- becomes the mode of salvation. And finally, salvation history will be fully realized only eschatologically, that is, beyond history.

Salvation History and Creation

With the introduction here of the term “salvation history” we come at once to the heart and the concluding summary of this brief essay. The term itself has a long and intricate “history.” The *Encyclopedia of Theology* offers a compact definition:

Theologically speaking, the OT is the phase of the history of revelation and salvation which began with God’s covenant with Abraham, had its center (as the prophets teach) in the exodus from Egypt and the covenant of the chosen people of Israel under Moses at Sinai, and came to fulfillment in Christ’s death and resurrection and the new and eternal covenant of God with the whole of mankind which they constituted.¹³

Today, as Christians, we confront challenges and opportunities on a scale that may be unprecedented. As the New Testament makes abundantly clear, our Christian story begins with the call to Abraham. Only thus is the Christian *kerygma* comprehensible. The present essay moves within the horizon of three spheres--creation (nature), history (grace), and spirit (the Transcendent). The human species is distinguished by its unique participation in all three spheres. The relationships among these spheres is not fully reducible to human terms of discourse, and is thus characterized in part as *mystery*.

Nature, the material world, is a determinate order. Humans, as biological organisms, are embedded in that order. But the creation of this unique species “in the image of God” introduces a finite zone of indeterminism into that determinate order. Culture emerges as the malleable ordering-medium whereby freedom becomes navigable within the determinate order. Yet culture at the same time is also conditioned by the determinants of nature. History effectively narrates the sequence of events arising in this indeterminate sphere, and assists to some extent, in the ordering of those events insofar as undetermined. Meanwhile, human response to natural determinism is indeterminately conditioned, insofar as humans as biological organisms, function also as parts of the determinate order. No wonder Paul, the transformed Jew, readily sensed that proclaiming “Christ crucified (is) a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the Wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

Through “the school of hard knocks,” Paul learned how readily our efforts in the kingdom turn out to be merely combustible “wood, hay, straw” (1 Corinthians 3:12), but to him that *discouraging* fact turned into *encouragement*, since thereby he learned that “it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry. So we do not lose heart, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen.” Of course, we must live, witness, and worship in the mediums of time and space. But what about all the institutional cacophony of our time, both free church and catholic? To what extent does this arise because we are more concerned with “what can be seen” than with “what cannot be seen”? It is in that transcendence that *grace fulfills nature*. What can we do in

our time to re-ignite the fundamental vision that informs, yet tends to slumber, in all our traditions?

NOTES

*Paper read at a conference at the Rolling Ridge Study Retreat Community, October, 2002.

1 This topic is part of the larger doctrine of the Trinity in Christian witness. Focus on the Creator/Redeemer sub-set here is without prejudice to that larger reality in which it participates. Miroslav Volf offers a bracing update of that wider discussion in *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image the Trinity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

2 *Kerugma* (or *kerugma*), the Greek term translated as preaching (1 Corinthians 2:4), and used by scholars to emphasize the unique character of the gospel message.

3 *Science* 155 (10 March, 1967).

4 *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. Ed. Roy J. Deferrari. Volume IV *St. Augustine Letters*. Tr. by Sister Wifrid Parsons, S. N. D. New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1955: 141-165.

5 *Augustine the Bishop: The Life and Work of a Father of the Church*. London & New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961.

6 Gerrit Jan Heering, *The Fall of Christianity: A Study of Christianity, the State and War*. New York: Garland Publishers, 1972,

7 *The Radical Reformation*. By George Hunston Williams. Rev. edition. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Publishers, 1992.

8 See Perry Miller, *Nature's Nation*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967: 155.

9 "The Schleithem Articles" in *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions*. Ed Denis R. Janz. Fortress Press, 1999: 178.

10 Our durable term "story" has become massaged in linguistics and postmodern discussion almost to the point of uselessness. Here employed in the traditional sense of real narration, without prejudice o postmodern discourse.

11 *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

12 See Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1976, 1997.

13 *Encyclopedia Of Theology*. Edited by Karl Rahner. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

PART IV

STAGES IN A VOCATIONAL PILGRIMAGE

Chapter XVII

The World That Shaped Me

Look to ...the quarry from which you were dug.

-- Isaiah the prophet

The task of this chapter is to sketch the cultural legacy that shaped me. For reasons that will become clear below, I begin with the story of Wilhelm Bender, my maternal great-grandfather, the first-born in a family of four children. In 1830, at the age of 15 he left home in Germany to set sail for America. He came from a village near Wohra, some thirty miles southwest of Kassel in west-central Germany. After a two-month voyage, the ship docked in Baltimore, Maryland. There he was stranded as a “redemptioneer,” an indentured servant to pay for the voyage he had just made. Word of his plight reached a German settlement in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, 130 miles northwest of Baltimore. An elder from that settlement went to Baltimore by horseback to bring the lad, first paying off the debt of his voyage.

The story of a rebellious youngster, running away from home? Hardly! He traveled not only with parental foreknowledge, but also their design. But why? To answer, we must dig still deeper into the “quarry” of history. After the Peace of Westphalia (1648) had ended the Thirty Years War in Europe, this family’s ancestors, as sectarian refugees (see below), had fled from Switzerland, filtering northward into the forested hills and valleys of the Wohra region in Germany. There, feudal landholders sought to repopulate the estates that had been devastated in the war now ended. These sectarians, still hassled by Swiss authorities, but preceded in this region of Germany by their reputation as upright, hardworking, skilled farmers, found there a relatively open door. Whatever regional restrictions against sectarianism remained in German territories, these local feudal landholders had the leeway to develop working agreements with their tenants.

By the early nineteenth century a scattering of Benders appeared among the sectarian settlements in the Wohra region, but that name did not appear among the Swiss immigrants. Whether by direct conversion or as a result of intermarriage, Benders among these sectarians were of German stock. But by then a new problem had arisen. Following the Congress of Vienna in 1815 (the year of Wilhelm Bender’s birth), the Prussian monarchy farther east was able to extend its power into regions of Germany to the west, including the above area. Men in the Prussian-controlled domains became subject to Prussian military mobilization. But these sectarians were pacifists, and to avoid Prussian military conscription, once more they would be on the move. Wilhelm, the oldest child, who several years later would be subject to conscription, was sent first. Unable to afford the voyage for the whole family, they hoped they might all follow at some later point. That hope was realized a

decade later, though shortly before their departure for America, the father died and thus never reached the New World.

Who Were the “Sectarians”?

A bit more must now be said about these sectarians. Given the social and political unrest that had widely erupted in Europe north of the Alps early in the 16th century, by the mid-1520s the Protestant reformers, notably Martin Luther in Germany and Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland, had called on political rulers to take control of the external affairs of the churches. The churches became departments of state. Meanwhile church reforms had contributed to that unrest in the first place. Indeed, after the Reformers and the Roman papacy had excommunicated each other, the former contemplated separation from state affiliation as well. But with general chaos looming, they reversed themselves, newly entering into collaboration with prevailing governments.

A few of their associates objected on the grounds of the reform leaders’ own earlier teaching that the Christian faith cannot be politically implemented or imposed. Essentially, these dissenters argued that according to the Gospel, churches consist only of believers who freely choose to follow Christ. They disavowed the universal baptism of all infants that the reformers re-instituted territorially. Thereupon these dissenters, meeting in small independent gatherings, baptized only adults upon their confession of faith. Since people generally had already been baptized as infants, this meant a second, effectively a re-baptism, quickly declared an illegal “sectarian” act. Moreover the sacramental sanctity of the rite of the original act was ostensibly violated in such a re-baptism. Anabaptist (re-baptizer) now became a derogatory label, later included along with the more generally used label, *sectarian*.

Here is not the place to debate the matter historically. Once Anabaptism was legally banned, enforcement which under the circumstances was “persecution,” set in--imprisonment, confiscation of property, exile, torture, execution, in a word martyrdom for many hundreds over the next century. Despite this, Anabaptism spread as a minority movement, along with refugee settlements, throughout northern and central Europe, albeit surviving only at the margins. Banned from the cities, some became skilled agriculturalists, and hence were welcomed, though with restrictions, in areas needing development. Such was the Swiss-German settlement in the Wohra region, from which my great-grandfather, Wilhelm Bender came.

THE “NEW WORLD”

The first of these “sectarian” Anabaptists had arrived in “Penn’s Woods” (Pennsylvania) in America already in 1683. What later became the State of Pennsylvania began as a posthumous land grant by the English King Charles to Admiral William Penn in 1681 as payment of a debt the King owed the Admiral. The present boundaries of the State of Pennsylvania, however, were set only in 1792. Penn’s son, also named William (1644-1718), became

the actual recipient of that grant, despite the fact that he had become a Puritan, and later, more radically, a Quaker. However, for the latter reason the King had denied knighthood to the Admiral father that he had otherwise earned.

Pennsylvania is of note here because the younger Penn, himself a dissenter in England, had traveled to the continent and established contact with Anabaptists there. Considering the establishment of this colony as a “Holy Experiment,” he intended from the outset that Pennsylvania would be a haven for religious liberty, hence serving numerous dissenting European groups seeking freedom. The Somerset County area was opened formally by Penn for settlement only in 1769 after he had signed an agreement the previous year with the Indians. According to Somerset County land records, my great-grandfather, Wilhelm Bender had a tract of land surveyed on July 14, 1841, which till then was directly part of William Penn’s land grant. By then Bender was 26 years of age. On September 24, 1850, he received an actual “warrant” for 55 acres. Apparently it must have taken another nine years for him to be able to pay for that acquisition.

An adjacent warrant had been awarded to a “Peter Pedgey,” presumably Peter Bitsche, my Peachey ancestor, likewise an Anabaptist but one who had arrived directly from Switzerland already in 1767. One of Peter’s three sons, however, had settled in Mifflin County, a hundred miles to the north in the Kishacoquillas Valley in central Pennsylvania, from whom my father, Shem Yoder Peachey (1889-1973) descended. A number of settlers had already begun to move into the area without formal clearance, apparently including Peter Pedgey.

Eventually several Anabaptist settlements developed at the southern and northern ends of the county and northward into Cambria County. This area was a hilly plateau between two ranges in the Appalachian chain. Mt. Davis, Pennsylvania’s highest, lies in the southern part of the County. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania’s “Garden Spot,” lies 200 miles to the east. Perhaps, because unable to compete with the Garden Spot, Somerset County came to be dubbed Pennsylvania’s “Roof Garden.” Whatever its “garden” qualities, Somerset County also served as a kind of staging area for some Anabaptists who migrated to areas farther west, to present states such as Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa.

THE WORLD IN WHICH I GREW UP

While as Somerset County is a farming area, there are heavily wooded mountainous sections as well. Maple trees abounded, leading here and there to a small scale maple sugar industry. In 1911 or 1912 my father, Shem Peachey, then in his early twenties, came south from his native Kishacoquillas Valley to work during the maple sugar season in late February and early March. There he met Saloma Bender, daughter of Enoch and Mary, nee Yoder, Bender. Enoch, a son of Wilhelm, and eventually my grandfather, died shortly before my parents’ marriage on January 2, 1916 .

I was born on October 10, 1918, in a one-room log cabin in the above-noted Somerset County, a few miles north of the Mason-Dixon line. That log cabin was an anachronism, for by then log cabin days were over. Land grants originally were much larger than single farmsteads. Subdivisions into family farms came step-by-step later. In this instance a farm had just been sub-divided, and my mother's uncle, Christian Bender, had purchased the new farm, as yet without buildings. My young parents, married less than three years earlier, rented this farm. While the new house and farm buildings were being constructed they moved into the log cabin pre-existing on the site.

When I was four years old (February, 1923) my parents bought, and moved to, my mother's home place, part of the tract acquired originally by her immigrant grandfather, Wilhelm, which is where I grew up. Eventually we were a family of ten children, six girls and four boys of whom I was second oldest. My older brother had already left home by the time the youngest of our siblings, a sister, was born. We lived a mile from a village named Springs (originally Chestnut Springs), named thus for the spring around which a settlement began. By then, a little country store with a post office had been built next to the spring, where we both shopped and picked up our mail. A treasured childhood memory is riding by horseback to fetch the mail, perhaps along with the purchase of a small grocery item. Along the gravel road leading downhill to the store stood the two-room, two-story, eight-year elementary school that my siblings and I attended.

During those early years the larger society was merely a distant horizon for both geographic and technological reasons. The farm house was constructed next to a spring, with its water supply piped into the cellar and through the cellar into the farmyard into a trough for the livestock. Hand pumps drawing from open tanks in the cellar brought water to the kitchen and the dining room. There was only an outdoor toilet, no electricity as yet, and of course no radio or daily newspaper. A local "party-line" telephone system included several dozen farmers. When the phone rang, everyone on the system heard it and, rudely enough, anyone could listen to any conversation.

We did subscribe to a biweekly farm newspaper entitled *The Pennsylvania Farmer*. I recall Charles A. Lindbergh's 1927 first transatlantic airplane flight from reading a poster in our nearby machine shop. I recall as well Herbert Hoover's presidential election in 1928 that as a ten-year old I heard about at school. News of Franklin D. Roosevelt's election four years later, in 1932, was brought home by younger siblings from the public school from which I had graduated the previous spring.

Like many others in the region, money-wise, my parents were poor. My mother and her five surviving siblings had inherited the farm from their parents, Enoch and Mary (Yoder) Bender. They in turn had inherited the farm from his father Wilhelm. Arrangements were worked out whereby our family would eventually pay her siblings over many years for the other five shares from the farm's earnings. Six years after this move (1929) came the Great Depression that shaped the next decade. As farmers we gardened and raised our own food, and the farm house provided shelter. Income from the sale

of farm produce barely covered operating costs. There were borrowings and barter.

By the late 1930s, things improved slightly, in part because, as the older children in the family reached later adolescence, the family work force grew accordingly. We increased livestock and poultry production and cleared additional land. Later we were able also to do sharecropping on temporarily available neighboring farms. My father retailed butter, eggs and meat in Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, and Frostburg and Cumberland, Maryland, towns respectively 12, 17 and 28 miles away. Eventually the sale of fluid milk replaced butter production.

In important respects, the surrounding community was strong. Two maternal uncles, with growing families, lived on adjacent farms. Throughout the year there were borrowings back and forth. Two annual harvest events were cooperative events--grain threshing and silo-filling. For the former, the owner of the largest farm acquired a threshing machine, and was then paid a per-bushel fee for the actual threshing. Silo-filling equipment was jointly owned. In both instances the neighbors pooled their labors for the annual harvest events, going from farm to farm, usually six to eight in the "club," one or two days each. In each instance the women provided a big meal, which added to the social dimension of the occasion.

