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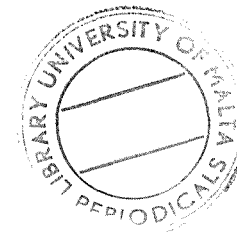

Monasticism as a Bridge Between East and West
— *Edward G. Farrugia S.J.* 1

I Formed a Man With Yahweh
— *Peter Paul Zerafa O.P.* 29

The Philosophical Implications of
Einstein's Relativity Theory
— *Mark F. Montebello* 33

Changing Religiosity: Secularisation and Variation
Data Analysis of Religious Values in Spain
— *Anthony M. Abela S.J.* 45

One Book: Two Different Reactions
— *Lino Sant* 65
— *Anthony Abela* 77

Book Review 91

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MONASTICISM AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Edward G. Farrugia S.J.

"The East differs from the West even in matters in which it does not differ at all." This famous saying of Mgr A. Szepticky seems to hold eminently true of monasticism.[1]

True, one could argue that, though the tensions between East and West have been many, they have not seldom been healed by monks whose names have come to symbolize mediation. Such is the case with St John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407), for whose sake Rome, acting on the information of Cassian, was willing to break off with Constantinople. Such is St Maximus the Confessor (ca 580-662), one of the greatest theologians of the Byzantine Church, who gave Rome, and received there, the strongest backing. Such were, too, Sts Cyril (827-869) and Methodius (ca 825-885), recently made patrons of Europe because of their excellent contacts, at a time of incipient schism, with both pope and patriarch, and who have been aptly described as "Orientals by birth, Byzantines by citizenship, Greeks by nationality, Romans by their mission, Slavs by the fruits of their apostolate...".[2] Indeed, one might even argue that

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Abbreviations employed in this study:

DIP = G. Pelliccia and G. Rocca (ed.), *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione.* V. (Edizioni Paoline; Roma 1978).

HAUSHERR = I. Hausherr, *Études de spiritualité orientale.* (Gregorian University Press; Rome 1969).

ORDENSREGELN = H.U. von Balthasar (Hg.), *Die großen Ordensregeln.* (Benzinger Verlag; Einsiedeln 1961).

1. Quoted in G. Tsébricov, *L'esprit de l'Orthodoxie.* (Collection no.7; Irénikon 1927) 9.

2. These are the words of Pius XI in an Apostolic Letter of 13 February 1927; see M. Lacko, *I santi*

what East and West have doubtlessly in common is monasticism: sprung suddenly as if by miracle in late third-century Egypt, it spread just as quickly through St Athanasius' *Life of St Antony* and the Alexandrian patriarch's own sojourns in the West, Cassian's travels and writings and St Jerome, who made available a translation of the first rules.[3]

Precisely on this point, once we start delving deeper into history for an answer, we find ourselves before the age-long dilemma: what came first — the hen or the egg? Monasticism in the classical form which would subsequently characterize it or the partition of the religious world in an Eastern and a Western half? The separation of Christianity into a Western and an Eastern Church may be largely traced back to the division of the Roman Empire into West and East, but it is notoriously hard to say when this division really started to exist. First attempts to latinize the Roman Church appear under Pope St Victor I (189-ca 199), but Greek was still in use in the liturgy at Rome under Pope St Damasus (366-389). The definite political division of the Roman Empire in East and West took place in 395 when Emperor Theodosius died, but this had been heralded through the administrative division of the empire under Diocletian in 286.[4]

Cirillo e Metodio: vincolo tra Costantinopoli e Roma," in Pontificial Lateran University/Catholic University of Lublin (ed.), The Common Christian Roots of the Eastern Nations, II, (Le Monnier; Florence 1982) 37-42.

3. How cautious one has to be with these generalizations may be gathered from recent scholarship. Doubtlessly, there was a pre-monastic form of asceticism which, as in the case of virgins, already enjoyed a measure of official recognition by the Church. As far as the exact origins of monasticism as an institution are concerned we are still in the dark on account of the dearth of documents. See R. Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen.* (Telos-Verlag; Altenberge 1989) 85; also: P. du Bourguet, "Pierres d'attente dans l'Égypte antique pour le monachisme chrétien," in R.-G. Coquin (ed.), *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: Contributions à l'Étude des Christianismes Orientaux,* (Patrick Cramer; Genève 1988) 45; L. Abramowski, "Vertritt die Syrische Fassung die ursprüngliche Gestalt der Vita Antonii? Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der These Draguets," in R.-G. Coquin (ed.) Ibid., pp.55-56. According to J. Gribomont, the primacy of Egypt and of Mesopotamian Syria refers in the main to the chronological priority with which certain models respected for their discernment of spirits, such as St Antony and St Pachomius (+ca. 346), were able to assert themselves; see J. Gribomont, "Monachesimo Orientale," *DIP,* 1684. As far as the origin of monasticism in the West is concerned, it is all shrouded in darkness. G.M. Columbás, in *El monacado primitivo, I.* (La Editorial Católica; Madrid 1974) 211-212, suggests that it was probably an indigenous product, a re-organization of the life of virginity many led in the West, even if one should not ignore the great influence exercised by the spiritual writings on monasticism coming from the East; see also Ibid, 211-215. For later influences see: B. Hamilton and P.A. McNulty, "*Orientale lumen et magistra latinitas*: Greek influences on Western Monasticism (900-1100)," in *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos, 963-1963. Études et Mélanges,* I, (Chevetogne 1963) 181-216.

4. See W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity,* (Longmann and Todd; London 1984) 452-53.

Therefore, during the first part of St Antony's long life (ca 251-356), when he was drawing crowds of hermits around him, thus giving rise to a new tangible form of the absolute search for God, Emperor Diocletian made his famous re-organization of the Roman Empire, on the basis of which Constantine the Great was soon to create Constantinople, and from which the Byzantine Church would ultimately arise. And so one might as well ask whether the first organization of monasticism which caught the eye of the historians did not correspond to the general movement of drifting apart of two blocks known as East and West — whether, in other words, the rise and diffusion of monasticism in the East was not a symptom of breakdown and separation, a movement soon to find enthusiastic adepts in the West, but also bound to develop on considerably independent lines, thus deepening the gulf of separation.

History can help us further here only if we see it in its depth dimension, that is, as the history of concrete beings in their all-emanating relationships, and not as an abstract record of politically isolated events. For this we may have recourse to one of the basic insights of Eastern theology, according to which dogma and spirituality form a unity. Spirituality is lived dogma.[5] Then since dogma reflects God's revelation and his design for all humanity throughout history, it encompasses the depth of life in its entirety and gives us a clue to discover what has been essential in the factual historical process. Consequently, in trying to figure out the role of mediation monasticism has to play we may follow just this lead: the point where dogma as the living doctrine of the Church and spirituality as the life of this teaching are seen as parallels which together form a unity.

Our reflections will thus concentrate on theology, taking this itself to be a prime medium through which monasticism creates bridges. [1] In the first section of this paper we shall try to reach the *theological* starting-point of monasticism in order to recuperate its original image, which is truly unitive in scope. [2] The further trans-cultural role which monasticism has to play in order to mediate between East and West presupposes a confrontation between the unitive vision underlying monasticism and the respective contemporary cultures, the theme of the second part of the paper. This contraposition seems at first to lead to insoluble divisions, but turns out to be a beneficient theological clash which may be called the "iconoclasm of the icon." [3] Failure to live up to this shock understood as opening oneself to the God who may be symbolized but is beyond images accounts for crisis, understood precisely as loss of the primordial image and, more generally, of the theology of image or symbol, the

5. "Dogme et spiritualité orientale," HAUSHERR, 145.176.

theme of the third part. [4] Finally, in the last section, the recuperation of the original image of monasticism is seen in line with retrieving the monastic dimension of theology, whereby the underlying unitive vision of monasticism inevitably finds expression in the pluralism of its concrete forms.[6]

A word about our way of proceeding is here in order. The scope of the present paper could be narrowed down by restricting it to a comparison between Eastern and Western monasticism, thus excluding from the latter those religious institutes which are not strictly monastic, since there are no non-monastic religious in Orthodoxy. When Dom Lambert Beauduin, in 1925, founded the monastery of Amay-sur-Meuse, later transferred to Chevetogne, he had precisely in mind the proximity of Western monks in the strict sense of the word to their Eastern colleagues. It is to be noted, however, that in Modern Greek the word for monk is used in a more inclusive sense, no distinction being made, for example, between Western monks and religious. This, in turn, suggests an analogously inclusive approach on our part, and not only by adopting this use. Then by further avoiding to discuss monasticism exclusively from the viewpoint of the three classical vows, we hope to exploit some patristic insights into monasticism as a universal model of the quest for unity, and thus useful also for the East-West dialogue. That the call to the religious life, as distinguished from that to perfection, is a special vocation with a specific identity, and one indispensable for the Church withal, is not thereby called into question, but it is not the theme of this paper.

1 Recuperating the Original Image of Monasticism

In our attempt to reach the beginning of monasticism theologically, that is, its original form or image, we are at once faced with a number of difficulties. There is, for example, the difficulty of circumscribing in a definition the essence of Christian monasticism. We may, however, easily understand why: shot through and through by the Spirit, whose victory over matter it proclaims, monasticism is hardly amenable to a neat juridical definition, without the accompanying temptation of introducing surreptitiously the victory of the letter over the spirit.[7]

6. See F.-E. Morard, "Monachos, Moine: Histoire du terme grec jusqu'au 4e siècle. Influences bibliques et gnostiques," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 20 (1973) 323-411; also: T. Fry (ed.), *The Rule of St Benedict*, (The Liturgy Press; Collegeville, Minnesota 1980) 301-321. For the problem of the pluralism of monastic forms see R. Hostie, *Vie et mort des ordres religieux*, (Desclée de Brouwer; Paris 1972).