Ethnic and religious factors played important roles in local affairs as well, both positively and negatively, and these we experienced as vaguely calibrated in concentric circles, around our family. Native Americans had moved out of the region before Europeans settled in. Immigrants originally came mostly from the British Isles and northwestern Europe, mostly Protestant (Lutheran, Presbyterian, and "free church"), though also Catholic. Denominations American in origin, though with direct or indirect European roots, principally Baptists and Methodists, were also present. As elsewhere, this did not mean that all were practitioners of the religious traditions from which they descended. In effect, those with whom we had the most in common religiously, were also regarded as closest socially

FROM SERF TO YEOMAN FARMER AND THE FAMILY FARM

The yearning of the "common people" to escape from serfdom was an important impulse in European history. The landed aristocracy in Europe possessed freedoms beyond the reach of the peasantry. Though less severe than slavery, the territorial attachment of peasants to manorial estates, sharply limited their human freedom and development. Between these two strata, especially in England, a numerically limited strata of independent freeholding farmers emerged, farmers who owned and worked their own land. Characterized as yeoman, these farmers came to be regarded by some historians as "the backbone of the English nation." Given the ostensible emptiness of the North American continent, independent farming became even more decisive as the backbone of the new nation.

In part, these yeoman farmers can be viewed as the prototype of what in American history became the “family farm,” with the family farm thereby becoming “nuclear” rather than “extended.” Except for Afro-American enslavement, peasantry and serfdom were never part of American history. But while the family farm entailed partnership between spouses, patriarchy persisted. Only in 1920, in the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US constitution did women gain the right to vote in federal elections. In that same year, 1920, the USA decennial census for the first time found that “urban” population exceeded “rural,” that is, living in settlements of 2,500 and upward.

In any event, well into the twentieth century, the *family farm* was doubtless the modal, that is, the most typical, matrix of human character in American society. Thomas Jefferson, the third president (1801-1809), had earlier spent considerable time on USA government assignments in Europe. Prior to his presidency, in a letter (1787) to James Madison, who later would succeed him as president, Jefferson wrote: “I think our governments will remain virtuous ...as long as they are chiefly agricultural...When they (the people) get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe.”

In retrospect, more than two centuries later, Jefferson’s observation appears prescient. Sociologically speaking, a family farm-based society provided an unparalleled setting for the character formation of succeeding generations. In the journey from infancy to adulthood, children were present and as they grew older they participated increasingly in the full round of daily living. Admittedly, a family farm ethos was a stage in history that could not last. Today, in American society, the family farm has all but disappeared. Replacement of its character-forming potential remains at best a fragmentary work in progress.

Though by the second decade of the 20th century, the decade of my birth, the tide had already begun to turn against the family farm ethos in American history, that ethos was still the air I breathed in my childhood and youth. I experienced deeply both its strength and its limitations. My parents were hardworking and devout, and despite all that has happened in the course of the four score years since my birth, their legacy is the most profound capital on which I continue to draw and to surmount. Despite their religious charter to the contrary, over time these ingrown Anabaptist (Mennonite, Amish and Hutterite) communities tended on a small scale to fuse faith and natural communities, effectively the very fusion that occurred in Christendom on a large scale.

Nonetheless until recent decades Anabaptists in the USA for the most part had no professional clergy. Instead leadership emerged in the processes of communal and congregational life. When as yet I was barely a teenager, my father was chosen by lot and ordained as a “lay minister.” He was self-educated, a process he continued to the end of his days. Farming continued as the source of his livelihood, aided by his devoted spouse, my mother, and the flow of their children, ten of us in all. In his ministry he traveled frequently

to other communities. His reaching out, though coming at a price, became a source of family creativity.

Character and Circumstance (or Contingency)

In these introductory chapters, I employ the three terms, *character*, *circumstance* and *agency*, simply as descriptive and analytical tools. As humans we are endowed with both a biological and a cultural legacy without our awareness or choice. *Character* will be discussed further in the next chapter. Subsequent *contingencies* (circumstances, events) and our *agency* (choices, actions) interactively flesh out the person we become. We change over time even as to some extent we remain the same. There is a charming French proverb to the effect that *the more things change, the more they remain the same*.

As indicated in the introduction, the present chapter engages primarily my cultural matrix, though outside this scope of enquiry, the interactive biological dimensions are acknowledged and presupposed. Corresponding to the original Greek usage, I treat culture as an engraving tool. The next chapter (18) sketches my responses, corresponding to the imprint of that tool on me, marking my “character.” Following this, the 19th chapter describes a mid-life shift in focus that emerged from the limitations and contradictions within that cultural legacy. These are summarized in the 20th and 21st chapters respectively as the interflow of “secular” and “religious” phases of human existence. A last chapter features the outcome.

Chapter XVIII

Embracing My Legacy

The sense of the worth and identity of the self is the rudder that steers the human ship. -- Morton A. Kaplan

On an April evening in the late 1920s I had been sent by horseback as a 10 or 11 year-old on an errand to my uncle's farm a mile away. It had been a day of April showers. Returning, I rode up the hill on the long winding lane home. To my left lay our largest field, planted with spring oats merely days earlier. The oats had quickly sprouted. Tender green shoots covered the freshly cultivated soil. Suddenly the setting sun broke through the showery clouds and a tender green sheen bathed the rolling field. Today, more than seventy years later, I still treasure the memory of that inimitable vista, a simple instance of God's glorious creation!

At roughly the same period in life, I had a rather different experience. The religious culture that had shaped me, with daily Bible reading and prayer around the breakfast table and the like, stressed the centrality of one's personal response to the overtures of God. Once, during evening chores on a typical day, I was cranking the cream separator in the basement utility room of our farmhouse, separating cream from the buckets of still warm cows' milk brought in from the barn after the evening's milking. Someone was working nearby, likely my older brother. I was in tears over the realization that I needed God's forgiveness and healing. Somehow there was closure, and I came to inner peace.

This incident, too, is embedded in my memory, though lacking are the immediate details that triggered this emotional moment. This religious experience was rooted, of course, in the religious story of my ancestry, told in the previous chapter. This episode is somewhat puzzling, since the "sectarian" tradition here described calls for adult decision and commitment, a decision presumably beyond the reach of the 10 or 11 year-old that I then was. Rather more routinely I was baptized several years later at age 14, young enough even then for that more public expression. My personal spiritual journey began with the cream separator episode. Still elementary, that faith would grow over the decades that followed.

GRAVURE AND IMPRINT

In keeping with the original Greek meaning of the term *character*, now incorporated into English, the previous chapter treated the cultural matrix that shaped me as a *gravure*, a tool that engraves. The present chapter focuses on the imprint made by that gravure, my character as the imprint of that gravure. Viewed retrospectively, the two youthful anecdotes just cited left their imprint on me, foreshadowing the two themes that would eventually come into original

though ambiguous tension in my life--a celebration of Creation, the world of nature on the one hand, and the call of the transcendent, beyond the realm of nature, on the other. Tension between these two modalities would mount over the years and lead eventually to a mid-life course change. Tension between nature and the transcendent, it must be noted, appears in all cultures, however interpreted. All this, in my adolescent years, I but dimly perceived.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the family in which I grew up embodied the farm family as ideal type. The round of daily life and work was family-based. Through this the ambience of the surrounding community was both mediated and filtered. The consequences were at once positive and negative--positive, because the relatively isolated, covenant-grounded nuclear family served as the conduit of the core human value of communal individuality; and *negative*, insofar as "sectarian" withdrawal from the evils of the world outside coalesced all too readily with the rural isolation and poverty to foster a ghetto-like mentality and stereotype. With regard to the latter, the negative side, as I would come to realize later, the nearby public school, which I attended for eight successive years, effectively came to my rescue. Thus relatively early in my isolated childhood years came a significant touch with the wider world. Yet here, too, there was a drawback. For example, the village schoolmates could play ball and other games after school hours, whereas we farm boys had to return to farm work and chores. Thus among my classmates there was an inner and outer circle; I was confined to the latter.

Another countervailing influence came from the ways in which my father, perhaps ironically, reached beyond the very ghetto that his piety meanwhile tended to foster. Coming of age in 1910, he had traveled west the following summer from his native central Pennsylvania home to follow the wheat harvest from south to north, from Kansas to North Dakota. This was not an entirely uncommon, though somewhat surprising, activity at the time. It afforded a combination of youthful adventure and money-making. Even elementary schooling was fragmented at the time, not to speak of higher education. In Kansas, where my father began his wheat-harvest odyssey, he encountered a small-town educational opportunity to which he was inclined to proceed at summer's end.

But meanwhile, come fall, his older sister was to be married, an occasion for which he had to return home. According to family legend, as he returned, his mother, learning of his educational dream, declared in the Pennsylvania German the home community still spoke, *Now Shemy bleibst Du dahame--Now Shem-boy, you're staying home*. He stayed!--till two or three years later, when he traveled a hundred miles south to sugar-maple country in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. There he met and later married Saloma Bender, granddaughter of the young Wilhelm whom we met in the previous chapter. Shem's dream of higher education would be realized only by his children, even as he pursued his self-education throughout his own lifetime.

CHARACTER AND CIRCUMSTANCE

Drawing on the language of Gerard Loughlin, the previous chapter noted the interplay of character and circumstance (contingency) in the shaping of character, and hence of one's life story. I was born a month and a day before the end of World War I (WWI) (1918) and came of age at 21, a month and ten days after the outbreak of World War II (WWII), 1 September, 1939, with Hitler's forces invading Poland. In important respects I was cradled between and by these two wars. Obviously I can't recall WWI directly, but I remember its echoes from early childhood. Meanwhile at the opposite end of my youth, came the forebodings of the approaching cataclysm, eventually known as World War II. Thus memories of the one war, and forebodings of the other, set the historical perimeters of my youth.

Without presuming to psychoanalyze, I always experienced myself as an introvert. Whatever the genetic or physiological roots of the orientation, this predisposition was reinforced by the surrounding sectarian "moat" that was my family and community. This sense of insecurity was reinforced by the Great Depression in the American economy that spanned my adolescent years. As a result, as I moved from setting to setting in my adult years, an apprehensive insecurity haunted me. Despite this, perhaps ironically because of this insecurity, reaching outward, especially in the initiation of academic dialogue, became a defining dimension of my life story.

Late on an early September 1939 morning my father and I were in a hayfield, harvesting a late second cutting of clover. Without radios and daily papers, we were blissfully unaware of what was taking place "out there" day by day. That morning a small truck came driving into the field. It was driven by John B. Meyer, our live-stock dealer from ten miles away. My father had inquired about the availability of some shoates (young pigs) to supplement a shortfall in that season's baby pig "crop." Meyer, with 14 sleek shoates aboard his truck, exited with the announcement, "You can't go wrong on them; there's a war on this morning." Nazi forces had invaded Poland, the opening blast of what developed into World War II.

Today, more than sixty years later, this scene remains seared in my memory. Why? While without direct World War I memories, given this announcement, I quickly recalled the early post-war echoes--occasionally seeing someone in uniform, elementary school classmates bringing souvenirs from the war brought home by their fathers, passing the home of a World War I veteran whose sleep reportedly was disrupted by front-line memories, stories of difficulties that conscientious objectors had experienced. Now, a few weeks short of turning twenty-one the announcement: *There's a war on this morning!* struck home--this time I'm on the line. I am about to be summoned by the military. Meanwhile--the shoates were what we needed, and the deal was quickly closed. Incidentally, I'm sure his sales pitch--*there's a war on this morning*--had no influence on the transaction!

Practically as well as symbolically speaking, this episode signified the break-in of *society and history* into the *communal ghetto* of my youth. *Society*

in its military guise became the challenging circumstance in my life for the next two decades and beyond. World War II brought the tension between the wider society and my sectarian legacy sharply into focus. Chronologically this “break-in” coincided with the beginning of adulthood in my life course. Even so, more than two years would pass before the USA formally entered World War II in 1941. Meanwhile, however, both aid to European allies in that war and preparation for America’s eventual entry were already well underway. Yet until the actual induction of draftees into the military services earlier in that fateful year, the impact of those preparations on American daily life was minimal.

During this two-year interval, 1939-1941, my transition into adulthood followed its own momentum. I recall rather vividly my wistful yearnings in later adolescence, for example, as I followed the horse-drawn plow back and forth across a field, wondering about what lay beyond the mountain horizon that closed us in. Despite this wistfulness, I became a devotee of rural life, which I assumed would be my career. Through my teen years I worked hard on our family farm to rid us of the shackles of the Great Depression. I fancied that this would enable us eventually to reach, to travel or even to move to more favorable farming climes.

In that regard 1939 turned out to be a fateful year. Our family made a sort of final push to get out of debt by increasing farm production, partly through the share-cropping of additional available land in the vicinity. But contingencies intervened--an epidemic swept through our dairy herd, our laying hens failed to produce during the peak season when egg prices were high. In October of that year I came of age (21) and I now realized that “the jig was up”--my hopes of financial success for the family would not be realized. For the time being I would remain with my native family as a “farmhand,” working for room and board along with a modest cash wage. Regarding the longer future, nothing appeared on my horizon as yet, I had a girl friend (not my future wife), but marriage was not in prospect as yet.

Meanwhile an unexpected chain of circumstances brought me into contact with a small young “sectarian” college a hundred plus miles to our south in the state of Virginia. Education beyond elementary school (eight years) was not part of our family repertoire by then I was well past high school age. Despite limited printed matter in our farm home, I had been an active reader, and on that basis was admitted to a two-year junior college program at that college. I soon learned that my home state, Pennsylvania, offered a pre-professional examination, which if passed, would serve as high school equivalent for persons seeking college entrance. After some months of preparation, in stages, I earned that credential. The elation I felt at that moment is unforgettable--at age 23 an academic track was open to me after all.

BUT NOW WORLD WAR II WAS UPON US

In 1940 the USA Congress updated the World War I Selective Service Act that during World War II would subject all able-bodied men to military conscription. That legislation included provision for the implementation of non-military national service by conscientious objectors to military service. Later that year I was included in the first registration following that enactment. In keeping with my upbringing I registered as a conscientious objector (CO) to military service. My CO status was duly approved.

Late in the following year, 1941, I was included in the first lottery-based national call-up for actual induction. That legislation also provided for exemption from service for particular categories of draftees--individuals with physical defects or family predicaments, or in indispensable civilian occupations. As I recall, I had only two or three days to prepare for induction. Not knowing how events might unfold after registration in 1940, I had meanwhile begun study at Eastern Mennonite School in Virginia. When I reported my call-up to the college dean he informed me that he had just received word that the Bible study major in which I was enrolled had been approved by Selective Service for what was called a 4-D classified deferment from conscription for seminarians, persons training for the religious ministry. That profession was considered of national importance, and candidates were permitted to continue their study and to enter that profession accordingly. At that time, however, most Anabaptist groups had no professional ministry, and hence no seminaries to provide such training. So Selective Service agreed to treat undergraduate college training with Bible majors as seminary-equivalent.

I now had twenty-four hours to decide whether to sign on for a full four-year program or to accept induction into national service. Having hailed straight from my parent's family farm a few months earlier, this was a difficult decision. By then I was committed to a life of Christian service though not as a professional clergyman. To remain in college merely on that flimsy basis--would this be a cop-out? With some discomfort, in a spur-of-the-moment telephone conversation with the dean, I decided to stay in college, thereby accepting a 4-D classification. About two months later came Pearl Harbor, and the USA was at war.

As the war progressed my discomfort mounted. Yet I never had reason to regret my decision to remain in college with a 4-D Selective Service classification. By the time I began my final year in the college program, the year the war ended, I concluded that my theological training needed to be supplemented by sociological study. "Theology may reach heaven" I commented to a few fellow students, "but I'm pretty sure it doesn't quite reach earth." Graduation came in May, 1945, the month the war in Europe ended. In June I married and within days enrolled in the graduate sociology program at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. But given the fact that the 4-D classification meant training for direct church work, pressure mounted from college and church leaders back in Virginia that I accept a church assignment

accordingly, thereby putting sociological study on hold. I yielded, and by September accepted two half-time church assignments back in the college community.

A DILEMMA RESOLVED

Within weeks, however, came a solution to my predicament. My bride and I were on a weekend visit to her family home outside Newport News, Virginia, our first since our marriage three months earlier. During the regular Sunday worship in her home church, in a sudden epiphany I realized that I was going to Europe to serve in the postwar emergency relief program that the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) had begun there. We returned to Harrisonburg later in the day. The next morning I reported to the dean, where I had begun to teach half time in high school Bible, asking to be released to join the MCC project in Europe. His response was puzzled.

“Didn’t John Mumaw see you on Saturday about this? He was asked by MCC to invite you to take an assignment in Europe.”

“No,” was my reply, “I was away over the weekend.”

The rest, as the saying goes, is history. In due time, I went to Europe. But having received an “inner” and “outer” call, simultaneously yet separately, was a life-changing experience. Though appropriately enough never duplicated in that form, that experience would serve as a lodestone for the rest of my days.

Meanwhile, however, there was a personal hurdle. Given the immediate post-war turbulence in Europe MCC was sending only individuals, not married couples, into service. Moreover the minimum age for volunteers was twenty-four. My bride, Ellen, was twenty two. I had to accept a two-year term of service without the assurance that she could join me during that time. It was a difficult decision four months after a wedding, but our common commitment to Christian service, that had figured in our journey into marriage in the first place, enabled us to come to terms with this challenge.

Several months of “red-tape” elapsed before I actually set sail, initially via England and Holland, to Brussels, Belgium. This decision and departure effectively set my life course for the next two decades, engaging challenges and tasks for which I was little prepared and obviously could not have anticipated. Here I can only summarize. Happily Ellen was permitted to join me a year later. Antwerp, Belgium, was serving as port of entry for the American forces in Europe, and the Belgian economy benefited. By the fall of 1947 MCC transferred us to Germany where large scale food and clothing distribution was still in progress. As it turned out we remained in Europe, interspersed with a brief furlough, till late summer, 1953.

Meanwhile, through occasional parttime, later fulltime, graduate study at several European universities, I was able to complete a doctorate in sociology and history at the University of Zurich (Switzerland). The degree was awarded in 1954, after the publication of my dissertation in Germany.

Effectively, the experiences of more than two decades following the 1939 hayfield episode described above were refracted through the war and postwar contingencies (*circumstances*). Those contingencies fell into three activity clusters: emergency relief (food and clothing distributions), collaborative rehabilitation (refugee resettlement, international voluntary services, student exchanges, conferences, etc.), and my own graduate study.

Eventually, near the end of my seven and a half-year sojourn in Europe I was drawn into an emerging conversation between representatives of the newly formed (1948) World Council of Churches (WCC) and a committee of the “historic peace churches” (HPC) (Brethren, Friends [Quakers] and Mennonites) regarding the “just war” tradition held by the major denominations of the churches and the pacifist minorities. In the fall of 1952, during a trimester at the Sorbonne in Paris, I was asked by the HPC committee to draft a working paper as the basis for those conversations. After considerable editorial emendation the document was submitted to the WCC. That paper triggered a series of discussions among European Protestant theologians that continued for a decade as the “Puidoux Conferences” (the first in the series was held in the Swiss town of Puidoux).

Before those conferences began, however, I had returned to the USA with my young family, and thus was not part of the conversation that ensued. But given that involvement in the WCC-HPC project in Europe, I was drawn on marginal time into a somewhat parallel conversation in the USA, begun in 1950 as the Church Peace Mission (CPM). This effort had been initiated jointly by peace societies in major Protestant denominations, such as Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Baptists, and the HPC (historic peace churches) to challenge the “just war” traditions to which the major denominations subscribed. Meanwhile I began what I assumed would be my teaching career at my *alma mater* in Harrisonburg, VA. But unexpectedly, a few years later, with my family, I was sent to Japan by the same Mennonite Central Committee as peace consultant to missions and churches there. The lingering trauma of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki, troubled further by the mounting nuclear weapons contest between the super powers, occasioned this assignment.

The initial two-year assignment was extended to five years, but before the end of the third year, the illness of a family member brought us back to America, and for treatment to residence in Washington, DC. By early 1961 I accepted an appointment as executive of the Church Peace Mission, with whom I had worked as a committee member in the mid-1950s before our Japan odyssey. The CPM had emerged from a national conference held in Detroit in 1950, and another in the same location in 1953. A number of regional conferences and smaller workshops were held meanwhile. Originally my assignment was to serve as organizer for another national conference, but it turned out that too much momentum had been lost since 1953 to make such an event feasible. The focus now shifted to the organizing of local conferences and symposia, mostly in academic settings. I will have more to say about pacifist and non-pacifist engagements in later chapters.

These peace-related experiences in Europe, Japan and the USA were wonderfully enriching for me personally, but nonetheless were bathed in ambiguity. In all three settings, and especially in Japan I confronted tasks for which I was poorly prepared and gifted. But it was also true that events moved at a pace and a reach beyond the resources in both the churches and society. To recall and retrace those years is a humbling, yet in the end gratifying, experience. Increasingly I sensed that deeper and larger issues lie behind the legacy of disagreement among Christians about peace and war. This was true as well of ferment arising during those years within the Anabaptist communities as well.

This growing awareness resulted largely from the upheavals of World War II and its aftermath, above all with the draft and military service cohort of young men. That cohort included also those opting for alternative service, whose experience admittedly was less traumatic than those who served in frontline action and survived. There were impacts as well, peculiar to the still tightly knit and withdrawn Anabaptist communities. Many of their young men assigned to Civilian Public Service, confined to the USA during the war, volunteered afterward for several years of relief and reconstruction work in wartorn countries abroad.

In the end, the impact of the 1940s and 1950s on these communities was profound. These years resulted in soul-searching and redefinition. Moreover, there were also young men in these communities who contrary to their native ethos entered military service. This time of testing and redefinition in communities of Anabaptist descent, meanwhile was enriched by the first time publication of 16th century documents by and about the Anabaptist wing of the Protestant Reformation underway already before the war began. In the spring of 1952 I was one of a group of seven young Mennonite men, living and working in Europe in several capacities, who met in Amsterdam for 10 days in an effort to sort all this out. We decided to continue and to expand the conversation by publishing a continuing series of occasional papers eventual named *Concern*.

A MID-LIFE COURSE CHANGE

By the late 1950s I was increasingly impressed with the futility of the resulting disputes in our Anabaptist-descended faith communities, and between them and the Christendom-derived denominations. In addition to my postwar sojourn in Europe, and experiences in the war-peace conversations, I had been privileged to carry out some specialized study of the Anabaptist chapter of the 16th century attempted Protestant Reformation of medieval Christendom. As noted above, archival records, principally of police and court proceedings against Anabaptists regarded as subversive, were being published for the first time. Zurich, where the original movement crystallized, was now a major center of the publication project.

A budding awareness of this development, and its sociological import, quickly became linked to my original response to the MCC assignment in

Europe. Already by early summer, 1946, I was brought into personal contact with Professor Fritz Blanke at the University of Zurich, church historian and leader of the Anabaptist publication project in that city. A major issue confronting historians of that movement, still debated today, was the relationship between the religious and socio-economic factors in the rise of Anabaptism. That question was already on Professor Blanke's agenda as a possible dissertation topic when we first met in 1946, which he then offered to me. Despite a five-year delay after our initial meeting, that dissertation was realized in the early 1950s. From court and other records I was able to identify some 800 persons, men and women, priests, monks, scholars, craftsmen, peasants, people educated and others who were illiterate, who were prosecuted for Anabaptist affiliations during the period, 1525-1540.

Prolonged life and work exposed me to the grandeur of European civilization before work on this dissertation exposed the profound heresy on which it rested vis-à-vis the biblical story. In more recent years, however, I came to note the parallels between ancient Israel and the Christianity which emerged from it. Mosaic Judaism was *covenantly* rather than *politically* grounded. Yet contrary to the original intention, when their very survival among political foes was threatened, the establishment of a monarchy was conceded (1 Samuel, chapter 8), though with a dire warning that perversion would follow. What emerged eventually was spiritual decline, resulting in exile and reconstitution accordingly. Ancient Israel eventually as Judaism, passed through three stages: covenant, monarchy and *Diaspora*. Something comparable, I eventually concluded, is occurring in the Christian odyssey.

By the end of the 1950s I was increasingly impressed with the futility of the debates, both between factions in Anabaptism-descended groupings and between these and the Christendom formations. I was aware of the Hippocratic oath among physicians--in efforts to diagnose and treat illness, first be sure to *do no harm*. Perhaps stepping outside these debates to gain a wider and more fundamental perspective might be fruitful. And I realized that my own experience and training were in some respects privileged in this regard, though at the same time, limited and incomplete. Hence by the early 1960s I concluded that stepping outside these trivial institutional debates for a broader and deeper perspective while remaining committed fundamentally to the Christian faith, had indeed become my vocation. The next chapter picks up this thread.

Chapter XIX

Re-mapping My Life Journey

I took the road less traveled. -- Robert Frost

In 1964, while I was executive secretary of the Church Peace Mission, John Heidbrink, church secretary at the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Nyack, New York, invited me to co-lead a traveling seminar of churchpersons to Europe, west and east. The occasion was the five-day Second All-Christian Peace Assembly in Prague, Czechoslovakia, sponsored by the churches of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. My joining would permit him to bow out of the tour part of the time after the conference. The itinerary included visits to Paris and Rome before the conference, and afterward to Budapest and Debrecen, Hungary; Kiev, Moscow, and Leningrad, USSR, and from there, Helsinki and Oslo in Scandinavia, ending eventually on the historic island of Iona off the coast of Scotland.

We were a full dozen in number, four Catholic priests and monks, the remainder Protestant clergy and lay leaders, a group large enough for stimulating diversity yet small enough to manage. Because of a previous engagement I joined the group only a day before departure from Rome for Prague, with an overnight stop in Zurich. There we had an engaging evening visit with Emil Brunner, a former professor of mine, but this is not the place to detail this fascinating six-week journey.

With my decision to re-map my life journey now firmly made, I still had a year or two ahead in my assignment with the Church Peace Mission. Thus there was time to explore future options. I had already made several university contacts about job possibilities in Washington, DC, where I lived with my family, but nothing definite as yet had crystallized. An engaging member of this traveling seminar was Daniel Berrigan, S.J., a Roman Catholic priest, soon thereafter caught up in the national controversy over the war in Vietnam. I had met him earlier in a monastery retreat in New York, and on this tour we became friends. I described to him the fork in my life-road at which I stood.

Several weeks after we returned from the tour I received a telephone invitation from the chairperson of the sociology faculty at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, inviting me to come for a possible job interview. Previously it had not occurred to me to enquire about employment there. I simply assumed that just as I would not want that University, they would not want me, "sectarian" that I was. I realized at once that only Daniel Berrigan could have triggered that call. Years later, when I asked him about the contact he had made on my behalf, he could no longer recall. In 1964 the Roman Catholic Council, later known as Vatican II, was underway, and resulting changes were about to take place within the University. Those pending changes both delayed and facilitated my eventual appointment to a

regular position in 1967. At last--the sociological gleam that first emerged in my eye more than 20 years earlier was about to take form.

YET ANOTHER INTERVENTION

Some weeks after the above telephone call came another, this one from John Heidbrink, organizer of the churchperson's seminar in the first place. He had received an important assignment at the All Christian Peace Assembly in Prague during our tour, but a few months after our return he had become seriously ill and could not undertake it. He now asked me to take on that assignment in his stead. To describe that assignment, another flashback is needed.

When the World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed in 1948, the Cold War was just aborning. In the years immediately following, the churches in what became the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe had little access to the emerging WCC or to churches in other lands anywhere. Conversations among church leaders about a possible remedy began among Protestant leaders in Prague and central Europe in the late 1950s. By then the Soviets were speaking of "peaceful coexistence" between the major powers. Church leaders in the Soviet camp thereupon hoped that endorsing that policy might widen their opening to the ecumenical movement. In limited ways that response worked, particularly enabling them to reach into what was then called the "Third World." The 1964 Assembly in Prague resulted. Individuals gathered from many lands, though mostly from Eastern Europe, with a total attendance of about a thousand persons.

Initially the Prague organizers, formalized as The Christian Peace Conference (CPC), sought contact with peace groups in the American churches as a gateway into the churches as such. Some seventy Americans showed up, many already in western Europe for other reasons--tourists, students, professors on leave, and yes, "fellow travelers." One afternoon the Americans caucused for a discussion of the American response to the CPC. The CPC project, while church-initiated, nonetheless was tightly controlled by the Soviet regime. For that reason, response from churches in the USA would be dicey at best.

Meanwhile, during the Assembly, John Heidbrink was appointed as member of the international governing body of the CPC. As staff person at the American, loosely Christian, chapter of the "Fellowship of Reconciliation" (FOR), which had been formed in Europe at the outbreak of World War I, Heidbrink had already visited the CPC on earlier occasions. The caucus quickly agreed that he should lead the organization of the response from the American churches. The implication was that an American chapter of the CPC might be formed.

We come now to Heidbrink's request to me. How should I reply? At long last I was moving toward a sociological opportunity. While my previous experience in Europe, the Orient, and in the USA under the ecumenical Church Peace Mission (CPM) served importantly as "applied" sociology, those

activities were not directly related to that discipline. Yielding to Heidbrink's request would be more of the same cross-discipline informality. Moreover, if now at last I was headed toward a graduate university faculty appointment, I had some rigorous homework ahead. Meanwhile, however, the realization also grew that in the career shift ahead, I needed to build on, rather than to drop the resources that my earlier experiences afforded. Karl Marx had been an important figure in the development of sociology, and of the history that followed. Bridge-building between the USA and the Soviet Marxist world would be a "laboratory" experience in that world. In any event, Heidbrink's assignment was to be carried out on marginal time. In the end I took on the task.