7. See P. Miquel, "Signification et motivations du monachisme," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*,

From the viewpoint, then, of an observer who wants to take stock of all the pertinent phenomena, the continuum between forms of pre-Christian, non-Christian and Christian monasticism proves baffling. Among the constants may be mentioned, in the case of solitaries, the withdrawal from normal social intercourse, sexual abstinence, prayer and specific ascetical practices. For those living in communion may be added a rule, written or at least transmitted orally and whose observance implies the master-disciple relationship, a formal initiation to the particular life-style of complete dedication, profession as a sign of incorporation within the community, and possessing things in common. In a hierarchy of importance poverty, chastity and obedience seem to form the basis of every monasticism, and not just of related phenomena.[8] All the more provoking becomes, in view of this, the question: in which sense can we say that Christian monasticism has to do with Christ at all, let alone assert that He is the ultimate founder of Christian monasticism?

It has been claimed that, by identity (or near-identity) of structures, it is the motivation which makes Christian monasticism specifically Christian.[9] Since Christians become monks for the love of Christ, there would be no Christian monasticism without the Christ-event.[10] This answer cannot satisfy entirely. True, without Christ's coming Christian monasticism would not exist, but the motivation alone does not render justice to what Christ did "for our sake and for our salvation." After Christ, the reality itself has been, from a Christian viewpoint, changed. Or to speak with the Eastern Fathers, Christ has restored the tarnished image according to which God had created human beings.[11] The Christian monk as such embodies Christ's own life-style at its deepest, in the mode of the restoration of the image accomplished by Jesus Christ. Since spirituality lives dogma as it is, in its fullness, the monastic call re-enacts the whole of Christian dogma. So though Christian monasticism is very similar to non-Christian types in structure, it is at the same time also very different from them in content.

(Beauchesne; Paris 1980) 1547-1548. Schmemann describes in eschatological language the incapacity of the world to "absorb" (and this surely includes neat definitions) monasticism, which is precisely the salt for the world; see A. Schmemann, *The Historical road to Eastern Orthodoxy*, (Harvill Press; London 1963) 108-109.

8. See J. Leclercq, "Fenomenologia del monachesimo," *DIP*, 1674-1675.

9. See Ibid, *DIP*, 1677.

10. See Ibid, *DIP*, 1678-1679.

11. See J. Gross, *La divinisation du chrétien d'après les Pères grecs*, (Gabalda; Paris 1938) 207-210, for St Athanasius.

We may now look for possible hints concerning the initial design of monasticism in a beginning known to us through faith and elaborated by theology. God created the first human pair in His own image and likeness (Gen 1,26-27) and placed them in paradise where they enjoyed personal integrity. There existed for them no such thing as separation of *eros*, or sexual attraction, and *agape*, or attraction for divine matters, because everything was transparent. In this sense, to distinguish between the secular and the religious state would have been meaningless.[12] The prohibition to eat from the fruit of the tree was only an exclamation-mark meant to draw attention to the inner hierarchy of love, which made of every eating a "Eucharist" of divine love.[13] Through sin the inner unity was destroyed, and — to speak with St Irenaeus — the likeness to God in grace was lost, even if the inborn image was retained.[14] In paradise, submission to God meant that man and woman were set to rule over creation in God's name, but after sin Adam and Eve were embarrassed by their own presence, because they realized, in an inchoate way, what a difference there now came into being between fertility and virginity. Like Mary, Eve's fertility prior to sin would not have impaired her virginity.[15]

But in order to form an idea of what God really had in mind in creating us we should turn to those who have best fulfilled His plan. This Mary, the Mother of God, accepted without any reserve. Her yes pronounced in the Spirit reflects, while at the same time surpasses, both states in life, motherhood and virginity.[16] In Mary we simply encounter a touch of paradise of the first among the redeemed. When we come to the Redeemer Himself, His concrete mode of existence becomes itself the definitive revelation of His Father's project of love for humanity. Christ was not simply obedient, but by His very nature he was

12. H.U. von Balthasar, "Vom Ordensstand," ORDENSREGELN, 11-12.

13. See Ibid, 12. Here is the beautiful comment of J. Zizioulas: "The eucharistic experience implies that life is imparted and actualized only in an event of communion, and thus creation and existence in general can be founded only upon this living God of communion. Thus, the divine act that brings about creation implies *simultaneously*, the Father, the Son and the Spirit (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* V, 28:4; cf. IV, *Praef.* 4);" in: J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, (Darton Longman and Todd; London 1985) 82.

14. See H.U. von Balthasar, Ibid, ORDENSREGELN, 12-13.

15. See Idem, *Christlicher Stand*, (Johannes Verlag; Einsiedeln 1977) 71-75. In the famous icon of the dormition of St Ephrem in the monastery of St Nicholas at the Meteora, we see, among other vignettes from the monastic life, a monk who comes to the burial on a lion's back, an illustration of paradisaical lack of fear. See E.N. Trubetskoi, *Icons: Theology in Color*, (St Vladimir's Press; N. York 1973) 29-30.

16. See H.U. von Balthasar, "Vom Ordensstand," ORDENSREGELN, 14.

obedience in person: His special truth consisted in making Himself the Word of another, that of His Father.[17] Christ was not simply poor, but showed how little possessive He was of His divine rank that He divested Himself of it. To give status to the pariahs of existence and make them partake of His riches He embraced poverty as His new position in being (Phil 2,5-11; 2Cor 8,9).

It is in this new form of existence Jesus lived out for us that monasticism finds its justification. By monasticism we understand, to begin with, the single-minded endeavour to pursue the call to perfection. The New Testament knows of several occasions when Christ called upon people to follow Him. It is well conversant with special vocations, not meant for everybody, such as the call of the Apostles. Nor did Jesus accept just anyone in His retinue, even when they entreated Him to do so, but only whomsoever it pleased Him to choose (see Mark 5,18-20; 10, 29-30).[18] In contrast to this, the call to perfection is incumbent on all without exception (see Mt 5,48; Luke 6,36; 14,25-27; Lev 19,2). Thus we see that, whereas there are special vocations reserved for some, the call to perfection is not one of them.

Indeed, the sacrament of the religious life is baptism. It coincides with the way in which the Christian comes to share in Christ's life, death and resurrection. In this sense the religious life has sometimes been called a second baptism. Since the sacrament of baptism cannot be administered validly more than once, only sectarians like the Messalians could take this comparison literally and draw themselves away from the Great Church pretending to be beings apart on the basis of a second baptism.[19] So when we say that the sacrament of monks with vows is baptism, the means instituted by Christ for admission into His Kingdom, this is another way of inculcating that the duty to become perfect is addressed to everyone.

In turn, if we have to move on and describe what distinguishes the monk from others without vows, we have to be in the first place careful not to identify him simply with the perfect man.[20] Perfection consists in possessing to a high

17. See Idem, "Vom Ordensstand," 9.10.

18. See Ibid, 18-21.

19. See "Vocation chrétienne et vocation monastique selon les Pères," HAUSHERR, 458-459; H. Rahner, *Symbole der Kirche: Die Ekklesiologie der Väter*, (Otto Müller Verlag; Salzburg 1964) 557-558.

20. Already A.v. Harnack reports that when he defined the monk as the perfect Christian he received many protests from Catholics; see A.v. Harnack, *Das Mönchtum. Seine Ideale und seine Geschichte*, (Verlag A. Töpelmann; Giessen 1921) 6.

degree the theological virtues, i.e. those virtues which have God as their direct object, namely, faith, hope and charity, of which the greatest is charity (see John 2,5; 4,12; 1Cor 13,8-13; Col 3,12-17). Or better: perfection consists in being possessed by God, when we believe, hope and love. Everybody can attain that and should try to. Well says St John Chrysostom that "Christ did not make a difference [between those living in the world and monks]. He has not invented the expressions 'layperson' and 'monk'. It is our human way of thinking which has made us draw this distinction, but it is not to be found in Scripture."[21]

It is now possible to distinguish between that perfection which is everybody's concern and the life or state of perfection which characterizes the life of the monk with vows. The difference between both consists not so much in the goal (that of perfection), as in the means to reach that goal. Monks have chosen for themselves the best means to attain a perfection which is everybody's duty to pursue.[22] With the fathers of the Church we may distinguish between "virtues" (ἀρεταί or ἔργα) and the "instruments of virtues" (ἐργαλεία ἀρετῶν). The virtues are the same (see 1Tim 6,8-9; 1Cor 7,29), the difference lies only in the instruments, and even this is relative. That there are means superior to those of the monk in the strict sense of the word is shown by martyrdom, for which monasticism is considered to be a substitute, not the other way round.[23]

We are now in a position to see how unitive the very idea of monasticism is. It is meant to reenact God's original project of a humanity at peace, i.e. at one, with itself, an integrated humanity. It reflects anything but a two-level morality, one for laity without vows and one for religious. On the contrary, the monastic ideal nurtures itself on the one goal which is unity on all levels, and especially unity between God and man, a unity expressed best of all in

21. St John Chrysostom, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3, *PG* 47, 37-38. Compare this with: K. Rahner, "Über die evangelischen Räte," *Schriften zur Theologie VII*, (Benzinger Verlag; Einsiedeln 1971) 430.

22. See "Vocation chrétienne et vocation monastique selon les Pères," HAUSHERR, 425.459-462. See also St John Chrysostom, "Adv. oppugn. vitae monasticae," 1.III, 15 (*PG 47, 372-373); A. Theodorou, 'Das Mönchtum der orthodoxen Ostkirche,' in P. Brasiotis (Hg.), Die orthodoxe Kirche in griechischer Sicht, II*, (Evangelisches Verlagwerk; Stuttgart 1960) 83ff.