To me, it was evident at once that the real dialogue partner in the USA to the Christian Peace Conference was the mainline churches, not in the first instance their socialist, pacifist, or peace church "fringes." It was evident as well that the varied denominations would not formally participate in the politically regulated CPC. However constituted, a chapter *of* the CPC in the USA could not hope to gain a hearing in the mainline Protestant communities. Indeed, even an independent committee or group "for" the Christian Peace Conference would encounter suspicion. Much would depend on whether trusted people in the denominations could be won for membership in an independent committee *for* rather than *of* the CPC.

In the end, forming an independent committee *for* the CPC was the route we took. In the spring of 1966 the "US Committee *for* the Christian Peace Conference" held its charter meeting in a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C. But soon, when in the fall of 1968 a Soviet army marched into Prague to suppress the liberalizing regime that had emerged, the CPC was disrupted. When a year and a half later the CPC was reconstituted, the US Committee was reestablished as well, now as Christians Associated for Relations with Eastern Europe (CAREE). By the late 1970s CAREE also formed and incorporated an Institute for Peace and Understanding (IPU), designed to facilitate conversations of our American constituency with Marxist scholars and scientists in Soviet bloc academies of science and universities.

My die was now cast. I became an eventually tenured associate professor of sociology at the Catholic University of America, continuing until my retirement in 1987, twenty years later. During the 1980s I also coordinated a newly established interdisciplinary program of peace studies at the University. During that entire period and beyond, however, I was involved as well in the bridge-building efforts of CAREE and the IPU between our country and the Soviet bloc. For me those efforts converged eventually with another program, that of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, independently based at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

THE RISK AND THE COSTS OF THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

A mid-life course change entails losses and risks; these must be noted, if only briefly. In the academic kingdom of specialists I had risked the life of a generalist. While I hung out the sociologists' shingle, both my training and my work had taken me as well into history, religion, ethics, and theology. Within sociology itself I was more attuned to theory and broader issues than to narrowly limited inquiry. Most of all, this partly reflected my mostly European graduate training, and in any event left me, as indicated, without anchor in a particular American specialty and professional niche.

Then there was the price of "stepping outside" the Mennonite denominational apparatus, thus losing the identity that such location afforded. As indicated, I remained spiritually rooted in the "sectarian" Christian tradition, yet without any mandate to speak to, or on behalf of, groups organized on that basis. Prior to the Vatican II Council in the mid 1960s, the CUA sociology department in arts and sciences included also a program on the social teachings of the Church. Hence appointments to that faculty presupposed Roman Catholic membership and training, even though there were non-Catholic professors scattered through most other departments. While I was the first non-Catholic with a regular appointment to the sociology faculty, with that door now open, others soon followed. Withal my 20-year sojourn at Catholic University (CUA) was a happy one. Nonetheless there was a sense in which I was a "resident alien," without a mandate to promote or to criticize, thus without a clear cultural identity.

In ecumenical religious contexts, whether at home or abroad, though identified as a "sectarian" (Mennonite), I was not present as someone mandated to speak on behalf of a constituency, nor could I contribute as a specialist might. There was also the cost of human distancing from my roots in family, community and church. This was already acute given my earlier prolonged sojourns abroad. I find myself wondering: is it easier to be an introvert abroad than at home? Was that a factor in the course that my life took?

Questions such as these arise as in recent years I compare notes in long conversations with a brother, eight years younger, an extrovert, perhaps not surprisingly, with a doctorate in psychology. He has been farmer, professor, small college president, administrator, and in recent years an interim pastor in a number of congregations. He has lived and worked in several communities in the eastern and mid-western areas of the country. Withal he retained reasonable contacts with our native Somerset County surroundings. He flows outward wherever he goes. I remain academically focused, largely limited to that sphere.

Finally, there was the spiritual vulnerability of this lonely break with my formative tradition. Hitherto my life course arose in the reciprocity of "inner" and "outer" call, though not always simultaneously. Christian reality is profoundly communal. But the calling I now sensed was inwardly to step outside the formal structure; it was a lonely one, and in that sense inconsistent with my faith tradition. Hence by the mid-1960s two problems

were converging for me. The first grew from the rather messy adaptation processes of Anabaptist sectarians to American society. I will say more about this in a moment. The second was my experiences over a decade and a half in the focused peace/war discussions within Christianity. Disagreement between the pacifist and non-pacifist readings was symptomatic of deeper problems which debate in those terms did not reach.

I just described the adaptation processes of Anabaptist sectarians to American society as messy, and that for two reasons. First, the acculturation of immigrants to a new society, always a complex process, was complicated by the ambiguities of sectarianism. Second, as indicated above (chapter 2), confusion prevails in the host (American) society regarding Christianity and politics in the first place. World War II, the alternative public service of conscientious objectors, postwar relief and reconstruction activities, all stimulated by “the recovery of the Anabaptist vision” triggered by the publication of 16th century Anabaptist records during this same period, resulted in bubbling cauldrons in many of the Anabaptist communities in the USA. The normal intergenerational transitions in the process were accentuated in the instance of the draft-age cohort of young men, in their alternative service, in their relief and reconstruction experiences, and the academic corollaries.

Here is an example. A group of young men, of whom I was one, serving in several Mennonite (Anabaptist) church agencies in postwar European emergency relief and renewal met in Amsterdam in the spring of 1952 to assess experiences during World War II and its aftermath. We decided to initiate a conversation concerning the emerging issues, a conversation not a schism, a conversation to be stimulated by the publication of occasional papers. We focused on the revitalization of our Anabaptist legacy and its witness. Unforeseen was the malaise and insecurity that this initiative aroused within our sectarian communities in America. Could this have been done less disturbingly; who knows?

Within a few years after my return to the USA, I increasingly sensed the resulting difficulties confronting the leadership in the churches and their institutions, given the circumstances and the underlying assumptions of which they and their communities were the heirs. The prolonged ostracism in Europe had ghettoized the mentality and culture of the Anabaptist communities in Europe. In this lenient new environment, how would faith and community identity be defined? Until some fundamental redefinitions emerged, much of the ensuing controversy would be at once dysfunctional and futile. New perspectives--something beyond polarization between the “free church” and the “state church” in western history, or between in-group factions --were needed but not yet available.

FINDING MY SOCIOLOGICAL NICHE

In 1967, the year of my full-time appointment to the sociology faculty at Catholic University of America, that institution was just beginning to feel the inspirations flowing from the Vatican II Council held in Rome in

the mid-1960s. All but the faculties of theology and canon law lost direct Pontifical sponsorship. The former inclusion of the program of Catholic Social teachings in the Sociology Department had been dropped. Sociology was now a “secular” discipline. Professors were expected to devote a third of their time to undergraduate teaching, another third to graduate teaching, with the final third allocated to their own research and seminars. Appropriately enough, given my training and previous experience, I was offered the sociology of religion as my specialization in the department. But meanwhile I had been drawn into the problem-complex of urbanization and community as my area of specialization, and this the department accepted.

Once that decision was made, I was accorded the University’s part-time slot as faculty fellow at the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, an independent local urban research institute for the first two years of my tenure. Practically this became the research third of my assignment for my first two years at the University. Other area universities made similar appointments. These appointments in effect gave us ring-side seats to the development and renewal processes of the expanding Washington metropolitan region. This greatly facilitated the retooling I needed at that juncture.

Meanwhile the organizing task of what had become CAREE--*Christians Associated for Relations with Eastern Europe*--both included and surmounted elements of my earlier peace-war discourse. Prior to the 1964 tour I would not have imagined either engagement--a career at the Catholic University and an intense extracurricular dialogue in Soviet-American relations. I now confronted, not only new tasks demanding new skills, but family and lifestyle changes.

Though this University was (Catholic) church-related, my work as sociologist was “secular.” At the same time, the CAREE church-related project continued in modified form threads of the religious thematic of my previous decades. Moreover it brought me into contact with three versions of Eastern Orthodoxy: Russian, Armenian, and Georgian. A more accurate comparison of the twin vocations would be that whereas at CUA my activity was primarily secular, with religious concerns secondary, my CAREE engagement reversed that order. Chapter 4, immediately following, expands on the primarily secular mandate. Chapter 5 follows primarily the religious thread. Finally, Chapter 6 seeks to connect the syllables of my life thus lived.

Chapter XX

Discovering the Germ of Society

The spread of relatively autonomous, consensual marriages prepared the ground for the extension of individualism.

-- James Q. Wilson

My appointment to the sociology faculty at the Catholic University of America (CUA) began with the fall semester in 1967. More than twenty years had passed since I was first attracted to sociology. Meanwhile, as noted in the previous chapter, I had begun, on marginal time, to mobilize a committee to serve as a link between the churches in America and the Christian Peace Conference (CPC) in Eastern Europe. That project meant that both cross-cultural and religious themes would look over my shoulder even as I pursued my primary work in sociology.

How and why did I arrive at the community and urbanization theme? And what did I mean thereby? The answers are complex. My interest in sociology while I was an undergraduate student had been triggered initially by the simple notion that sociology would help to narrow the gap between creedal statements and the “real world.” Instead that interest soon was sidetracked by the rural life movement, no doubt partly because of my rural upbringing. Eventually--and happily--my European experiences, from early 1946 to late summer 1953, upended my romanticizing of rural life (see above, Chapter 1). It was not that I now depreciated rural life. Rather, Thomas Jefferson’s rural exuberance notwithstanding, I had learned that rural life cannot serve as normative in human society, and certainly not for Christian reasons.

But that was in fact the ideology that I carried to Europe in early 1946! An example follows. In the fall of the following year, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) transferred us, my wife and me, from Brussels, Belgium, where we served initially, to its relief team in southwest Germany. This region, known as the Palatinate, was then part of the French Zone of the postwar occupation of Germany. Included in this area were some scattered Mennonite farmers descended from the 17th century sectarian Anabaptist refugees from Switzerland. They found respite there because of the agricultural skills they had honed in the Swiss mountains where their ancestors earlier had found refuge from persecution.

Once my wife and I had settled into food and clothing distribution work in progress there, I asked locally to be directed to a farm that had been held for several generations by the same family. A certain family with the surname of Kaegi soon was designated. Thereupon I spent a weekend with them and on the basis of that visit wrote an article entitled “A Way of Life That Has Stood the Test.” The test? The Kaegis, as stem family, then in its 8th generation (since 1707), had made it through 265 often difficult years with this farm. “To them,” I wrote, “farming is not a money-making scheme; it

is a way of life that has stood the test.” Mailed back to the USA, the article was published in a monthly magazine entitled *The Mennonite Community*, the March, 1949, issue. At the outset of this sketch I noted that one follows the now peaceful German highways through comparatively undisturbed country areas into pulverized cities. In these rural areas society continues to function more coherently, if not entirely normally, while in such cities virtually every function of society has disintegrated or deteriorated. Admittedly, it is obvious that the ills of our age could not be solved by moving everyone on farms, even if such were possible, yet it is clear that certain basic communal and spiritual values have been preserved through these terrible years in the natural environment of rural life, that have long since disappeared in the now ruined artificial world of man’s own technological creation.

Initially, my European sojourn seemed to confirm my rural life bias. In due time, however, as I became more deeply involved in the European experience with its history and culture, my tune began to change. The city has been defined as a device to overcome the friction of space. Only in coming together can we specialize and exchange goods and services. Without larger settlements our human potential is thwarted. Our existence rises little beyond mere subsistence. Yet Jefferson had it partly right. When people “get piled upon one another in large cities,” corruption looms. Memories of “pulverized cities” set in “undisturbed country areas” in the wake of World War II will never completely fade from my psyche. Nonetheless the city, with its possibilities and problems, soon after the publication of the above article, began to capture my attention.

AN AMBIGUOUS ACHIEVEMENT

A way of life that survives eight generations is surely noteworthy. Yet the Christian spin that I had placed on the pastoral ideal was ambiguous at best. The Christian story and vocation, as we have yet to spell out, transcends and transforms the material processes of human existence. When ghettoized by persecution and withdrawal, sectarian faith communities may mutate into mere ethnic configurations, the very mutation which they had been formed to surmount in the first place. As we have yet to see, this cluster of issues appeared classically in the attempted sixteenth century Reformation of European Christendom.

At another level, however, as implied above in Chapter 1, I remain profoundly indebted to the rural legacy that formed me. In this rootless age, that legacy serves me as an inexhaustible source of identity. That identity, indirectly if not directly, led to my choice of community and urbanization as the focus of my reflection as I began the second half of my career at the Catholic University of America. How are the communal dimensions of the human process to be perpetuated, given the atomizing consequences of the increasing social differentiation of our era?

This contrast between community and society was one of several streams of thought that had converged in the emergence of sociology as a

“science” in the late 19th century in Europe and America. In 1887 Ferdinand Toennies, a German scholar, had published a treatise entitled *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (translated as *Community and Society*). In *Gemeinschaft*, Toennies wrote, people “remain essentially united in spite of all separating factors, whereas in the *Gesellschaft* they are essentially separated in spite of all uniting factors.”

A few years later Max Weber, another German sociologist, described as communal the mode of action of individuals that is based on “a subjective feeling of the parties that they belong together,” while action in the associative mode “rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests.” In legal parlance, community relations are “solidary” in nature; that is, they consist of a “joint obligation on the part of several debtors anyone of whom is liable for the whole.” Already in 1861, a quarter of a century before the Toennies formulation, Henry Sumner Maine, an English historian, had observed that in “progressive societies...the individual is steadily substituted for the family as the unit of which the laws take account.” Increasingly the human individual now must stand alone on his or her own identity. Yet as Talcott Parsons, America’s mid-20th century premier sociologist argued, community, specifically as marriage and family, must continue to socialize the young and stabilize the adult.

The four terms appearing in these several quotations--individual, family, community, society--on the one hand, are simple, straightforward, and clear. On the other hand, as basic categories of human experience, these are profoundly complex realities, continuously and interactively transformed in the flow of history. Compare, for example, the experience that these four terms communicated when the 20th century began with what they conveyed as that century ended.. At the century’s beginning, we still moved about in horse-drawn carriages and radios were not yet in common use. At the latter stage we live increasingly in the world of cyberspace, and communicate instantaneously anywhere around the globe.

HISTORY AS LABORATORY

Above in Chapter 3 I briefly traced my unexpected introduction to bridge-building efforts from the USA into the Soviet world, beginning in 1964. Over the next thirty odd years I traveled frequently into various parts of the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc, attending meetings, participating in symposia, and arranging exchanges and tours. Insofar as those efforts were church-related, further comments follow in the next chapter. With regard to the community/society thematic of my work at Catholic University, the Soviet-American contest can be seen as a quasi-sociological experiment on a vast historical scale.

The eighteenth century Enlightenment in Western Europe resulted in a polarization in our anthropology, our conception of human reality. Do human individuals create society or does society create or shape individual humans? A moment’s reflection leads to a both/and rather than an either/

or conclusion. Nevertheless, pre-modern societies tilt heavily in the latter direction--groups engulf individuals. They offer little access to activity and relationships beyond family and clan. Modern societies, on the other hand, tilt in the opposite direction. Groups may be mere temporary aggregations of individuals.

The resulting polarities were well captured in the two following quotations. Karl Marx, writing in 1845, announced that "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations." In 1872, less than three decades later, John Stuart Mill, swinging toward the individualistic pole, proposed instead that "human beings in societies have no properties but those which are derived from, and may be resolved into, the laws of the nature of individual man." This polarization in the perception of human reality emerged in the eighteenth century Enlightenment. While Marx wrote before Mill in this instance, it was the advance of individualism that triggered Marx's response in the first place. Historically, while Mill-style individualism found ready soil on the frontiers of the New World, Marx's counter claim found a haven in pre-industrial Russia.

The Cold War that dominated the second half of the 20th century was a complex geo-political phenomenon. Included in this complexity, however, were the above two opposing societal paradigms just outlined. The two polities, the Soviets and the American, extolled the opposing half truths of collectivism and individualism. We Americans, in the vein of Mill, maintained that the individual comes first. No, the Soviets argued, following Marx, the collectivity comes first. When the Soviets collapsed, we concluded that our system had won, and we Americans now float on a triumphalist balloon. Alas! history has not yet spoken definitively.

FROM THE ABSTRACT TO THE CONCRETE

Terms such as community and society are conceptual abstractions. Too often in our discourse, however, we proceed as if abstractions were concrete objects that can be measured and counted--a tree, house, or a table. Some sociologists have referred to abstractions as "sensitizing concepts," as signs telling us where to look. In any event, efforts to treat human social relations scientifically meant finding ways to measure and count, permitting analysis of cause and effect, and of correlations among social activities.

Demography, a related social science, can be seen in part as paving the way. Demography deals with measurable entities--births, deaths, population movements and distributions, etc. But how does one measure, count and analyze phenomena such as attitudes, beliefs, ideas, prejudices and endless similar factors? Often these vary with age, age cohorts, and the like, yet other variables less measurable are also involved. Increasingly refined methods of measurement in this regard have emerged over the decades. Survey or analysis of that progress is beyond the scope of the present autobiographical treatise.

KINSHIP AND LOCALITY

Traditionally and interactively, kinship and nigh-dwelling served as the primary sources of community in human experience. The family household took for granted the support of relatives and others living nearby. The ties thus generated arose spontaneously. Such connections did not have to be engineered. They were simply there, a given. Early sociologists defined community territorially. Thus, according to one formula, locality was treated as “the datum apart from which a group is not a community.” I adopted this definition as the first step in operationalizing the concept of community in my studies.

In the course of the 20th century, the decline and loss of community were frequently deplored. Life became increasingly delocalized. Young people were less likely to settle near their parents. Careers and interests took them to distant points. Moreover, schedules, interests and activities are less and less likely to overlap simply because people happen to live side by side. Neighbors living nearby for years often remain strangers. Living adjacently is less and less likely to serve as a source of common experience. And now questions began to pile up. How are time and place related? Are their limits beyond which life cannot be delocalized without disruptive effects? Are there ways to compensate for loss of local attachments?

During my first two years at Catholic University, as parttime fellow at the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, I was exposed to activities such as urban planning and urban renewal. Meanwhile, with the assistance of colleagues and students at the University I began to survey neighborhoods in the vicinity of the University and nearby suburbs. The purpose was exploratory. How did spatial considerations affect the daily living of local residents? Are there generational differences? What are the questions we need to ask?

University policy at the time provided a semester leave with full pay every seventh year, or a full academic year at half-pay. As my first sabbatical leave approached, I was already traveling to eastern Europe several times annually in the bridge-building exercise described above. While doing so, I had learned of the European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences established by UNESCO in Vienna, Austria. This Centre was established to facilitate joint work by social scientists in Eastern and Western Europe during the Cold War. Would it be possible, I began to wonder, to launch from there a comparative cross-societal study of delocalization in contemporary life in North America and the two parts of Europe, East and West?

Ideally I should have had additional training and experience before undertaking such a task. On the other hand, this was already relatively late in my career, and I was traveling to Europe under other auspices in any case. I decided to risk the venture, having received encouragement from the above-mentioned Centre in Vienna. Small funding grants were eventually provided by the Kettering Foundation and several other agencies. With my wife and

three of our five children, I moved to Vienna for the entire academic year, 1974-1975.

This is not the place to detail the story that followed. With the help of colleagues from the sociology faculty at the University of Vienna, the project emerged slowly with Vienna as its base. After several years scholars or teams had signed on the project from Austria, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany along with the USA and Canada. We began with the above-cited formula: *Locality is the datum apart from which a group is not a community*, and then conceptualized attachment to the locale of residence as the “residential areal bond” (RAB) Thereby we tried to deal with “the fate of local attachments in delocalized societies.”

The project was never fully realized. Only in two instances were original surveys undertaken. Otherwise we had recourse only to secondary analysis of survey data. We never succeeded in developing scales that effectively measured the personal effects of the delocalizing of social life in the original surveys, not to speak of the problems of secondary analysis. Irvington Publishers, a New York firm, then unbeknownst to us already on the road to bankruptcy, printed a few hundred copies of a volume of preliminary papers from these several countries. This edited volume entitled: *The Residential Areal Bond: Local Attachments in Delocalized Societies* (1984), was never marketed.

Today the tension continues to mount between the need for a communal matrix in the formation of the young and the equally strong need for the adult to be free from communal inhibition in the modernizing adult world. What a balance between these two modes of configuration entails or how it is to be maintained in the world now emerging remain unanswered questions. A few psychologists have argued that notions of a core personal identity, continuous over time, are obsolete, that seeking to maintain such a self under today’s circumstances places an unsustainable burden on the “psyche.” These analysts conclude that self today must be understood as “protean,” as simply situation- dependent. Identity is merely a function of momentary relationships. Accordingly, it is claimed that chameleon-like, “personality” simply varies as situations vary.

LEAVING AND CLINGING

If, on the one hand, advancing modernization entails an increasing delocalizing of social life, on the other hand, it entails defamilizing processes as well. Initially ancestral descent, along with physical proximity, served as organizing energies in human aggregation beyond the concrete domestic group. Early human groupings can be described as tending toward *family without society*. Today, in this era of “high modernity,” we seem to be moving in the opposite direction, toward *society without family*. Yet fundamentally it is clear: neither configuration is self-sufficient without the other.

Biblical religion, it is often assumed in the world of Christian traditions, champions the primacy of family in human affairs. Throughout the

biblical story, the reproductive family is both taken for granted and celebrated. Yet a more nuanced view emerges in further reading. Remarkably enough, in the detailed account of the origin of the human species in Genesis, the joining of male and female is presented in its own right, without even passing reference to its reproductive outcome. Not consanguinity, the family or “blood tie” generally, but rather each partner’s leaving of that tie to become voluntarily yet permanently conjoined to a stranger (the “incest taboo”), becomes the archetype of society. Simultaneously this act represents the crowning stage in the formation of the human youth. *A man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

Effectively, thus, the conjugal union in every generation forms, and in the end, dissolves each family unit. Community and society stand in a synergistic rather than a dichotomous relationship in the human story. Jesus later emends the passage from Genesis just quoted with the formula, what God has joined together, let no one separate. We thus confront the human mystery. As Aristotle, the ancient philosopher, put the matter: the human is a *zoon politikon*, a social animal. We choose and join; that is, real freedom comes only when we assume responsibility for the outcomes of the choices we make. That we are predisposed to proceed in that manner is not our own invention. It is simply the way we are constituted as humans.

Since ancient times, philosophers have wrestled with the realities of time and space. Though distinct, the two categories are somehow related. Resolving these quandaries lies beyond the present task. Yet it is hardly accidental that the dimensions

of time and space confront us correlatively. Sooner or later, efforts to deal with the force of spatial factors in human relations--the first phase of the present investigation--turns to the temporal dimension as well. Thus while in my early years at Catholic University I focused in my work on spatial factors in social life I was eventually engaged, perhaps inevitably, with temporal (family) factors as well. What emerged from those later years, but long after my retirement, was a volume on family, or rather on the anthropological on the significance of the conjugal union.

The present volume is addressed to the non-American academic reader, in part as a response to the one-sided individualism in our American ethos. I quote here two paragraphs that come near the end of the other volume just referenced:

The long quest for human freedom that informed the saga of modernization resulted understandably in an exaggeration of the agentic dimension of the human self at the expense of its communal constitution. The disintegrative consequences, epitomized in the divorce revolution since the 1970s, now permeate our society. Our task is to re-cognize and re-invigorate the communal integration of the human individual in our American culture.

Both the disruptive consequences of the divorce revolution, and the transcending persistence of the bonding predisposition of the human pair since the dawn of history, underscore the archetypal significance of the conjugal commitment in the human process. While family and communal renewal in our society will be a complex task, the ennobling and revitalizing of marriage is foundational. Unless or until we get to this root of our problem, the many remedial tasks that must likewise be undertaken will be frustrated. *Leaving and Clinging: The Human Significance of the Conjugal Union*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), p. 214.

A “MARRIAGE MOVEMENT”

To thus elevate the conjugal union as both human and inter-human archetype when marriages are less and less stable may seem absurd. Yet the repercussions of that instability through all levels of human existence in the USA since the divorce revolution of the 1970s point precisely in that direction. In late June, 2000, more than a hundred academic, civic and religious leaders met in a “Smart Marriages” Conference in Denver, Colorado, and issued a signed statement entitled *The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles*. Together these conferees pledged that:

in this decade we will turn the tide of marriage and reduce divorce and unmarried childbearing, so that each year more children will grow up protected by their own happily married parents and more adults’ marriage dreams will come true. (Press release. June 29, 2000, www.marriagemovment.org/html.press.html.13 }

This 36-page statement was prepared under the sponsorship of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, the Religion, Culture, and Family Project of the University of Chicago Divinity School, and the Institute for American Values in New York. After listing the diversity of professions and affiliations from which the participants came the opening paragraphs of the statement continues:

We are people of faith, asking God’s blessing on the great task before us. We are agnostics and humanists, committed to moral and spiritual progress. We are women and men, liberals and conservatives, of different races and ethnic groups. We come together to pursue a common goal. We come together for a marriage movement.

We come together because the divorce revolution has failed. Contrary to the high hopes of many Americans in the 1970s, high

divorce rates have proved no panacea for family dysfunction. Divorced parents can fight, too, and sometimes even abandon their children altogether. Children of divorce must cope with new emotional, time and financial problems. Even in the best of circumstances, children miss their fathers when living with mothers and miss mothers when living with fathers. (*The Marriage Movement: A statement of Principles. 14, ibid.*)

The Synergism of Civil Society

Meanwhile, however, the sources of marital instability cannot be ignored. The one-sided individualism that haunts the American experiment is correlatively implicated in the instability of marriages in the first place. The “divorce revolution” in the USA in the 1970s permits either partner to walk out of a marriage that no longer seems to serve her or his individual interest. Effectively, the classic formula of the union--the two become one - takes on ontological significance. Yes, the tie can be broken, but once the tie is constituted, the union is more than merely a sum between two basically separate and self contained units.

Political scientist Michael Walzer introduced the now widely-used synonym of thick/thin for the community/society dyad introduced above. Individuals united in family and local community are bound by thick relations, while much that transpires in the public arena or “civil society” can be described as thin, consisting of mere individualized exchanges. In the Greek versions of the biblical texts we meet the term synergism--working together--for what Walzer calls “thin” relationships or exchanges.

In recent decades the importance of “civil society,” the public sphere between “the family” or “private” sphere, on the one hand, and the state on the other, has received wide attention. The state consists of citizens, divested, as it were, of the thick ties of family and neighborhood. On the other hand, the thin tie of citizenship, as patriotism itself makes thick claims. Though conceptually the distinctions with this triad--private (family), civic and political---are simple and clear, practice is loaded with ambiguity. In the end, though conceptual and structural clarity is necessary, the complexities of lived reality are decisive. Cultures, values, beliefs, religions, and institutions are complex, processual realities.

Might sociology help to connect my study of the biblical story to the “real world?” When as an inexperienced youth I became intrigued by this question, I had little inkling of what lay ahead. Choosing either biblical study or sociology as career would have offered a more promising career path. Instead, as indicated, I became stranded at the frontier between the two disciplines. More thorough grounding in both domains doubtlessly would have enhanced my journey along this little-traveled road. Now in retrospect, I can only rest my case along the above lines.

Chapter XXI

The Legacy of Christendom

Serving the world by being other than the world.

-- Gerard Loughlin

The second by-product of the 1964 churchpersons' traveling seminar to Europe was the re-channeling of my peace discourse into the bridge-building effort between the USA and the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War. This continued until after the Berlin Wall came down at the end of the 1980s. So now the question: What is the *phrasing* that emerges from those *syllables*? And how did those bridge-building efforts figure in the re-mapping of my life journey? What was the outcome, the contribution, of those endeavors?

Three projects emerged: first, *Christians Associated for Relations with Eastern Europe* (CAREE); second and later: the *Institute for Peace and Understanding* (IPU); and third, my eventual participation in activities of the *Council for Research in Values and Philosophy* (CRVP). Apart from this, in 1967, when the *Church Peace Mission* (CPM) folded, my advisory committee decided independently to continue and expand as the *War-Nation-Church Study Group* (WaNaCh), ending after 20 years in 1987. Thus in a broadened but secondary manner the *church-sect* problem remained as a sub-theme in my "meta-narrative." I now briefly describe these four projects. Before doing so, I need to fill a small autobiographical gap.

THE "JUST WAR"--PACIFIST DISCOURSE

In the spring of 1948 my two-year term of service in the emergency relief program of the Mennonite Central Committee, first in Belgium, then in the French occupation zone of Germany, ended. While my wife continued her term of service in the French zone, I resumed my graduate study, this time at the University of Basel in Switzerland. Among the professors whose lectures I attended were Karl Barth, the theologian, and Karl Jaspers, the German philosopher. Jaspers had just moved there from Hamburg. For that semester I roomed at the European headquarters of the MCC located in Basel, and continued to assist marginally in staff work being done there.