23. E.g. St John Damascene, *De Virtute et Vitio, PG* 95, 85-98; see "Vocation chrétienne et vocation monastique selon les Pères," HAUSHERR, 408; T. Špidlík, "Das östliche Mönchtum und das östliche Frömmigkeitsleben," in F.v. Iványka/J. Tyciak/P. Wiertz (Hg.), *Handbuch der Ostkirchenkunde*, (Patmos Verlag; Düsseldorf 1971) 559-60; E. Sauser, *So nahe steht uns die Ostkirche*, (Verlag Josef Knecht; Franfurt a.M. 1980) 112-118.

mysticism.[24] This holds even more so in view of Christ's redemptive refurbishing of the image, in which He mediated between all divisions running through humanity.[25] If already the original state of man and woman consisted in unity and integrity, one would be led to expect that the monk' mission cannot consist in divisiveness, but rather, especially after Christ's restoration, in healing wounds and promoting unity.

2. *Shock of the Past*

At once we find ourselves before a paradox. When monasticism organized itself in a way that society at large had to take notice of it, it manifested itself as a mass-movement that separated itself from society and moved into the desert. There was an element of protest right from the start.[26] And throughout its history monasticism was thoroughly capable of protesting. Sometimes it was against emperors who thought they could tamper freely with the faith, as in the age of iconoclasm; at other times it was monks themselves who fomented discord.[27] Protest even has its place in the rule of Pseudo-Basil in what is called the practice of "reproving the heretic".[28] Indeed, if we consider the prime analogate of perfection, that is to say, martyrdom, it seems as if perfection, far

24. See O. Clément, *Questions sur l'homme*, (Éd. Stock; Paris 1972) 96: "Martyrdom ... is the mystic state par excellence;" also: S. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, (Centenary Press; London 1935) 177-178: "Orthodoxy knows no different standards of morality; it applies the same standard to all the situations in life. Neither does it recognize any distinction between two moralities, one secular and the other monastic; these are only differences of quantity, of degree, and not of nature. ... Each one should be a monk and ascetic in his heart." As I. Hausherr points out in his *Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois*, (*OCA* 144; Roma 1955) 291-292, the division of Christians in the perfect and the good, such as it is found, for example, in the *Liber Gradium*, is heretical.

25. See L. Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St Maximus The Confessor*, (St Vladimir's Press; New York 1985) 80-91, where Christ's fivefold mediation to heal a divided universe are discussed.

26. It would be mistaken, however, to reduce the origin of monasticism to a matter of (sociological) protest only. See G.M. Columbás, *El monacado primitivo, I*, 36-39; H. Bacht, *Neue Erkenntnisse über den Ursprung des Mönchtums,"* in *A. Rauch u. P. Imhof (Hg.), Basilius: Heiliger der Einen Kirche*, (Verlagsgesellschaft Gerhard Kaffke mbH; München 1981) 137-142.

27. Eutyches in the East and Pelagius in the West were both monks; see H. Bacht, *Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (431-519)", in H. Bacht und A. Grillmeier (Hg.), Das Konzil von Chalkedon, II*, (Echter Verlag; Würzburg 1953) 193-314.

28. See *PG* 31, 649-650; "Spiritualité monacale et unité chrétienne," HAUSHERR, 322-323.329. The text in Scripture to which this refers is the *Epistle to Titus* 3,10: "Warn a heretic once or twice; after that have nothing to do with him." It is to be noted that Pseudo-Basil left out the mitigating circumstances and used a harsher word than the original.

from contributing to idyllic peace, is on a collision course with society.

No wonder, then, that the appeals to perfection the New Testament enunciates are not seldom couched, even when they are addressed to all Christians without reserve, in the language of conflict and contrast. In what has been called the first letter of the East to the West St Paul writes:

> And now, brothers, I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect.[29]

The word used to relay "non-conformity," μη συσχηματιζεσθε, is derivative of "schema," a monastic word which brings to mind monks' habits: *mikroschemes* and *megaloschemes*. But for all its symbolic value, the habit, unless accompanied by a greater progress in union with God, in *deification*, here suggested in the word for radical transformation, μεταμορφουσθε, does not make the monk and remains superficial.[30]

Since non-conformity accrues content from the object on which it refuses to pattern itself, we would be well-advised at this juncture to reflect non-conformity as a form of counter-culture. A counter-culture usually holds up as values factors which go counter to those of the established society. But even these deviations or alternative values need not be destructive, but may thoroughly be worthy of the name of culture.

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.[31]

29. Rom 12,1-2; translation of: *The New Testament of The New American Bible*, (Image Books; New York 1970) 350.

30. See I. Hausherr, *Renouveau de vie dans le Christ Jésus*, (Éd. P. Lethielleux; Paris 1969) 29-34.

31. A.I. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, (Mass., University Press; Cambridge 1952) 357.

This well-rounded definition of culture underlines the force engendered by patterns which establish themselves as traditions, but somehow it does not mention the motivation — the reason why people spend their lives writing books, planning buildings and what not. Revealing, in this regard, is S. Freud's study, *Culture and Its Discontents*.[32] The leitmotiv recurs in one form or another: human beings oft undertake arduous enterprises spurred on by their inferiority complex (A. Adler). The point is however, that culture, to a large extent, is a negative concept because one's drive to cultivate oneself and one's environment depends in part on one's attitude towards death and life. And in this respect culture, left to its own devices, can only grope in the dark, letting down the seeker completely.

In spite of the sociological and psychological deviation of some of these categories, which are thus incapable of doing justice to what monasticism is in the last analysis, they can help order the phenomenon of the religious life within the ambit of its social relevance. In this respect, monasticism would be useless, if it simply were in complete harmony with the prevailing norms of society at large. Rather, it was meant to stand out some distance from them and point out to the Christian alternative. If it lives to its ideal, monasticism functions as a corrective against false models and as an aspiration which others who cannot join the ranks may nonetheless seek to realize at least in part.[33] In this sense monasticism is a counter-culture: it shows the complete relativity of culture in comparison with spirituality. This relativity, however, does not mean that culture and spirituality need to be opposed to each other in principle.

To illustrate the counter-cultural role of monasticism: St Benedict, patriarch of Western monasticism, faced a society in which the old Roman *ordo* was crumbling down leaving the barbarians free to play with a people now prostrate because of war and scarcity. St Benedict is well-known for having imprinted *stabilitas loci* on his monks. But, in his warnings against the "gyrovagus" or wandering monk it was the uprooting of whole peoples and the insecurity it engendered that he tried to curb. To oncoming hordes he did not say "Go ahead!" but rather offered a halting-place in the monasteries, which quickly became a stabilizing force of society. The halting-places

32. The same idea is well relayed in the original German title: *Das Unbehagen mit der Kultur.*

33. J. Leclercq has shown that, while the first impulse of monasticism is a bit savage, or, we might say, centrifugal with regard to established culture, it tends to be integrated within the ambit of the official Church and becomes in turn a foyer of general and especially Church culture. See Idem, "Fenomenologia del monachesimo," 1675.1681; also his *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, (Fordham University Press; New York 1977) 45-46.

Benedictine monasteries developed into were places where the masses, fleeing in disarray, or the individual, caught in his own inner struggle, could tarry, enthralled by the cadences of liturgy, to catch glimpse of a social order impregnated by Christianity. The monks did not seek to create a counter-Church, but they held forth the ideal of an alternative society, based on more social justice in the spirit of the early Church.[34]

The same holds true of any other founder of a religious order, who knew how to seize the occasion God sent him his way through the crying need of the hour. Thus, St Francis did not so much preach justice for the poor, he did not found an order of charity, but he rather preached poverty to the rich, peace of mind through evangelical renunciation among the rising bourgeois classes.[35] Both saints exemplify what monasticism is: to curb humanity's evil tendencies by healing spiritual illness in its roots.

In Eastern theology especially, this counter-cultural way of living has been expressed in a far better way theologically by speaking of "fools for Christ's sake." In the Greek tradition this type of fool is known as *salos*, among the Russians as *yurodivy*. There is a close connection between folly for Christ's sake and monasticism; one may venture to say that, while it is incumbent on every Christian to reject reliance on his own resources and worldly wisdom (1Cor 3,18), monasticism as such represents the institutionalization of folly as the ultimate criterion for judging human endeavour. There is an element of jest in this folly, not completely dissimilar to that of the court-jester, and there is an element of shock in it, too, the consternation people feel before the irruption of something radically novel in time.

But most of all: the fool for Christ's sake has his centre in Christ, not in himself; his action is inspired throughout by the Spirit, so that this folly is as once a criticism of his contemporaries and an anticipation of God's judgement, which will upset human wisdom and compromises. Precisely folly for Christ's sake shows the difference between mere protest for the sake of protest and the eschatological dimension of monastic culture. Far from being ego-centred, it points to the conflict, as a matter of principle, between the present world and the world to come, whose resultant is the cross, which is the way the God of

34. See W. Dirks, *La réponse des moines*, (Éditions du Seuil; Paris 1955) 97.103-104; also: L. Hunkeler, "Der heilige Benedict und seine Regel," ORDENSREGELN, 178-182. For a relativization of social rank through St Benedict's rule see, e.g., chapters 2, 21, 34, 63 and 64.

35. See W. Dirks, Ibid, 138.142.

glory manifests himself to human beings in need of purification.[36]

And now, for our purposes, it is important to see that folly characterizes true theology, too. Indeed, we have spoken of Christian dogma and spirituality as being parallels. Parallels can be like two poles: they can also have, besides the fact of being parallel, something else in common, e.g. they may be both painted in the same colour. Spirituality is lived dogma, dogma is spirituality become articulate, but what they have in common is this folly, which is the wisdom of the cross.