The outcome of that stimulating semester at Basel, however, was unexpected. I anticipated a transfer eastward to Zurich where my dissertation project waited, presumably after my wife's term of service with MCC ended. But once more, for me this was a time of ferment. There was the stimulation of the university. There was the contrast of this city outwardly untouched by war to the wartorn settings in which I had just spent two years. There was the opportunity meanwhile to reflect from a slight distance on the experiences of those many months, while living at MCC headquarters with a continuing flow of information about MCC activities in a number of European countries.

Most important, perhaps, were the rumblings of an approaching change in the four-zoned military occupation of Germany, which came the following year. It was then that the three western zones of occupation, American, British, and French, were released to unite as the Federal Republic of Germany. Corresponding to the Cold War then aborning, the Soviet regime formed the German Democratic Union, leaving Germany divided until 1990, after the “Berlin Wall” came down. In any event, before the semester there ended, I sensed a rather abrupt call to return to Germany for the transitional period just ahead there, akin to the call that had sent me to Europe in the first place. The MCC was shifting focus accordingly and in conversation with the administrators plans emerged the establishment of a conversational center in Frankfurt/Main, the civil society nerve center of the new West German nation state.

After a brief furlough in the USA, partly to attend an international church conference stateside, Ellen and I returned to Germany to begin that new center in Frankfurt. A five-year term of service was agreed upon, during which, through part time study, I might complete my doctoral training. Student exchanges and dialogues with churches and church leaders were part of the new agenda. A “Confessing Church” went underground as the institutional church establishment caved in to Hitler. Some underground leaders landed in Hitler’s concentration camps. While languishing there, some reflected on the rebuilding tasks that lay ahead once the Nazi era ended. From those reflection several initiatives blossomed after the war--notably the Evangelical Relief Agency; province by province Evangelical Academies (neutral turf for civil society discourse about social and spiritual reconstruction); and an annual nationwide *Kirchentag* (church day) rally.

In this context MCC, from the Frankfurt office in Germany, sponsored student and church exchanges; international voluntary work camps for students; conferences and colloquies. By 1949 I enrolled parttime at the University of Frankfurt, but I quickly learned that my work for my agency necessarily took priority. After that semester I dropped the idea of parttime study. But over the next year or two I was drawn into activities beyond my academic competence. An example: at a clergy conference at an Evangelical Academy in the Ruhr area of Germany, since I was from a “peace church,” I was asked to speak on the approaches to peace and war among Christians during the first few centuries of the Christian era. I had had some training in theology and church history, but certainly no professional expertise in that regard. I didn’t get far into that session until it became evident that these educated Lutheran and Reformed pastors knew more about the topic than I did!

That part of the early Christian story can be summarized briefly. During the second and third centuries of the Christian era, as Christianity spread, occasional persecutions emerged here and there for varied local reasons. By the fourth century, the Christian movement in the Mediterranean world gathered enough momentum for the Roman Empire to decide to adapt rather than to resist this growing religious movement. But that adoption of

Christianity entailed a major mutation of biblical faith. Political edict replaced personal transformation as the constitutive basis of Christian identity. Prior to that, Christians for the most part found military service, indeed all violence and bloodshed to be incompatible with the example and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Against the backdrop of sporadic persecutions, the imperial adoption of Christianity rapidly came to be seen as the beginning of the triumph of the biblical story in history. Thus for example, Bishop Augustine of Hippo, North Africa, who lived 354-430 CE, argued that the earlier Christian disavowal of military service was due to the fact that no rulers were Christian. Once rulers converted to Christ they were called to use their military force to protect and even to promote the cause of Christ. For centuries thereafter, even down to modern times, religious or conscientious objection to military service was not even considered an option by the church.

While the above-noted meeting with an Evangelical Academy was the most dramatic instance of my academic immaturity, by the end of our third year in Frankfurt, I reported to the MCC that I simply was not able to meet the challenge of the assignment. All I could do was to resign and complete my education. MCC consented. By now my wife and I had an infant daughter, and by the fall semester, 1951, we moved to Zurich to begin work on my dissertation. These experiences need to be related here because they effectively were the basis for an assignment that followed a year later, to be described below. And that assignment in turn would largely determine my course of life and work for the next 15 years.

Cold War Ecumenicity

I had no background in Eastern European affairs or studies, nor was I a specialist in political science and ethics. Nonetheless the convergence of “character and circumstance” cast me momentarily in the role of facilitator, to link the initiative of established churches in Eastern Europe to their “mainline” counterparts in the USA. As indicated in the previous chapters, the *Christian Peace Conference* based in Prague, Czechoslovakia (CSSR), was an outreach effort on the part of Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches to come to terms with the regimes of Soviet Marxism in eastern Europe. The effectiveness of the CAREE response depended on the coming on board of persons with both empirical competence and/or recognized ecclesial groundedness. Both were realized to an effective degree. While independent, CAREE was informally linked to the *National Council of Churches of the USA* with its administrative office located at the NCC headquarters in New York.

At best Soviet-style Marxism was an ambiguous achievement. Rooted in part in the several pre-modern histories in the area, it was also informed by the 18th century (west) European Enlightenment; that is, by one-sided communal reaction to the equally one-sided individualism of that movement in the West. Meanwhile the churches in the Soviet world had to come to terms

with the existence of the Soviet regimes into the indefinite future, which, it must be recognized, had their moments of idealism.

Under these circumstances, CAREE made two important contributions: first by assisting communications and exchanges in both directions between the churches in USA and Eastern Europe during the difficult Cold War Years; and secondly, it began to publish occasional papers on east European churches, today published bimonthly at Princeton Theological Seminary as *Religion in Eastern Europe*. While given the fall of the barriers between East and West in Europe both CPC and CAREE are merely vestigial, this publication series continues to serve.

The Christian-Marxist Dialogue

Over the decades conversations between Christians and Marxists occurred in various settings. As CAREE participants traveled to Christian Peace Conference (CPC) related events, encounters with Marxists in Soviet lands increased. We formed an Institute for Peace and Understanding to ease such encounters, thus to sponsor exchange visits and tours. Exchanges with scholars in the Soviet Georgian Academy of Sciences in the capital of Tbilisi was a noteworthy example.

Permission for privately-sponsored exchanges of this sort were difficult to obtain. The only avenue we found was to finagle an invitation from the Soviet Peace Committee. On one occasion when our focus was to be discussion of human rights we were denied Soviet visas. Meanwhile, in a directory of Soviet academies we discovered the listing of a sociological institute in the (Soviet) Georgian Academy of Sciences that included personality studies in its program. Without having received a reply from our advance inquiry, we included Tbilisi, the capital city, on our itinerary. On arrival, from our hotel we telephoned the Institute. The director, Niko Chavchavadze, meanwhile deceased, just back from vacation, defying orders to the contrary, came to the hotel to speak to the dozen and half American professors in our group. We had brought our own interpreter. Experiencing suspicion in the conversation at the outset, after about half an hour we began to discover some common ground that turned the occasion into a fruitful conversation.

After our meeting ended, the co-leader of our tour and I engaged Professor Chavchavadze in conversation, and found him ready to accept an invitation to the USA. More than a year later, the proposed visit materialized. With Ghia Nodia, a younger colleague he came to Catholic University for a few days and was able to make a other contacts in the city. Several of us made a return visit, and then once more he came with four colleagues for a several-day conference. Meanwhile his younger colleague remained for a two-week seminar sponsored by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (CRVP) which led to subsequent visits and fruitful exchanges.

Remarkably, by adapting external trappings and terminology, Niko Chavchavadze had been able to continue the classic traditions in social

philosophy during the Soviet era, aided no doubt by geographic and historical distance from Moscow. Already in the fourth century CE, a Georgian King Mirian had adopted Christianity as the religion of his domain. Thereby the Georgian church eventually became one of several independent traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy. An anecdote during one of my visits to Tbilisi, however, well dramatized the ambiguity of the state-established Christianity that is centrally important to the present volume.

With two colleagues I happened to be in Tbilisi during a high-feast Sunday in the Georgian church calendar. With the long special ritual under way, the cathedral was well-filled with worshippers on foot (as in the eastern traditions), with several clusters of activity simultaneously under way, along with continuous coming and going among those present. Eventually I stepped outside to gain a wider view of the event. There I met one of the colleagues from our host institute who was pacing back and forth. We fell into a brief conversation. "Well, here I am," he commented spontaneously, "an atheist and a communist, but I had my children baptized. You see, it somehow belongs to being Georgian." In these few words he wonderfully captured the anomaly/contradiction of politically-established "Christianity." I will return to this conundrum below and again in the final chapter.

THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

By the late 1980s my activities in CAREE and the IPU brought me into contact with somewhat similar work of the RVP located independently at the Catholic University of America where I was employed. On campus there I became acquainted with the founder and executive of the Council, George F. McLean, a priest and professor in the University's School of Philosophy. While we were each grounded in our respective tradition, we found much common ground and became colleagues and friends. In our respective labors we found ample occasion to draw on each other.

George McLean, while serving as executive of the *International Society for Metaphysics*, developed extensive international contacts with philosophers, out of which his Council emerged. A wide range of issues fall within the nexus of values and philosophy around which his Council began to organize international symposia, with subsequently published proceedings. While I was not formally a Council member, I contributed papers and participated variously in subsequent publications. This greatly extended my contacts with both Marxist and other traditions of thought and conversation.

THE WAR-NATION-CHURCH STUDY GROUP

The *Church Peace Mission* as indicated was a joint effort by peace societies in mainline Protestant denominations and the "historic peace churches" (Church of the Brethren, Friends [Quakers], and Mennonites) following World War II (1950-1967) to challenge American Christians anew with the centrality of peacemaking in the Gospel. When that project folded,

the small advisory committee expanded, now including Roman Catholic scholars as well. Adopting the name of the CPM newsletter, the gathering became the *War-Nation-Church Study Group* (WANACH). Meeting annually, this off-the-record conversation continued for another twenty years till 1987.

Members of WANACH played visible roles in various academic and/or church agencies. The purpose was to maintain an honest conversation between scholars from the “just war” and “pacifist” traditions for the mutual benefit of these scholars in their respective fields. Much of our time together (Friday evening-Sunday noon) was devoted to sharing experiences from the past year. Our professional experiences served at once as a testing ground for ideas and as an indirect outlet for the benefits of those conversations. Frequently, for part of the Saturday session, we invited a guest speaker involved in a current conflict- or peace-related public issue.

An example of the manner in which these conversations bore fruit was the trailblazing statement, *The Challenge of Peace*, by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, published in 1983. The Bishop’s consultant on international affairs, a member of WANACH tested in advance in our group several of the ideas that went into the preparatory statement he wrote at the request of the bishops. Only once, however, as the end of our little saga approached, did we “go public.” In 1986 Fortress Press (Philadelphia) published a collection of papers written by various members of the group for this purpose entitled *Peace, Politics and the People of God* (from which a chapter is in Par II below). I took extensive notes of all those meetings, now archived, awaiting the time and energy to be synthesized.

THE ROLLING RIDGE STUDY RETREAT COMMUNITY

Before proceeding to some concluding reflections, I must briefly note one more life chapter. A year before my 1987 retirement from Catholic University at age 67, Ellen and I moved to a small ecumenical center for study and retreat of which we were cofounders. This center is located at the foot of the western slope of the Blue Ridge mountain, a hundred kilometers west of Washington, DC. We obtained a lease of land from a private nature preserve there that extends from the Appalachian Trail atop that mountain to the Shenandoah River, about 20 kilometers before it flows into the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry, en route to Washington, DC,

The venture was formed in 1976, about a decade before our move to the site. The project emerged from discussions that were triggered by the ferment in American society in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Discovery of land being offered cost-free to a few agencies that would engage in meditative and environment-conserving activity crystallized this venture. Our venture was Christian-based, but not tied to a particular denomination or creed. The organizing maxim is *nurturing persons and communities*. Varied church groups from Washington, D.C. are shareholders in the property to the center, to which they have access for their own activities, proportionate to the number of shares they hold. The resident staff community and board of directors also

organize retreats and colloquies on particular themes which they interactively develop.

Ellen, based on training and experience in Tokyo and Washington, introduced a program series in the “meditative arts.” I was involved in the organization of a variety of academic events. We both participated in administrative activities, building maintenance, gardening, community events, communication and hospitality. The project was enriched by the diverse career paths that brought the four founding couples together as well as by the numerous participants who came on board afterwards.

We lived and worked there for fifteen enriching and crowning years, but obviously they inevitably came to an end. Four of our five children with family and career live in the Greater Washington region, where they grew up. A fifth lives in Florida. In 2001 Ellen and I retired a second time, taking up residence at the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community at Harrisonburg, VA, a hundred miles south of Rolling Ridge. This community provides care for seniors as they pass through their several stages.

MEANWHILE THE WORLD WAS CHANGING, DOUBTLESSLY FASTER THAN WE ARE

No doubt far more than I perceived, the ambivalences that led to my mid-1960s course shift, arose from the historical changes here noted. An important ecumenical conference held at Oxford, England in 1937, shortly before World War II (1941-45), for the first time, after many centuries, acknowledged that renunciation of violence and hence refusal to bear arms is an appropriate option for Christians who feel thus called. Then in 1948, the founding meeting of the World Council of Churches listed three approaches to war found among Christians. Some, it was observed, believe it necessary to support the use of force in the absence of “impartial supra-national institutions.” Others, though prepared to support the use of force in some circumstances, now concluded that weapons of mass destruction eliminate war as an option. Finally, it was noted, there are those Christians who adhere to “an absolute witness against war and for peace.” Persons espousing this last position became known as “conscientious objectors,” a term abbreviated as “CO.”

The weight of the earlier legacy of Christendom was evident on both sides in World War II. On the one hand, Hitler had succeeded in enlisting the silence or support of institutional Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic, though with important differences between the two. During that time a “Confessing Church” (Protestant) emerged underground, often resulting in imprisonment of clergy and others. On the other hand, on the American side, the Hitler enterprise appeared evil enough that churches in the USA tended to support the Allied war against it. Ironically, Reinhold Niebuhr, the most visible spokesperson in the USA for that church support, was himself a leading figure in the neo-orthodox school of theology. But it must also be noted that Niebuhr acknowledged the ultimacy of Christ’s nonviolent challenge!

It must not be overlooked that both 20th century World Wars, though in the end taking on wider dimensions, originated within “Christendom,” between nations long described as Christian. Retrospectively, the Oxford (1937) and Amsterdam (1948) conferences, in their recognition of the refusal to bear arms as a defensible Christian option, signified an historical turning point. Not surprisingly, however, this fact did not immediately change public opinion. Nor for that matter did I, at this early stage in my “story,” have any awareness of the Oxford conference or of what Amsterdam signified in this regard.