This becomes all the more poignant when we speak of monasticism as a bridge between two cultures. Then: how do cultures communicate among themselves? We are perhaps more convinced of the difficulty of such communication: in fact we speak of "cultural shock". We may here think of the difficulties an emigrant encounters in trying to adapt to his adopted country. Confronted with a new life-style, a spontaneous reaction may very well be to recoil from it in horror. But he may also succumb to an opposite temptation, namely to consider the culture of his home-country as a "negative identity" and, in a bid to adapt quickly, might as an immigrant in the USA try to be more American than the Americans, and perhaps find it advantageous to cast off his religion. These two temptations become writ large when we are dealing with the contact of cultures on a mass-scale. The cultural shock at this level may mean rioting or war, but it usually expresses itself as the concupiscence of the dominant culture, its greed to subserve all as far as it can in the less dominant cultures.[37]

This analysis may be applied to any religious association, be it a monastery of a religious order. The identity established at the time of its foundation may be lost and thus become a negative identity. This in turn may be due to the fact that a religious institution has outlived its purpose, once meaningful within a specific cultural setting. Judged from the vantage-point of the cross the history of the Church cannot be reduced to victors and victims in the sense of profane history nor is real success tantamount to having asserted oneself. Participating in Christ's redemptive suffering may mean here casting off elements, once

36. See J. Saward, *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality*, (University Press; Oxford 1980) 12-16; G. Spiteri, "Francesco d'Assisi: Profeta dell'incontro tra Occidente e Oriente," *Extractum ex Commentario LAURENTIANUM* 26-2-3 (Roma 1985) 673-674. For the ambivalence of the laughter of holy fools ("laughter through tears"), who laugh at what they love, see Jostein Børtnes, *Visions of Glory: Studies in Early Russian Hagiography*, (Humanities Press; New Jersey 1988) 276.

37. See E.H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, (W.W. Norton; New York 1968); B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (Darton, Longmann & Todd; London ^{2}1973) 3-4.

effective, and now become dead lumber and it may also mean to collectively cease to exist as a group in what J.B. Metz has termed a "charismatic *ars moriendi*." The contrary, however, is also true: re-discovering the original purpose of the order may shake a complacent Church from its ecclesiastically lethal slumbers.[38]

Consequently, to act as a bridgehead between various cultures monks must never become completely welded to their culture. Now this is no easy task, not only because it presupposes detachment, but also because detachment in turn makes people sensitive to cultural values. The only educated members of society were sometimes drawn from the ranks of the clergy and monks (although the opposite is also true: the education of both these groups left at times more than something to be desired). Nonetheless, the spiritually motivated opposition which again and again came to the fore against the predominance of certain cultural elements reveals that monasticism and the dominant culture, not infrequently, relate like two competing cultures. So, by his very religious constitution, the monk may be more prepared to face foreign cultures and feel more at home away from home, for example when on the missions with all the sacrifices this entailed. If monks are counter-cultural they are likely to be cross-cultural. Folly for Christ's sake may make them feel closer to other similarly inspired monks outside their cultural, and even religious, sphere. If historical reality does not always bear up to this, it is because the concrete Church is not a pure society, but has all sorts of deficiencies to it.

Well has it been pointed out: there is nothing more similar to an Eastern saint than a Western saint; St Francis of Assisi and St Seraphim of Sarov may here be cited as an example. Such were the few to whom it was given, each in his own different cultural milieu, to take the pressure off society by taking it upon themselves, like Christ, and start realizing God's future for humanity in the here and now. So they shocked a stagnant society into opening up to progress and so be forged ever closer to the original project God had in mind for society at large.[39] Progress, in turn, means shock, not so much because one has to face up to a brave new world, but rather because one has lost the contact

38. See J.B. Metz, *Zeit der Orden?* (Herder; Freiburg i.Br. 1977) who sees the current crisis of vocations as functional, e.g. due to the inability of religious to release a shock within the Church by criticism of a prophetic kind.

39. In his *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion,* H. Bergson has shown how it is the great saints who help open up society, closed through its own force of adhesion, to the inspirations of greater justice. Mysticism redounds inevitably to the benefit of society. See Ibid, in A. Robinet (ed.), *Henri Bergson: Oeuvres,* (Presses Universitaires de France; Paris 1970) 1024-1029.1201-1206.

via God's constituted symbols (sacraments, saints, icons) with His blueprint.

The enthusiasm attendant on the early Church was not simply yet another instance of the joy of beginnings — new car, new job, but on the contrary, the vitality concomitant on real progress is a sharing in the Spirit of the dynamism of Pentecost — the new life in Jesus Christ.[40] Far from being an ideal society in a romantic sense, the early Church had perhaps harder crises to meet, was more torn by inner and outward dangers than subsequent times — which is why its discernment, recorded first of all in Scripture, has become normative for subsequent times. It is this return to the early Church which makes saints everywhere so similar. But every time the effects of tradition as a living past are loosened, the dialogue with the dead is interrupted, the dead become more dead, and, as a consequence, the living become less living, because they too must undergo *this* additional death. This is but one instance of the loss of symbol, and in general, of the weakening of the theology of the image.[41]

3 Crisis in Theology

Just as monastic non-conformism becomes vibrant in a note of protest against established mediocrity, theologians bequeath the high standards set by the Fathers by keeping alive the flame of protest which inspired them to promote conversion rather than revisionism and spiritual freedom rather than modernism.[42] Instead of raising their voice in protest against the idols of theological rancour, quite a number of theologians seem at a loss how to translate the unity of argument and spirituality into theological method. At times this very unity seems to constitute for some a negative identity. Already St Basil the Great complained that, instead of theology, many were indulging in "technology",[43] an excessive reliance on one's own dialectical abilities

40. Note the tendentious way in which the past is evoked by R.L. Wilken in his provocative book, *The Myth of Christian Beginnings*, (Doubleday Anchor; New York 1971) 158: "The apostolic age is a creation of the Christian imagination; the very early history of Christianity appears ideal to later generations, just as anything new seems more perfect...".

41. The original meaning of "symbol," in Greek, was "thrown together," one thing evoked another seemingly unrelated to it, and thus brought out the underlying unity. See P. Evdokimov, *L'amour fou de Dieu*, (Éd. du Seuil; Paris 1973) 27.

42. See C.M. Martini, "La Chiesa primitiva di fronte alla conversione dei pagani: Legittimazione di un nuovo metodo missionario," in Z. Alszeghy et alii, *Ortodossia e Revisionismo*, (Gregorian University Press; Rome 1974) 58-71.

43. See *PG* 32, 473; and: G. Galitas, "Schrift und Tradition beim hl. Basilius," in A. Rauch and P. Imhof, Ibid 155-156. See also B. Sesboüé, *St Basil, Contre Eunome*, I, 9, (Éd. du Cerf; Paris 1982) 200-203.

accompanied by a disrespectful way of treating the divine matters. Modern rationalism fits this description. When somebody concentrates more on form than on substance, then he easily loses sight of real priorities as well as of a unitive vision.

The crisis which affects theology is characterized by a loss of unity, of which the millennial inability to solve the East-West dilemma is only a consequence. Thus, before giving some attention to the problem of bridging Eastern and Western theologies, and the role monasticism can play in that, we have to understand that the prototypical unity to reach is that of theology itself: bridging the gaps which divide the many parts of theology which, like so many *membra disjecta*, threaten to lead an independent life on their own, independent, that is, of the life of the whole. In the wake of this we may compare Eastern and Western theology to a boat with two oars which goes forward only if both row together, but goes in circles once one seeks to go ahead without the other.

This said, it is important not to think of the cross-cultural dimension, of the bridge-function of monasticism, primarily in practical terms like travel and contacts. According to Eastern theology, praxis is not simply an application of theory, but rather both theory and praxis form a unity. Suffice it to say here that theological theory cannot but reflect on the Church's praxis and that, as an intellectual activity, it is carried out in the context of the Church's life and is thus itself a praxis. From this viewpoint, one may naturally distinguish between various activities, but only in retrospect, and precisely because these activities were already present in the original synthesis.

For the Greek Father, for example, theology does not designate in the first place a discursive knowledge of articles of faith, but an illumination of the Spirit enabling heart and mind to grasp spiritually the mystery of the Trinity and foster participation in the Trinity's life. In other words, theology was considered, even if not necessarily in formal reflection, to be both theoretical and practical in a differentiated synthesis with its fulcrum in the primacy of the spiritual. Therefore, the first function which monasticism has to exercise in bridging East and West is likewise theological, but then not theology reduced simply to an intellectual activity and discursive argument. The first service for unity monasticism can render is to make us grasp the unitive vision of theology which underlies it.[44]

44. See J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, (Fordham University Press; New York 1979) 8-9; J.J. Allen, "The 'Being in Act' of Theology," in J.J. Allen (ed.), *Orthodox Synthesis. The Unity of*

The failure to grasp the "Eastern connection" of its crisis in general, and the monastic dimension which contains the elements for its solution is particular, is at the root of the crisis of theology in the West. True, the last few decades have seen there an intense debate on method, ranging from exegetical and hermeneutical issues to a search for new ways of doing theology, of which *nouvelle théologie* is already an indicative name. The need for a "return to the Fathers" was thus a potential bridge between East and West, if we think of *Sources Chrétiennes* on the Catholic side and of G. Florovsky's appeal launched at the Panorthodox Conference of Athens in 1936 on the Orthodox side.[45] Typically enough, however, some felt, after so many patristic texts had been published, that the aura of mystery surrounding the Fathers was gone and that it was unlikely that they would present any additional surprises. Plans for the reform of theological studies were thus often couched without much reference to the East, as if the crisis in the West were of purely local vintage.

Precisely this goes to show that the return to the Fathers does not end with the publishing of texts, but requires more than anything else a change of perspective to better appreciate the kind of theology the Fathers had. Names like J. Daniélou, H. de Lubac and H.U. von Balthasar come immediately to mind. One of the most outstanding theologians in the West who came to grips with the contemporary crisis in theology, while at the same time making of the return to the Fathers a decisive part of his answer, incorporating it in his very way of doing theology, was Karl Rahner.[46]

A key-word Rahner used to diagnose the crisis is pluralism. Applied to method in theology pluralism means that there is no way in which one could possibly master all the theological disciplines nowadays, because the special methodologies necessary to assimilate their conclusions are too many and too complicated. Consequently, a detailed knowledge of the scientifically ascertained conclusions of historico-positive theology in all its branches is no

Theological Thought, (St Vladimir's Press; New York 1981) 99. For the presence in the West of a monastic theology, which was more a theology of the heart, alongside the more dominant theology of the school, which was more discursive, see J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 111ff and 223ff. Nonetheless, this distinction should not be overdrawn.