Several years later, in the fall of 1952, I was drawn directly into the ecumenical conversations on peace and war stimulated by those conferences. My sociology professor at the University of Zurich, while I was writing my dissertation there, had sent me to the Sorbonne in Paris for a term to observe a sociological study of French Catholics underway at that university. I had just been asked by the Continuation Committee of Historic Peace Churches to draft a statement on peace for presentation and discussion to the World Council of Churches. After considerable editing the statement was submitted by the committee of the “historic peace churches” to the WCC under the title, *Peace is the Will of God*. This title was triggered by a section in the WCC founding statement entitled “War is contrary to the will of God.” to which the WCC subsequently published a brief reply. More importantly, this exchange triggered a decade-long series of ecumenical discussions among scholars in Europe known as the “Puidoux Conferences” (from the Swiss town where the first conference in the series was held).

In ways that I could not have anticipated, that brief entry into the war-peace debate in the churches, largely set my life course for the next decade and a half. Beyond that, in other secondary ways these questions were to occupy me to the end of my days. As retrospectively evident in the ecumenical events of 1937 and 1948, changes were already underway that eventually would change the context of the pacifist-nonpacifist debate. But for the period in my life here referenced, 1952-1967, the older terms would prevail.

AN INSTRUCTIVE CHAPTER IN HISTORY

As indicated, an instructive shift in Western history had already begun to unfold. Echoes of early Christian renunciation of violence and war had lingered at the edges throughout medieval times. Beginning with the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, Christian pacifist renunciation of war re-emerged anew in the modern era. Until the 20th century, however, polities showed little understanding and tolerance for pacifist dissent. But in the course of World War I, Britain and the USA effectively began to experiment with forms of alternative service for religious objectors to military service. Might conscientious objectors to war be assigned instead to other forms of public service?

Vestiges of those World War I adjustments lingered. Then, during the 1930s as war loomed anew, Quaker, Mennonite, and Brethren representatives

conversed with Selective Service, the USA congressional conscription agency. That agency was updating the World War I conscription program in preparation for the new war that loomed. From that conversation Civilian Public Service (CPS), a program for conscientious objectors, was born. While oriented to “peace church” members, religious objectors from other traditions were also included.

Such broadening was appropriate. Membership in any of the peace churches did not guarantee that an 18-year old draftee was truly a CO, nor was conscientious objection to military action a Christian monopoly. By 1970 the USA Supreme Court ruled that “ethical and moral beliefs” were as valid as religious convictions for objection to military participation. “Conscience,” a more inclusive category however formed, now effectively trumped “religion” as the basis of exemption from military service. A further twist emerged: what about “selective conscientious objection,” objection to a particular war? Significantly, selective objection was seen as political judgment, not immediately as exercise of conscience, and thus was excluded from the CO category!

Importantly meanwhile, during the later decades of the 20th century, provision for conscientious objection to war, channeled into alternative civilian public service, has rapidly spread internationally. The operating rationale is no longer religious but democratic. The focus is on conscience, effectively the innate dignity of the individual, and hence a human right. Correspondingly, for varied related reasons, military service became voluntary as well. At this stage of historical development, this phenomenon appears only in countries whose polities are rooted in the Western tradition. Meanwhile, however, the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, already in 1987, adopted a resolution urging universal recognition of the right to conscientious objection to war.

A particularly dramatic example of accommodation of conscientious objection is the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, formed from the three western zones of the military occupation of Germany soon after the end of World War II. Article 4 of the Basic Law of this new German state stipulated that “no one shall be forced to do military service against his conscience.” As historians note, this formulation reflected a fundamental change in the German political and military institutions and culture. They also observe that the German alternative *Zivildienst* (civil service), now continued in the reunited republic, is the most extensively developed alternative service among all the nations.

A recent book entitled, *The New Conscientious Objection* (edited by Charles C. Moskos and John Whiteclay Chambers II), describes this 20th century transition from religion to conscience as ground for such objection. That transition reflects other changes underway in the century just past that cannot be described here. Following the controversy surrounding the war in Vietnam in the 1960s-1970s, conscription was abandoned in the USA. Doubtlessly voluntary professional service is more appropriate in this high-tech military era. New questions now arise regarding the civic education

of the youth formerly provided by universal military training. Meanwhile shortages in staffing in various social services are mounting. Religious and other agencies draw on voluntary programs for students in response to these shortages. Here are potentials for significant future development.

AT LAST, A RETURN TO THE AMERICA THEME

The introduction indicates that this autobiographical treatise is about America. In the pages that followed, however, America received little direct attention. This seeming neglect is about to be remedied, first here and in the final chapter that follows. We have just noted the emerging assimilation of conscientious objection to war into the Western political ethos in the Western world during the past century. Regarding this, military sociologist Charles Moskos, cited above, notes: "Calling themselves 'defenseless Christians,' the separatist Anabaptist pacifist groups contained the embryos of modern ideas of church and state" (p.10).

This "secularization of conscience" (Moskos), a remarkable development in its own right, is an instructive case study in the role of religion in society more broadly. In this instance, religious rejection of war serves also as an opening wedge for respect for conscience in society more widely. Closer examination discloses further that the readiness of American society to respond appropriately was due in part to the manner in which the same Christian tradition had already impacted that society. Not without reason the progress of modernization has been attributed to secular energies, notably the 18th century Enlightenment. Nonetheless, as Gil Baillie, a contemporary Christian writer rightly observes:

What the Enlightenment did was to secularize a wariness about religion that has its roots in the Old Testament prophets, the Gospels, and the letters of Paul. For both the secularizing and rationalizing impulses it espoused were products of the Judeo-Christian tradition that the Enlightenment came into existence by underestimating and repudiating.

That is, the respect for individual conscience that evolved in the American polity was facilitated by the fact that the culture generally had already been partly tempered by the Christian leaven.

But as the earlier project of Christendom so eloquently demonstrates, the *leavening* mission and effect of Christianity is all too readily misread as *Christianization*. *Sublating* mutates into mere *sacralizing*. On this point the biblical story is unmistakable. The achievement of "a new heaven and a new earth" comes only at the end of this aeon, at the end of time, a mystery beyond our comprehension. Until then, as Loughlin puts it, we *serve the world by being other than the world*. Generation by generation humans must be transformed from within. Whatever the personal fate of the Emperor Constantine, he had not been awarded a wand whereby he could Christianize an empire.

Chapter XXII

From Sacralizing to Sublating

When “scattered syllables form a single phrase”

-- Abraham Joshua Heschel

To where did the less traveled road that I took at mid-life lead? How do the costs and gains of that journey balance out? Here I recall Kierkegaard's citation that heads the introduction to this treatise: “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.” Abraham Heschel, the late Jewish rabbi, whether or not aware of Kierkegaard's above dictum, elucidated that concept more fully. Heschel, born in Poland, educated in Berlin, eventually came to New York, where he was a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He wrote:

In our own lives the voice of God speaks slowly a syllable at a time. Reaching the peak of years dispelling some of our intimate illusions and learning how to spell the meaning of life-experiences backwards, some of us discover how the scattered syllables form a single phrase. Those who know that this life of ours takes place in a world that is not all to be explained in human terms; that every moment is a carefully concealed act of His creation, cannot but ask: is there anything at all wherein his voice is not suppressed? Is there any thing wherein His creation is not concealed?

Within our common humanity, each life takes its own particular route. In my case, the “scattered syllables” feature was accentuated by a mid-life course change. Taking an uncharted route meant that the scattering of syllables would abound. The collection of essays that follow in the rest of this volume are “syllables,” triggered by vistas that appeared along the little-traveled route of the second half of my life. Taking an uncharted route put me in a posture of *waiting, listening and responding*, hardly the mode of career “success!”

I am now at “the peak of years,” the stage in life more ripe than during “the prime of life.” This “autobiographical treatise,” specifically in this concluding chapter, seeks to “discover how (or whether) the scattered syllables” in my life “form a single phrase.” Tracing this phrasing, though richly rewarding, is also humbling. Moreover, the peak of years also brings a decline of powers and the ability to communicate. In any event, the extent to which this effort to spell out the phrase succeeds, depends in part, as Heschel implies above, on what the reader brings to these pages. Our human dilemma in the end is that the metaphysical assumptions to which Heschel refers--“This life of ours takes place in a world that is not all to be explained in human terms”--are not fully reducible to the empirical discourse that our

“postmodern“ era, by seeking to expose, effectively idolizes.

Once more I proceed by anecdote: the first, exemplifies the pseudo-monomism implicit in Christendom, the legacy of which still haunts the so-called western world; the second, illustrates the reaction of radical individualism that variously recurred to that monism over the centuries; and the third, a refocusing of the communal individualism that emerges in the bi-polar biblical story, reasserted in the 16th century, and discredited as “sectarian” from the outset. Following this, the latter part of the chapter will be devoted to spelling out some affirmations and problems that arise in this *phrasing* of my life’s sectarian *syllables*.

RECALLING THE BASE LINE FROM WHICH I BEGAN

In the fall of 1951 I enrolled in a doctoral program in sociology and history at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. Meanwhile I also attended a lecture course in Christian ethics taught by Emil Brunner, a well-known Protestant theologian there. Zurich is the city where in the mid-1520s the nonviolent sectarian Anabaptist movement described in Chapter 1 had emerged. In the highlands some thirty kilometers to the east of the city lies the “Baptist Hollow,” a cave where outlawed Anabaptists gathered secretly during those beginning years in the second half of the 1520s. Memories of those years are imbedded in the Swiss culture and consciousness. Switzerland has been identified in modern times as a neutral country, but to this day has maintained a militia-based defense system. All able-bodied male citizens are still required to serve as active reservists. Meanwhile, as recently as the 1950s, local middle school civic classes were still being taken on guided hiking tours to the Baptist Hollow for a lesson in anti-sectarian civic responsibility.

This Anabaptist story was part of the *meta-narrative* that lay behind Brunner’s lectures. Historically, lecture courses in European universities were formal occasions. There was no discussion. Discussions were reserved for seminars. In rare instances students still rose respectfully as the professor entered and, at the end, remained in their places until he had left the hall. In the section of his lecture course in Christian ethics that dealt with the political order, Professor Brunner commented briefly but dramatically on conscientious objection to war. He characterized and rejected the CO position as *parasitic*, as leaving the “dirty work” in society, namely defending the country militarily, to others. Having made that point, he stepped from behind his formal lectern, approached the class with a hand on each hip. Leaning forward, with scorn in his voice as he came to the key word, he said: *If there’s anything I don’t want to be it’s a Schmarotze*, the rather onomatopoeic German term for *parasite*!

Brunner, it must be noted, was a leading figure in a theological movement known as “neo-orthodoxy.” That movement countered the liberalism and optimism that had preceded World War I (1914-18). The century previous had climaxed in Western religious thought with notions that human progress was leading ever onward and upward. Advances in science, technology, and history at the dawn of the twentieth century seemed to point in that direction.

But events, notably World War I and thereafter, soon suggested otherwise. In response, neo-orthodoxy once more took human depravity seriously, and hence likewise the transforming energy of the Christian gospel. Repentance, forgiveness and spiritual transformation once more came to be seen as existentially central in the biblical story.

This neo-orthodox thematic was vibrant and uplifting in Brunner's introductory lectures. But coming to topics of government and the state, the mood shifted. This can be understood only against the backdrop of the Swiss scene just described and, more importantly, of the story of Christendom, in which the Swiss culture was imbedded. For in dealing with the military question, Brunner simply drew on the millennium-long tradition of Christendom that emerged from the adoption of Christianity as the Roman imperial "religion" in the fourth century CE. But that adoption of Christianity hastened a major mutation of biblical faith. Political establishment replaced personal transformation as the defining basis of Christian identity. The sublation of the human world mutated instead into its (presumed) sacralization.

Prior to that, Christians for the most part had found military service, indeed all violence and bloodshed, to be incompatible with the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. Thus, for example, after Christianity was adopted imperially, Bishop Augustine of Hippo, North Africa, who lived early in the fourth century argued that once rulers converted to Christ they were called to use their military force to protect and to promote the cause of Christ. For centuries thereafter, religious or conscientious objection to military service was not even considered an option by the church. Christianity was now privileged and enforced by the empire in exchange for the *sacralization* that it afforded.

As already indicated, that view, though beginning to soften, still prevailed at mid-twentieth century. *Character* and *circumstance* (Loughlin, Introduction above) converged to place me vocationally at the interface of the Christendom paradigm and the "parasitic" sectarian camp that survived from the 16th century Reformation into the 20th. While in the first half of my adult life I was strengthened in my rejection of the legacy of Christendom still held by Professor Brunner, I increasingly recognized the insufficiency of my own Anabaptist tradition. Whatever the merits of this dissent, forming a "church," that is, a denomination, in response to a glaring flaw in Christendom, became equally one-sided, though in the opposite direction.

Mukyokai, a more Radical Response

In the late 1950s, during our (I with my family) three-year sojourn in Japan I was taken on a visit to the western province of Kyushu to visit an independent Bible teacher in his home. While by that time I had acquired a bit of conversational Japanese, we communicated through an interpreter. This man, whose name I cannot recall, was in mourning, his wife having died some weeks earlier. Though he was definitely a Christian, his home displayed the marks of mourning that were conventional in non-Christian Japan.

Today, nearly half a century later, though I cannot recall conversational detail, the impression left by the conversation remains indelible. In that Shinto/Buddhist country, where fewer than 1 percent of the population are Christian even today, this man had become a “born again” Christian merely by having read the gospels in the Bible. At the time of his conversion he had never yet met another Christian. The *Christ event* had engaged him directly. Yet I fully resonated inwardly with his description of his faith and conversion experience. In fact, his account of his inner transformation, without the institutional overlay of churchly traditions, bolstered my own faith in an unparalleled manner.

But here, too, there is a *meta-narrative* that must be briefly noted. While converted in the manner indicated, this Japanese Christian found his way into the Mukyokai (churchless) community of Christians in Japan. The founder of that movement, Uchimura Kanzo (1861-1930), was born into the *samurai* (warrior) class in Hokkaido, the country’s northernmost island. That class was dissolved after Japan’s opening to the West in the latter half of the 19th century. Uchimura, while a student at Sapporo Agricultural College, converted to Christianity. He later traveled to the USA where he studied at Amherst College and Hartford Theological Seminary. Both in Hokkaido and in his American experience, he became fully alienated from institutional and denominational Christianity, all the while growing in his own robust Christian faith.

Returning to Japan in 1888, he became a teacher. Because of his Christian commitment he clashed with the *Imperial Rescript on Education* issued in 1890, a pronouncement that reaffirmed claims of divinity in the Japanese nation and its emperor. Through the resulting controversy, Uchimura became a nationally known figure. At the same time he continued to resist all forms of Christian institution, such as church organization and membership, sacraments, clergy, and buildings. Eventually he published his own journal and conducted a Bible class, both dissolved at his death by the will he left behind.

While initially dismayed by those dissolutions in 1930, several individuals from that Bible class eventually sensed a calling themselves to begin such teaching. By that radicality, Uchimura Kanzo set a unique precedent. The movement is perpetuated only in the manner in which it originated. There is simply no formal structure. Quasi, self-appointed believers hang out a teaching shingle. Most who thus lead and/or attend, are educated intellectuals. The man I visited in Kyushu was such a teacher. Whatever the validity of this Mukyokai “paradigm” in its own right, it remains a powerful testimony to the intrinsic nature and power of the Christ event. I return to this topic below.

THE 16TH CENTURY ANECDOTE

An early martyr of the 16th century Anabaptist (or “free church”) movement was Michael Sattler, cruelly tortured enroute to the site where he was then burned at the stake on May 20, 1527. The initial rebaptism that signaled the rise of that movement took place in Zurich on January 21, 1525, more

than two years earlier. Sattler, prior of the Benedictine monastery St. Peter in the Black Forest of southwest Germany near Freiburg, left the monastery in May, 1525. This was the peak of the peasant uprising, and awareness of the injustices suffered by the peasants and corruption among church professionals had gotten through to him. However, he apparently had some awareness of Martin Luther's reforming initiative as well. According to scholars, Sattler next appeared in Zurich in November of the same year, by then in contact with the Anabaptists.

Thereafter he showed up in Strasburg, where in 1526 he had extended conversations with the Strasburg reformers, Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito. While they appear to have regarded him highly, Sattler's notions of reform went beyond their reach. Meanwhile he married a former Beguine sister named Margaretha. From Strasburg they circulated farther east into Wurttemberg. On February 27, 1527, Sattler was back in Switzerland, in the small Swiss town of Schleithem. There a small group of Anabaptists gathered furtively to spell out their commitment. Felix Manz, a participant in the first baptism in 1525, had just been given a martyr's drowning in the Limmat River at the center of Zurich, the first such in Switzerland. That drowning apparently triggered the Schleithem event.

The meeting in Schleithem hastily produced the first group declaration of the Anabaptists that, as it turned out, played a normative role for the next few decades in the stabilizing of this budding movement. Sattler was the principal writer of this seven-article document. Soon thereafter in the south German area under control of the Archduke of Austria, a Roman Catholic jurisdiction, he was arrested with others who had joined the movement. The juristic proceedings that followed were complex, and several incomplete accounts are extant. Details cannot and need not be provided here. Rejection and violation of the sacraments was at the heart of the charges that resulted in his death sentence. Rejection of the sacraments was thought to directly defame and undermine the coordinate religious and political foundation of Christendom.

Sattler's criticism of the sacraments lay in his affirmation that creation is already blessed by God the Creator. Clerical blessing can add nothing to the processes of creation and falsely imply improvement of what God had already made and blessed. On the other hand, in the Schleithem statement Sattler proposed that "the sword is an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ." Here we meet the perplexing duality of the biblical story that defies simple doctrinal packaging--God appears to act simultaneously in two distinct, even contradictory, modes. First and perpetually God acts as Creator, and subsequently, on the human plane, as Savior. As we shall see below, this formula points to a mystery requiring perpetual human coping rather than mere doctrinal formulation.

NOW THE PHRASING OF MY LIFE SYLLABLES

The first of the foregoing three anecdotes exemplifies an historical duality that emerged in Western Christianity between politically and innately established faith communities, known as churches. Growing out of medieval Christendom, and despite modifications in the Renaissance and Reformation, the ethos of that legacy survives even on the cusp of the 21st century. Moreover it prevailed especially in the USA, despite and in part because the separation of church and state is enshrined in the American constitution. That separation emancipated religious energies that the established church of European Christendom, by political means, had suppressed.

The second anecdote, my meeting with the Mukyokai leader points to the opposite extreme. While shortchanging the church in salvation history, that movement directs our attention to the primacy of the Christ event above all later accretions of Christian practice. The third anecdote, this one an instance of a 16th century martyrdom, affords a mapping of Christian history that assists our understanding of the challenge before us in this globalizing, “post modern” era. Clarification in this regard in this era becomes newly possible and urgently worldwide among us Christians.

To both focus and elaborate a bit further, the third anecdote signals a mid-point on the continuum between the *Christendom* and *Mukyokai* extremes. In fact, while historically both extremes figured in the lines that the furtive gathering at Schleithem in 1527 sought to draw, persecution and ghettoizing aborted that effort. Confusion followed, classically in the American separation of church and state. Absent theological and anthropological grounding for that separation, the consequences in some respects have been, and remain, chaotic.

Ironically, to an unprecedented degree the leadership of the Catholic and Protestant Christendom-descended church bodies in USA opposed this military venture against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, though with relatively little support from their laity. Meanwhile the individual-conversionist “free church” groups along with rightist Jewish minorities, dissenting from politically- established Christendom, provided the support for the Bush administration without which this crusade might not have materialized. Given the separation of church and state in the USA, personal conversion can now be promoted, but merely in a subjective privatized manner.

Salvation History as the Biblical Saga

The Bible begins with a brief and celebratory account of creation but is followed quickly by stories of human freedom gone awry. Then, once events showed that as humans we cannot correct ourselves, God intervened as Savior. Thereafter, while biblical writers presuppose and celebrate God the Creator and his creation, their principal theme becomes *salvation history*. That term has been widely used (and debated) in both scholarly and lay discourse to summarize the biblical account of God’s saving intervention in the human

story. The germ of that intervention appears in the terse opening lines of Genesis, Chapter 12:

Now the Lord said to Abraham, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

In this call a second "stream" of divine action emerges alongside and within the first, God's self-manifestation in Creation. Amazingly, the kernel of the whole subsequent biblical story, including the Christ event, appears in this sending of Abraham. Yet meanwhile the process of creation continues unabated. Indeed, this saving intervention permits the full realization of the original cosmic *telos*. For more discussion of the two "streams," "creation" and "saving grace," I refer the reader to the two final essays in the third group of the papers included below.

One of the seven Schleithem articles contains the pithy assertion cited above that *the sword is an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ*. This line, penned by Sattler, the former Benedictine monk and prior, captures inimitably the incongruity arising in the insertion of this second conversation, the perfection of Christ, into and alongside the cosmic discourse, God's ordering of Creation. This line is reminiscent of the imagery of Professor Brunner in the above anecdote. In Brunner's above paradigm of Christendom, *the perfection of Christ* is eclipsed by the *ordering of God* in Creation. In the Anabaptist appeal to *the perfection of Christ* this eclipsing impulse is reversed. Creation now tends to become obfuscated in our appropriation.

THE RESULTING PROBLEMS ARE REAL AND COMPLEX

No wonder that, as a prominent biblical writer observes, the Christian proclamation becomes "a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles." Above I briefly cited the three anecdotes as examples of this duality. Both conversations evolve in the course of time. The notion of the first, the language of creation, implies a beginning, a continuing development, and a culmination. The second conversation is humanly conditioned, within the limits of human finitude. It may be asked, had humans responded fully to the Mosaic covenant, would the Christ event have followed? When humans failed, God changed once more, indeed, changed step by step. Thus the later adaptation (Christianity) differed enough from the former (Judaism) to become a "stumbling stone" to those formed by that previous stage of the new conversation and covenant. Hence a transition from Judaism to Christianity? Herein we encounter a further complexity in the two-language enigma.

Second, if in fact intention of the second, the salvific (saving) conversation, is the fulfillment of the first, as stated in the above call to

Abraham, how do participants in the second--Schleithem's "perfection of Christ"-- respond to the improvements they effect in the first--God's "ordering" in Creation? Chapter 5 above briefly describes the 20th century unfolding of conscientious objection to war as a case study of this problem. Christian conscientious objection to war in the modern era resulted initially in imprisonment and even martyrdom. By the end of the 20th century refusal to bear arms is becoming secularized and incorporated into the civic order. What are the consequences of this evolution for the "peace churches," who earlier were persecuted for refusing military service?

And finally, how do those participating in the second conversation relate to those remaining in the first, those responding to God as Creator? As the Abrahamic project reaches the stage of Diaspora, whether by choice or by exile, the notion of *witness* emerges as the mode of promulgation of the second conversation. But historically, in the call to Abraham, what is intended as a straightforward diagnosis of the human predicament degenerates in its application into conflict and aggression with other religions. Yet in the biblical writings, where there are casual or marginal encounters with other religions, wholly different perspectives emerge.

The engagement of Peter the Apostle with Cornelius, a centurion in the occupying Roman army in Judea, is perhaps the most eloquent example. The story is told in the biblical book of Acts, chapter 10. In the encounter with Cornelius, an officer in the Roman occupying army in Palestine, Peter, the converted Christian Jew, has an awakening experience. Cornelius, described as "a devout man who feared God with all his household," receives a vision paralleling the vision received by Peter that brought him to the house of Cornelius. Both men are changed. Cornelius, with his household, accepts Peter's witness, and accepts the enhancement of his faith that the gospel affords. Peter, a "dyed in the wool" Jew, discovers "that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who hears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."

The linkage of Christianity to political conquest, is surely a heresy of the first magnitude. Yet all too often Christian witness among the nations of Christendom has been linked to colonizing aggression, especially in the early modern era. As Gerald Loughlin, a contemporary English scholar observes, Christians serve the world "by being other than in the world," hence as witness, not by conquest or domination.

IS AMERICA A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY?

The USA is a difficult country in which to live as a Christian. This is not because Christians effectively are driven underground, as in many times and places elsewhere, but precisely because Christian input in the culture is so widely taken for granted. But Jesus says, using pictorial language, where the gate is wide few find the narrow path of faith. Today, in public discourse, *God bless America* is a mantra with which perorations of all sorts typically

end. But sloganeering does not a Christian make, not individually, much less collectively.

Christianity, indeed the whole Judaic-Christian biblical and historical story, was an important energy in the formation of the American ethos. Insofar, the labeling of the USA as a Christian country can be justified. If, on the other hand, the Christian gospel is taken as it is given, labeling America as Christian is dysfunctional at best--dysfunctional for Christians as faith communities, on the one hand, and dysfunctional for the American society and state on the other. The gospel brings about personal transformation to believers from within, a transformation that is manifestly shared in faith communities. But they are communities of *faith*, not of *nature* as the created order.

Hence the gospel is not an alternative blueprint for political societies. Human communities otherwise, from family to nation, are grounded naturally. In this regard, as humans, whether we are atheist, agnostic, or theist, we find ourselves on a level playing field. All this is implicit in the paragraphs of the immediately preceding section of this chapter. In the biblical story, God introduces a second, a specifically remedial language, within and alongside his first language in Creation. The separation of church and state in the American system corresponds to the distinctions thus drawn. But as already indicated, that separation was "stumbled into" pragmatically, and thus has yet to be clarified fundamentally. Until that occurs, the current "God bless America" confusion will persist.

Beyond Christendom

History has now moved beyond Christendom, hence also beyond the formations that arose ostensibly as alternatives to it. What remains, however, appears more awesome than ever. For the Good News has demonstrated its power despite and beyond all our idolatrous embellishments over the centuries. Whatever the validity of the conciliar decrees of the early centuries or the ecclesiastical bodies subsequently formed around them, it has become ever more evident that the power of the gospel is embodied in the original *Christ event*. Yes, gatherings of must continuously reach out to other gatherings. Yet institutional layering of outreaches quickly assume a life of their own, no longer beholden to the conversational gathering. Arguments as to which configuration of gatherings is the true church are sterile and distracting. Following, not presuming to lead, those gathered conversations is now our perpetual task.

WHERE DOES ALL THIS LEAVE US?

It leaves Christians simply as *witnesses*, never as empire, whether religious or political. As indicated, the relation of the two conversations, first in creation, then in salvation--God as Creator and subsequently God as Savior--remains in some measure enigmatic. An acute dimension of this enigma, it is important to note, is the relation between the biblical story and other religions.

According to that story, as indicated, God now begins a new discourse with His human partners. Friction arising between these two modalities at the divine-human interface has been a major chapter or phase in the human story ever since.

The biblical story relentlessly exposes all forms of idolatry, whether “pagan,” Jewish, or Christian. The metaphors that the story employed at its early stages, nonetheless, were highly ritualistic--tabernacle, altars, sacrifices--idioms that readily slide into idolatry. Eventually, however, the prophets become increasingly critical of the whole ritual system. The prophet Hosea (Ch. 6:6) quotes God as saying *I desire steadfast love and mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings*. In that vein, Jesus eventually announces (Luke 17:20): “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among/within you.”

As the story unfolds through the age of the prophets, followed eventually by the exile and dispersion of the Jews among the nations, and then finally the coming of the Christ, the focus of the conversation grows increasingly personal and spiritual. All along the intention has been the transformation of the human heart, transformation of the human person from the inside out. This is not a denial or disparagement of the importance of Christian influence in American civilization or European Christendom. Recall that Abraham, as cited above was sent to an unknown land on behalf of all the people on earth. Jesus views his disciples as light, as salt, as leaven. In the words of Gerard Loughlin, they serve the world by being other than the world they serve.

Instead of the debate between the Christendom and free church traditions to which my early adult life was devoted, my re-mapping during the second half takes me forward beyond those cultural sedimentations of the past to the ever living reality of the *Christ event*. Something quickly goes amiss when we qualify organizations that are rooted in the created order with the adjective “church.” In one of the two rare instances where the term church appears on the lips of Jesus (Matthew 18:20), he describes that moment as a conversation of several believers with Jesus in their midst, hardly a blueprint for a cathedral and all that such structures entail!

Christians may find it appropriate to organize around particular tasks--schools, hospitals, and the like. But doesn’t treating such ventures as Christian or church-directed mix and confuse categories? But what about churches themselves, churches as the face-to-face process with Jesus the Christ in the midst? The problem begins the moment the two or three make plans to meet a second time. Here an analytical suggestion may help: a distinction between primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of organization. We might call that conversation the primary level or cell--small groups or “house churches.” The secondary arises when organizational links are formed between such clusters, thus eventually growing into “denominations,” such as Catholic, or Lutheran, or Mennonite. Tertiary refers to instances where denominations sponsor social agencies such as schools or hospitals. Political formations would take us a

step further to a fourth or quaternary level, thus even more remote from the primary face-to-face-cells constituted by the Christ in their midst.

How do we fully participate in and celebrate the world of creation precisely because God's saving conversation takes us beyond that world? That is our defining challenge, serving the world by being other than the world. In ending this "peak of the years" treatise, I cite the prayer of the unnamed Psalmist (Psalms 71:17-18) that enriched this personal writing venture:

O God, from my youth you have taught me,
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.
So even to old age and gray hairs,
O God, do not forsake me
until I proclaim your might,
to all the generations to come.

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THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976

in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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