45. G. Florovskij, "Patristics and Modern Theology," *Procès-Verbaux du Premier Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes*, (29 novembre - 6 décembre 1936), (H.S. Alivisatos; Athens 1939) 238-242.

46. One could try to show, in this context, that Rahner adopted Ignatian spirituality. St Ignatius of Loyola familiarized himself with the rule of St Basil (as well as with other Eastern rules) before writing the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus; see T. Špidlík, "Die geistliche Dimension der Kirche bei Basilius," in A. Rauch und P. Imhof, Ibid, 82; H.U. von Balthasar, "Basilius," ORDENSREGELN, 58-59. All this, however, requires a study of its own.

longer possible for any one person. From this Rahner concluded that we must draw a line between a first level of reflection, which he called pre-scientific, and the second, properly scientific, level. On the first level one would seek insight at a point where dogma and spirituality, theory and practice are one. Having once gained from the context of Church life pertinent questions and elaborated them somewhat as a lead to further investigation, one can then proceed to tackle the insight, obtained at the first level, in full historical perspective, developing a systematic theology at the second. In this highly specialized area each investigator would have to restrict himself to a closely delimited field which he could — relatively — master.

In effect, Rahner hoped to obvert the crisis of irreducible pluralism and attain some unity in present-day theology by doing a theology which had always been possible to do, when modern specialization did not exist. If the Church, in times gone by, could produce a theology which is still useful — and this holds eminently true of the Fathers, who remain an abiding source of inspiration and orientation in theology — we too must be able to come up with a good theology without necessarily resorting at once to the highly refined methods of positive theology. In his scientific studies on penance in the early Church Rahner had argued that, if the sacrament of penance belongs to what is essential to the Church, then it must have been present in early times too, although maybe in a form different from our own. Over a number of historical investigations he worked out what that continuum was, now and then, which he identified with the need of reconciling oneself with the Church after having been excommunicated from it as a result of one's sins. "Excommunication" does not correspond exactly to our modern canonical term, but to the Christian community's reaction to sin, as a consequence of which one is excluded from participating in the Eucharist.[47]

Moreover, this historical interest concentrated on the pre-Nicene period, when East and West were, especially in comparison with the troubled times to come, still relatively a differentiated unity. Rahner traced some developments in the theology of penance within this period. Both Tertullian (ca 160-ca 220) and St Cyprian (+ca 258) tried to grapple with the possibility of reconciliation with the Church and re-admittance to communion. Both of them reflected on the acts of the penitent and of the Church in attaining this goal. But lacking a theology of non-conventional symbol capable of showing the interrelatedness of exterior acts and interior effects, they did not explain adequately the intrinsic

47. See K. Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie, XI, Frühe Bußgeschichte in Einzeluntersuchhungen*, (Benzinger; Einsiedeln 1973) 140.

link between the actions of the penitent and the forgiveness of sins. On the contrary, Origen (+ca 254) interpreted penance in terms of what K. Rahner calls real symbol, better suited to account for the causal link between both. He thus came close to anticipating a theology of the sacraments, expressive of the fact that peace with the Church is not only the sign of the peace with God but also its cause.[48]

Rahner's own theology has been described by his own brother Hugo as "theology of the [real] symbol," which we may paraphrase as the "theology of the icon." For K. Rahner, between symbol and the symbolized there should prevail a unity-in-difference, harking back to the fact that the Logos is the icon or real symbol of the Father. Both symbol and symbolized should be inseparable, to avoid extrinsicism or a purely conventional theory of symbol, but neither symbol nor symbolized should be confused with each other, to avoid pantheistic immanentism.[49]

This alone, coupled with the ecclesiological dimension of penance as being reconciliation with the Church, *pax cum ecclesia*, would bring the recent theological revival in Roman Catholicism associated with K. Rahner very close to Orthodox thinking, and even to some modern trends in it. One need only recall N. Afanasiev's "Eucharistic ecclesiology" and J. Zizioulas' contribution to "being as communion".[50]

Many students of Rahner failed to grasp the capital importance he assigned to penance as method, i.e. the possible exploitation of penance as a model for doing theology.[51] He often begins his essays with a criticism of "current

48. See Ibid, 74-89.360-370.

49. See K. Rahner, "Zur Theologie des Symbols," in *Schriften zur Theologie, V*, (Benzinger; Einsiedeln 1967) 278ff. On p.302 he points out the general convergence between the Greek theology of the icon and his theology of symbol.

50. St Augustine formulates "pax Ecclesiae dimittit peccata," (*De bapt. contra Donatistas* III 18, 23; *PL* 43, 150). St Cyprian comes very close to the formulation (see *Epist* 57,4), and, most of all, holds practically the same thesis; see K. Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie, VIII*, (Benzinger; Einsiedeln 1967) 459-462. *Schriften zur Theologie XI*, 84ff, 233ff. See G. Russo, "Rahner and Palamas: A Unity of Grace," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 32 (1988) 157-180. Naturally, not everything in Rahner's thought, especially in his post-Vatican II production, corresponds to a theology of symbol. On Orthodox side, J. Zizioulas understands his own work as a "contribution to a 'neopatristic synthesis' capable of leading the West and the East nearer to their common roots," *Being and Communion*, 26. This point of contact over penance and eucharistic communion has not thus far been exploited in the official Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue.

51. Many of those who have misinterpreted Rahner have concentrated onesidedly on his philosophy, without much reference to its patristic background. For example, Rahner's insistence that there is no area of human endeavour debarred from grace is couched in the same words of the dying

positions," tantamount to a theological protest against mediocrity in thinking. The treatment of penance, then, includes both the virtue of the subject and the objective structures of the sacrament. Thus Rahner hoped to bypass the subjectivity which wreaks havoc on the objective contents of faith, while allowing at the same time full scope for the spirituality of the subject, the penitent. If the term penance naturally belongs to the monastic vocabulary, Rahner's further articulation of his theology develops the monastic dimension of theology. His insistence on apophaticism,[52] that God is mystery above comprehension and even naming, who in every effort to know Him grasps us rather than we Him, who opens the door of our hearts from inside; that theological statements find their verification in mysticism as the experienced union of the subject with God; and that the Christian of the future has to be a mystic, because he can rely less than was the case until recently on societal mediation of Christian symbol: all this makes Rahner's theology profoundly (though not exclusively) monastic.[53] It is, to a large extent, his antidote to overcome the current theological crisis.

4. Monastic Analogy and Discernment

The crisis is a fact and manifests itself in a cleft that runs throughout Christendom. The East-West division is the first instance of this predicament, whereas the crisis in Western theology is, in the main, but a resonance of this greater global dilemma and an example of how things go to pieces when they separate themselves from the whole. Naturally, the East has problems of its own, also related to a lack of unity, and which Eastern theologians like J.

Paphnutius in K. Rahner/M. Viller, *Aszese und Mystik in der Väterzeit*, (Herder; Freiburg i.B. 1939) 278-279; compare with "Über künftige Wege der Theologie," in *Schriften zur Theologie, X*, (Benzinger; Einsiedeln 1972) 47. Paphnutius the hermit wanted to know what degree of holiness he had reached, and was shown the way to people living in the world; so he reached the conclusion God may be hiddenly at work even where we least suspect it; see Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia Monachorum*, *PL* 21, 439; for the similar story of Eucharistius in the *Apophtegmata Patrum* see *PG* 65, 168-169. For the ecumenical significance of this criticism in dialogue with M. Luther's criticism of monasticism see O. Clément, *"Función icónica del monacato oriental," Vida Religiosa* 66/3 (1989) 183. Finally, see also E. Farrugia, *Aussage und Zusage. Zur Indirektheit der Methode Karl Rahners veranschaulicht an seiner Christologie*, (Gregorian University Press; Rome 1985) 152ff.

52. For the relationship of apophaticism to folly and its possibility of bridging East-West differences see T. Goritcheva, "Le fou chrétien au siècle de l'apophatisme," *Contacts* 141 (1988) 37-49; J. Hochstaffl, *Negative Theologie*, (Kösel; München 1976) 157ff.

53. Here Rahner's idea meets that of V. Lossky, *La teologia mistica della Chiesa d'Oriente*, (Il Mulino; Bologna 1967) 6-7.

Meyendorff have described so well;[54] but we concentrate here on a criticism of the West. At any rate, crisis should not be interpreted only or even primarily in its negative moments, but rather offers the occasion to take a decision which will forestall progressive deterioration. Once we accept critical moments as privileged occasions to hear the Spirit of God, then we are well on our way towards overcoming them. Crisis as a time for decision presupposes discernment.

Discernment of spirits is something we eminently associate with the monastic life. St John Climacus has insightfully described obedience as putting an end to discernment through an abundance of discernment.[55] This naturally excludes its manipulation on the part of the monk or his superior. On a more general level, discernment of spirits is not the monopoly of any exclusive elite, but belongs to all who seek perfection without conforming to the patterns of this world, i.e. without giving in unduly to pressure-groups.

Then why speak of monastic analogy at all? Analogy obtains when two things are similar and dissimilar in the same respect. The element of protest we have associated with monks, the counter-cultural element or monastic recalcitrance, their folly for Christ's sake, may aptly underly here both the similarity and the dissimilarity even with regard to East-West relations. What Eastern and Western monks ought to have in common is their non-conformity to the ways of this world. But precisely this non-conformity should enable them to withstand any attempt at enforced uniformity between East and West. If St Alexios, of whom it is said that he spent seventeen years as a fool in Syria and seventeen in Rome, stands for similarity of tasks in quite different contexts, monastic counter-culture gives us reason to hope that never will anybody succeed in imposing just one cultural pattern on all monks, but that a variety of forms is necessary and even desirable within the one Christian spirituality. Thus monastic analogy means that monks, precisely because they are a bond reaching back to common Christian origins, represent a Christianity that is at the same time one and irreducibly pluralistic.

It remains to articulate somewhat monastic analogy in theology. This refers to a role, at once similar and dissimilar, which monastic theology is called to play. Generally speaking, monastic theology is in many respects the

54. See J. Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church*, (St Vladimir's Press; New York 1983), p.12.

55. See St John Climacus, *The Ladder of Paradise*, Step 4 (*PG* 88, 680); P. Evdokimov, "La direzione spirituale nella tradizione delle chiese I. La Chiesa orientale: L'arte dei Padri spirituali," in E. Ancilli (ed.), *Mistagogia e direzione spirituale*, (Edizioni O.R.; Roma/Milano 1985) 533.

continuation of the unitive theology of the Fathers. Monastic and scholastic theologies were sometimes at odds, but sometimes they co-existed peacefully, or were found united in the same person. At its best, monastic theology defends, against any monopolizing tendencies on the part of the school, the monastery as a suitable milieu for theology, style other than scholastic as a viable alternative, and contemplation as the source of vital theology. Mysticism as its inspiration is perhaps the hallmark of monastic theology.[56] Obviously, although monastic theology may be associated with some of its more eminent practitioners from among the monks, like St Bernard (1090-1153), it is as little exclusive as the biblical and patristic call to universal perfection.

More specifically, monastic theology remains, to a large extent, a desideratum in contemporary theology. A theology of monastic inspiration ought to exploit the unitive vision of monasticism, which heralds the recuperation of the original image of God-willed humanity, and seek a correspondingly unitive vision in theology. Now, if we look around us in the early Church, what we see primarily is the theology of Churches or of local Churches even. We have thus got to distinguish between these theologies and another, which would be the theology of the Great Church and from which every theology ought to live. This theology is not one in the sense that it excludes a plurality of theological expressions. And, of course, it is not one as if it pretended to be a *norma normans non normata*, for only the Word of God can serve as the last criterion against which all theology has to be measured.[57] Rather, the unitive theology we have in mind is one in the sense of some general orientations, which, in spite of so many differences in the local Churches of the time, served as a common frame of reference. For the sake of simplicity, we may call this interpretative framework the theology of the Fathers.

Precisely in the light of a unitive theology we see that the theology of the Fathers was different from what we might be led to think it was nowadays, because we are tempted to read into the past subsequent divisions. The more East and West were a differentiated unity, the more nuanced was the difference between Greek and Latin Fathers. The Latins were by and large the followers or the continuators of the Greeks. Tensions there were, but it is interesting that in spite of repeated ruptures of communication, the first great permanent schisms took place in the East and not between East and West. Unity was safeguarded more along some common lines of orientation: the theology of the Fathers was biblical, liturgical and monastic, so long as we do not draw too

56. See J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 233-286.

57. See W. Kasper, *Glaube und Geschichte*, (Matthias-Grünewald Verlag; Mainz 1970) 188-189.

sharp a distinction between these dimensions.

Thus we may paraphrase what has just been said by saying that the Fathers were the first interpreters of Scripture, whose message they summarized in God's incarnation and our deification (= perfection) by the Spirit who dwells in our heart. They aimed at interpreting the Word of God, using such cultural means as were necessary to answer its cultured despisers. It was liturgical, because the truth could be celebrated and the essentials of faith inculcated during and by means of Church worship. It was monastic because it put the experience of God as the central point of reference for faith assertions, an experience which required nothing less than the quest, on the part of every baptized, to be perfect like God. No wonder that the choice of the monastic life, in the early Church, not infrequently coincided with the reception of baptism, and that many postponed their baptism till late in life, when they would be mature enough to meet in full the requirements of Christian living.[58]

So a penitential spirit was not to be thought away from serious Christian living — and we cannot think of a unitive theology without penance. Penance means change: not only the change of contents, but also of the way of thinking them. Not only new wine, but also new wine-skins! Therefore, if we cannot think of the way of doing theology without the monastic dimension, we cannot think of the monk without method. One of the main characteristics of method, indeed, is the capacity to change radically. In spite of so much talk about penance we should not be misled into thinking that all is dull. On the contrary, penance is the one indispensable condition for the deepest joy. Christ preached the kingdom at the price of full conversion. *Penthos*, a Greek word which literally means compunction of heart but which we perhaps could translate as "matured joy," holds the key to *apatheia* or learning to undo suffering and deepen serenity through union with God.[59]

58. See L. Bouyer, *Dictionnaire théologique*, (Tournai; Belgium ^{2}1963) 466-470. See also H.U. von Balthasar, "Basilius," in ORDENSREGELN, 38; I. Gobry, *De saint Antoine à saint Basile: Les origines orientales*, (Fayard; Paris 1985) 414. We agree with Gobry's thesis that nothing resembles a Western monk so closely as an Oriental monk, see Ibid p.22, but only under the analogical reserve: the Western monk resembles his Eastern colleague, Oriental monasticism serves as the first link of Western monasticism's to the early Church only according to the way in which the early Church existed: namely as a *differentiated* unity. One is tempted to invert Mgr Szepticky's saying and affirm: the Western monk resembles his Oriental colleague even where they differ, precisely because they have preserved the same pluralism in unity of the early Church.

59. See I. Hausherr, *Penthos. La doctrine de la componction dans l'Orient chrétien*, (Gregorian University Press; Rome 1944) 153-158. It was the great expert on method B. Lonergan who said: "As conversion is basic to Christian living, so an objectification of conversion provides theology with its foundations. By conversion is understood a transformation of the subject and his world.

Union in theology is likewise reached in this spirit of *penthos*. Recurrent talk in theology of a need of a return to the Fathers is itself an expression of this promising sorrow: sorrow with the promise of integration. On the one hand, it furthers union through a radical transformation which changes both content and form. On the other hand, this transformation amounts to a non-conformism to the pattern of this world. Here are some illustrations, of necessity somewhat disparate.

Philosophy as it is taught in places is a problematic discipline, not only a discipline to teach how to find out problems. The truth it seeks (if it seeks it at all) is not something that can be celebrated, it is at best an abstractive truth, often a cheerless truth, presupposing human beings as a complicated mechanism rather than a whole entity, capable of reaching integrity and unity. Such truth in the abstract cannot be celebrated because it has too little joy to it. Far from being integrated with a Christian viewpoint it is often the pulse of the contemporary pagan world. This kind of philosophy is at best justifiable methodically, that is, as a phase which may be necessary as a preliminary step but which has to be superseded and incorporated in a more wholistic approach.[60]

In effect, much has been written on the critical dimension of theology, which ought to derive from its openness to philosophy, and less on its *sobriety*, a word taken from the *Philocalia*, an Eastern anthology which was put together at the time of the Enlightenment. If by the dimension of sobriety we mean the assimilation of the best of this intellectual movement so as not to dissipate the heart but rather guard it, then we have yet another example of the unity of discursive argument and spirituality. That sobriety does not kill joy is shown by the fact that Christian truth is to be celebrated without reserve, which is why the liturgy, for Eastern theology, is the first among the *loci theologici* or sources whence theology derives its content.[61] Liturgy is just the right place where we can hear the Church expound the Word of God as the norm for our lives and gratefully rejoice over Christ's salvific presence among us — in or out of tune with the world!

Normally it is a prolonged process... Still it is not just a development or even a series of developments. Rather it is a resultant change of course and direction," *Method in Theology*, 130.

60. See V. Solov'ev, *La crise de la philosophie occidentale*, (Aubier; Paris 1947) 161.

61. It is sometimes objected that there is a liturgical narrowness about Eastern theology; see E. Sauser, Ibid, 180-181. This danger exists if the liturgy is taken in isolation. The counter-cultural role of monasticism (which includes the monastic protest against social injustice) coupled with the decisive role played by the monks in the formation of the liturgy should throw a light on this kind of objection. The very promoters of right worship are entrusted with a prime social role, as already evidenced in St Basil's rules.

The same kind of dichotomy which characterizes modern living and the philosophy which reflects it is met with also in style, which ought to be sober but not by placing the discussion at several reaches away from reality. For the ancients, museums hardly existed because beauty was to be found in greater continuity with daily life. However, even where the monopoly of a scholastic method is deplored, the style which predominates is oft rather scholastic or at least academic. The capacity of creating the *Sitz-im-Leben* as one goes along, as we see in Plato's early *Dialogues*, which are nonetheless rigorously philosophical, is a rarity, accounting for much of the abstractedness of modern theology. A notable exception is the genre of the *sermon*, but it is the exception which proves the rule.

Naturally, theology has a certain relationship to schools because it has to be taught and because it finds expression in concrete historical forms and associations. The connected problem of the relationship between history and faith has been discussed from many angles, less so from that of a unitive theology. With a view to the reform of theological programme in schools W. Pannenberg suggested that theology is possible only as *Religionswissenschaft*, or the science of God in a positivistic key. While the idea is brilliant as far as it goes, it has the drawback of factually leaving out what is specific to theology as the science of mystery.[62] Against any attempt to reduce the core of theology to a positivistic approach the theology of the image will always protest strongly. One could perhaps here rephrase a thought of Archimandrite Vasileios: if theology amounted primarily to historical accuracy above all, then it would be all the worse for us, we were not lucky to be there when the event occured![63]

One of the ways to resolve the issue in the basic course of theology, especially in view of ecumenism, is to teach the first seven ecumenical councils as a history of the discernment the Church had to make in the first thousand years when East and West were still united. History, at its best and deepest, is the history of discernment or guidance of the Spirit, in turn reflected in liturgical developments. Unfortunately the kind of facts often presented in manuals are rather abstract, because they leave out the first theological *Sitz-in-Leben* from a viewpoint of a unitive theology: the liturgy. A much-used textbook like Neuner-Roos contains, for instance, texts about the sacraments, but does not really confront the student with basic liturgical texts, indispensable for dogma

62. See W. Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, (Suhrkamp Verlag; Frankfurt am Main 1977) 303-329.

63. See Vasileios Gondikakis, *Hymn of Entry. Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church*, (St Vladimir's Press; New York 1984) 84.

in its comprehensive context.[64]

A final word has to be said about the reserve monks have often shown with regards to ecumenism. So long as this reserve is not lacking in self-criticism, it serves an important function against a facile ecumenism. This may be seen in the light of what Plato said: the best way to learn to hate is to love artlessly.[65] We might add: The best way to learn to hate the truth is to seek it superficially. Truth, full orthodoxy, require penance and a conversion of heart in preparation for the exquisite joy of having found the great treasure. St John Climacus comments: "In any conflict with unbelievers or heretics, we should stop after we have twice reproved them (cf. Titus 3,10). But where we are dealing with those who are eager to learn the truth, we should never grow tired of doing the right thing (cf. Gal 6,9). And we should use both situations to test our own steadfastness."[66] Therefore, one way in which monks may exercise their countercultural role and vocation to folly is by a Christian polemic, that is, by joining the dialogue of love with that of the truth. This is already the case in the official Roman Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue. In a time when internecine quarrels rend Church unity, this Christian polemic counsels irenic mediation; when ecumenical slogans are in vogue it promotes a certain critical distance.

Conclusion

Partly because of the rise of the ecumenical movement, we have been accustomed to speak of East and West as the two lungs of the Church.[67] The image is useful, insofar as it calls to mind the like dignity of East and West, but needs to be supplemented. The two lungs stand for two great traditions, somewhat embarrassed by unfortunate polemics in the past, but now steadily rediscovering their affection. If there were not a common direction, the two lungs would not function in unison. This common direction is, in terms of Eastern theology, the heart. In this heart is encased, as in a treasure-box, the

64. See J. Neuner und M. Roos, *Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung*, (F. Pustet; Regensburg 1975).

65. See *Phaedo*, 39D.

66. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, (trans. C. Luibheid and N. Russell) (Paulist Press; New York 1982) 246.

67. The image first used by W. Ivanov and popularized through John Paul II's pronouncements, can be traced on Western side, at least as far back as Y. Congar, "La personne et la liberté humaines dans l'anthropologie orientale," (=Texte d'un exposé fait le 4 mars 1952 au Centre Catholiques des Intellectuels Français) *Recherches et Débats*, 1 (mai 1952) 99-111, here in Y. Congar, *Chrétiens en dialogue*, (Éd. du Cerf; Paris 1964) 287.

early theology of the Fathers.

One way of paraphrasing the heart of the Christian endeavour is monasticism, which has rightly been described as the most successful aspect thus far of Christianity. This may sound unacceptable to those denominations who only now are reintroducing forms of the consecrated life. The question, however, is quite different if we count those who have as a matter of fact best responded to Christ's call for perfection, whether they were monks only in spirit or factually came from the monastic ranks. Again, it may seem at times that monasticism is a stumbling-block to unity. But if monks were to open up to the unitive vision underlying their vocation, by readily identifying themselves with the faith of their Church and making charity their first norm, they would become privileged members of dialogue. So perhaps it is closer to the truth to say that only when partners enter dialogue with a true monastic spirit does it stand any chance of lasting success.

If first things first has any meaning the first dialogue to be made consists in putting the monk back into theology, and this is attained by restoring the original unity of theology. Otherwise we shall be seeking unity by divisive means. Besides fostering the unity of spirituality and dogma, the monastic dimension of theology has something peculiar to it. It is the counter-cultural element, which enables the monk to relativize his culture, however high, through spirituality. Monasticism as a counter-culture should not amount to ensconcing oneself in an adolescent moratorium, but rather means a sobering up for oneself and one's neighbour; it is self-criticism and folly for Christ's sake in one. It is the sobriety of μέθη νηφάλιος, *sobria ebrietas*, the sober drunkenness of the God-enthused, enabling them to transcend their limits precisely because they are all too well aware of them.[68] From the viewpoint of method, the monastic dimension implies *penthos* or suffused joy consequent on the integration of the heart in life and of a theology of the heart or unitive theology in thinking, and both imply the forced marches of conversion and change. If we thought about the implications of the *penthos* for method, we would have come long ways to forge unity, or rather to discover that there is somebody in our midst whom we often do not know, the Spirit of truth and love and unity.

A recluse on Mount Athos, upon being asked for what his austerity served, answered: Humanity has been at grips with Satan since the days of Adam and

68. Philo seems to have coined the Greek expression and Eusebius of Cesarea (+340) is the first known Christian author to use it. Cf. H.-J Sieben, "Ivresse spirituelle," *DSP* VII,2, 2312-2322.

needs everybody at his post; victory, however, is guaranteed only through the perseverance and courage personified by the hermit. *In this sense, the true hermit is humanity's child and God's slave; he is neither Greek, nor gentile, nor Jew, he is ecumenical.'*[69]

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69. B. Apreleff, "La Sainte Montagne de l'Athos," *Irénikon* 3 (1927) 397.

I FORMED A MAN WITH YAHWEH

Peter Paul Zerafa O.P.

The title is a literal translation of the words of Eve at the birth of Cain, *qānîtî 'îš 'et-YHWH* (Gen 4,1). It has aroused some interest because it mentions the activity of the woman together with that of Yahweh at childbirth, although it does not posit a special divine initiative and acknowledges the factual intervention of the husband.

Translations differ on the interpretation of the beginning (*qānîtî* and end (*'et-YHWH*) of the phrase. The beginning has a uniform textual tradition (no variant readings), and a clear reference to the birth of Cain. The specific role of Eve in childbirth is not immediately clear. It largely depends on the interpretation of the controversial end (*'et-YHWH*).

The verb *qānāh* expresses the general idea of procuring which could include the acquisition (receiving, buying) or the production (forming, creating) of something. It is generally assumed that the various shades of meaning derive from the same root. This was also the original opinion of L. Keohler[1] before he opted for a double root with W. Baumgartner.[2] P. Humbert[3] offers a semantic reason for the double root: it is difficult to derive the disparate meanings from the same root. E. Testa[4] volunteers a morphologic reason: the

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1. "Kleinigkeiten," 3, ZAW, 11(1934) 160.
2. *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, (Brill; Leiden 1958) 843.
3. "Qana en Hebreu biblique," *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag*, (Tübingen, 1950) 258-266.
4. *Genesi: Introduzione — Storia primitiva, La Sacra Bibbia*, (Marietti; Torino 1969) 331.

classic *qānāh* could derive from an original *qnw* (to produce) and *qny* (to acquire). The available evidence is too meager to end all discussions.

With God as a subject, *qānāh* means creating (the universe, Gen 14,19.22), producing (wisdom, Prov 8,22), forming (a man in his mother's womb, Ps 139,13), choosing (Israel, Dt 32,6), redeeming (Israel, Ex 15,16; Ps 74,2), conquering (Jerusalem, Ps 78,54). With man as a subject, it means acquiring (counsel, Prov 1,5; wisdom and understanding, Prov 4,5; knowledge, Prov 18,15; truth, Prov 23,23), buying (land, Gen 47,22; a slave, Ex 21,2; a girdle, Jer 13,1), owning (a house, Lev 25,30; an ox, Is 1,3; a flock, Zac 11,5).

The LXX opts for the meaning of acquiring (*ektēsame¡n*, I acquired). It is followed by the Vulgate (*possedi*, I owned, came into possession), the New Vulgate (*aquisivi*, I acquired) and many modern translations, such as AV, RSV (I have gotten), NICOT (I have acquired), Dhorme, *Bible de Jérusalem*, Osty (*J'ai acquis*, I acquired), Luther (*Ich habe gewonnen*, I have gained), Garofalo (*ho avuto*, I had), Saydon, Sant (*ksibt*, I acquired).

The meaning of producing is adopted by some other modern translations, such as NAB (I have produced), Confraternity (I have given birth), NEB (I have brought into being), TOB (*J'ai procréé, I have begotten), Segond (J'ai formé*, I have formed), Riessler-Storr (*Ich habe das Leben gegeben*, I have given life), Testa (*ho formato*, I have formed).

The end of the phrase (*'et-YHWH*, with Yahweh) does not have a uniform textual tradition. The seemingly incongruous idea of Eve operating together with Yahweh, has produced some textual fluctuations and arbitrary interpretations. The most conspicuous textual fluctuation is witnessed by the Targum Onkelos which reads *min qodam* and presupposes an original *mē'ēt* (from). The arbitrary interpretations are witnessed by the LXX which has *dia tou theou* (through God), and by an anonymous Greek manuscript that understands *'et* as an accusative particle and reads *anthrōpon kurion* (a man as lord). The masoretic reading is retained by Symmachus (*sun kuriō*, with the Lord). Modern translations follow either the MT, the Targum, or the LXX.

The reading of the LXX is an easy favourite. It is followed by the Vulgate (*per Deum*, through God), the New Vulgate (*per Dominum*, through the Lord), RSV, Confraternity, NAB, NEB (with the help of the Lord), Dhorme (*grâce à Iahvé*, thanks to Yahweh), Segond (*avec l'aide de l'Eternel*, with the help of the Eternal), Riessler-Storr (*mit des Herrn Beistand*, with the help of the Lord), Garofalo (*con il favore di Jahve*, with Yahweh's favour), Testa (*con [il favore di] Jahweh*, with Jahweh's favour), Saydon (*b[il-għajnuna ta]l-Mulej* with the Lord's help), Sant (*bil-għajnuna tal-Mulej*, with the Lord's help). The variant

of Onkelos is followed by AV (from the Lord), NICOT (from Yahweh), Bible de Jérusalem, Osty (*de par J/Yahvé*, from Yahweh, in his name). The masoretic reading is retained by Luther (*mit dem Herrn*, with the Lord), and TOB (*avec le Seigneur*, with the Lord).

The masoretic reading has a mythological and a biblical justification. The mythological justification is found in a Babylonian creation narrative where "Aruru, together with him [Marduk], created the seed of mankind."[5] It is confirmed by the Akkadian theophorous names that begin with *itti*, such as *itti-bel-balatu* (with Bel there is life), and commercial expressions such as *itti-ili-ašāmšu* (with God I acquired it).[6] Considering that the creation narrative of the Jahwist (Gen 2,4b-3,24) is steeped in Mesopotamian imagery, it is possible that Eve's words in Gen 4,1 (equally belonging to the Jahwist) reflect the same cultural background.

The biblical justification stems from the idea of the sanctity of Yahweh, found mainly in the Priestly tradition. Sanctity separates and contaminates. Yahweh is remote and tremendous. Whatever concerns him is excluded from normal human use, falls under the contaminating influence of the deity, embodies a potentially dangerous force, and has to be decontaminated in order to return to common use.

The mountain of Sinai was contaminated by God's presence; the Israelites were not allowed to trod its soil (Ex 19,10-25). Uzzah did not respect the remoteness of the ark, and God struck him down on the spot (2Sam 6,7). The high priest changed his clothes and washed himself after entering the Holy of Holies in the Day of Atonement (Lev 16,24). The Bible contaminates the hands because of its sanctity (Mishnah, *Yadayim*, 4,6; Talmud Babli, *Megillah*, 7a). All genital activity contaminates, but especially childbirth (Lev 12,1-5), for Yahweh forms the child in the womb (Job 31,15; Ps 139,13; Is 44,2.24; Jer 1,5), and minds it at birth (Ps 22,10). The mother works with Yahweh.

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5. E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliotek*, VI, (Berlin 1900) 1,40-41.

6. See R. Borger, "Gen 4,1, cf. Accad. *^{m}Itti-ili-ašāmšu* vel *^{m}Ištu-^{d}Ašur-ašāmšu*: 'penes Deum emi eum'" *VT* IX (1959) 85/6.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF EINSTEIN'S RELATIVITY THEORY

Mark F. Montebello

"The struggle to widen our horizon and to go deep into our knowledge, is one of those absolute objectives without which it seems impossible for any thinking individual to have a conscious and positive attitude toward life. The true essence of our struggle for knowledge is made up, on the one hand, from the attempt to embrace the whole width and complex variety of the human experience, and, on the other hand, from the search for simplicity and for brevity in their essential foundations."[1]

The originator of the Special and General Theories of relativity,[2] Albert Einstein exerted a significant influence on his and all successive generations. His intellectual endeavour had great repercussions on many a field of thought, from mathematics to metaphysics. In his days, Einstein unceasingly advocated the attitude of critical rationalism, the critical search for error. His most important contribution being obviously that by which he taught us that Newton's cosmology, overwhelmingly successful due to its incredible survival of the most severe tests, may well be mistaken.

In the following paper, I suggest we first briefly pass over Einstein's life, and successively go into some philosophical implications of his theories. The attempt is to bring out Einstein's challenge to philosophy.

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1. From the message sent by Einstein in occasion of the 42nd meeting of the Società Italiana per il progresso delle Scienze, held in Lucca, 1950; published in *Albert Einstein: Idee e Opinioni* (henceforth recalled as *IDEE*) (ed. by C. Seeling) (Schwarz Editore; Torino 1965) 331-332.

2. Henceforth recalled as STR and GTR respectively.

Einstein

Born of Jewish parents in Ulm, Germany, in 1879, Einstein's first studies in theoretical physics are held in Milan. Later he studies mathematics and physics at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic in Zurich. It is in Bern, working at a patent office, that Einstein first meets intellectual success. Studying hard, in 1905 he is capable of publishing noteworthy investigations in the field of physics. The *Annalen der Physik* gives voice to four of his papers, together with memoirs on special relativity, which immediately give him widespread attention. His main thesis therein holds that radiation has a corpuscular as well as wavelike aspect. The articles mark the presentation of the *photon* (the light corpuscle), thereby superseding Planck's theories of 1900. But Einstein's main breakthrough that year was in another field. Publishing two papers, he launched his STR, thus establishing one of the main landmarks in science. Therein, Einstein rejects the ether concept (that medium providing the standard of absolute rest), a notion so fundamental to Newton's cosmology. Later, Einstein would write: "By way of the STR, affirming the equality of all the so-called inertial systems by the formulation of natural laws, I was immediately faced with a question. Briefly it would be like this: Does there exist also an equality between the systems of coordinates? In other words: if it is not possible to attribute to the concept of speed but a relative sense, why should we insist in continuing to consider acceleration as an absolute concept?"[3]

It actually seemed incredible that Newton's solid construction should go down like a pack of cards. However, Einstein's critical investigations, guided by simple, staunch questions, did open up the way to a new conception of the world and the universe. 1905's intuitions shall be henceforth expounded and developed, especially up to the formulation of the GTR, but enough not only to degrade Newton's high stand in science, but also to undermine any absolutist theory regarding reality.

In 1927, the year of the 200th anniversary of Newton's death, Einstein would say: "With no equal, before or after, Newton determined the course of thought and study in the West. He was not simply the genial inventor of methods destined to revolutionize the field of science. He was capable of dominating the empirical material of his time. His spirit extraordinarily showed itself to be ingenious in the specific analysis of mathematics and physics (...).[4]

3. From the notes on the origin of the GTR; published in *IDEE*, 268.

4. See *IDEE*, 240.

The generalized theory of relativity constitutes the ultimate development in the evolution of the theory (of motion). Quantitively, it modifies but little of the theory of Newton, but qualitatively, it introduces much more profound changes."[5]

The years following the publication of the STR, proved to be crucial for the 35-year old Einstein. First at the University of Zurich, then at the German University of Prague, and finally at the Federal Polytechnic of Zurich, he teaches theoretical physics. Before dedicating himself exclusively to scientific research, he is made member of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences and the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft. "The theoretical method," he held in those years, "is founded on the need to take as a starting point some general hypothesis, called "principles", from which it is possible to deduct consequences. Our activity is thus accomplished in two ways: to find, first and foremost, the principles, and successively to develop the consequences which follow (...). The investigator has to listen to the secrets of nature, find out the general principles, having as his objective the formulation of the general elements of the complexities of empirical facts."[6] In this way, Einstein is establishing the foundations of the new approach to scientific research. It is this which in later years proves to be of great epistemological importance in the field of philosophy. Einstein believed in the method and its implications, and effectively made use of it in his investigations. When in August 1916 Einstein viewed his famous GTR, he was anxious to set it to the test. The GTR was an advance over the classical gravitational theory of Newton, and thus could hardly be taken seriously. It announced the deflection of light in a gravitational field. The tests made to the GTR were more than welcome to Einstein. It clearly involved great risk.[7] If observation (by Eddington) showed that the predicted effect is definitely absent, then the theory would have been simply refuted. The theory, in that case, would have been incompatible with certain possible results of observation. The system employed here is not that of verification, but that of falsification: no attempt is made to verify the theory, but, on the contrary, to disprove it.

When the theory was proved right (in 1919), Einstein gained world-wide fame. The GTR held that the laws of nature should be expressed in a form that

5. *IDEE*, 245.

6. From Einstein's inaugural speech at the Prussian Academy, 1914; in *IDEE*, 210 and 211 respectively.

7. See on this point, K.R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: the growth of scientific knowledge* (London 1989) 35-37.

is the same for any choice of space and time coordinates, and this was demonstrated in a theory that was purely geometrical. "Without geometry it would have been impossible to formulate the theory of relativity. Without it the following reflection would have been impossible: in a system with a general relational reference to an inertial system, the laws of solid bodies do not correspond to the laws of the Euclidean geometry, following the contraction of Lorentz. This means that if we do not accept the systems of non-inertia on the basis of equality, we have also to abandon the Euclidean geometry. Without this latter interpretation the decisive move for the acquisition of the general covariant equations would have certainly been impossible."[8]

The 3-D Euclidean geometry which was for ever made use of for an intelligible understanding of the universe thus gave way to a new conception. These far reaching results came after the actual publication of the GTR. At the time, the GTR seemed to be simply a different result following a different combination of age-old laws. "In the first place, the GTR is due to the numerical equality, picked up by experience, of the inert mass and of the mass weight of bodies. This is basic. However, it is something classical mechanics has failed to explain. We arrive at it by extending the principle of relativity to the systems of coordinates by acceleration relative to one and the other. The introduction of systems of coordinates to the relative acceleration in relation to inertial systems necessarily leads on to the appearance of gravitational fields in one and the other."[9]

The further understanding of the theory pressed home the fact that the STR became the limiting form of the GTR in situations where gravitational effects are negligible.[10] Both theories together presented a comprehensive picture of the new-founding science. The principle of relativity became the fundamental starting point for the study of physical phenomena. In this way, Newton's laws were rejected, together with his concept of time (and, in particular, that of simultaneity).

Einstein's critical powers had made a great effect on the world of phenomena. He affronted the field with an inquisitive air and a passionate love for truth. Every riddle encountered called in him serious, though incredibly

8. Einstein at the Prussian Academy of Science, 1921; in *IDEE*, 222-3.

9. Einstein at King's College, London, 1921; in *IDEE*, 234.

10. See the further technical points offered, relating to physical theory, in N.R. Hanson's "Philosophical implications of Quantum Mechanics", in Macmillan's *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol 7, 44-46.

simple, profound thought. In this Einstein was following in the footsteps of two great philosophers, Hume and Mach. Hume with his criticism of the traditional common-sense assumptions and dogmas; Mach with his criticism of Newton's absolute space. "The advantages of constructive theory," Einstein would say,[11] "are completeness, adaptability and clarity. Those of the theories of principles are the logical perfection and the certainty of the fundamental principles themselves. The theory of relativity belongs to this second class. To affirm its essence it is necessary first of all to understand the principles on which it is built (...). The theory of relativity resembles a building with two stories: the special theory and the general theory."[12]

Einstein understood (quite against the conception of Newton) that if velocity increases, inertial mass of a body increased too. This meant that no particle of matter can ever attain the velocity of light. Mass depends on velocity, which means that mass and energy are manifestations of the same fundamental entity. This was confirmed by subsequent nuclear physics. In equation form this result took the by-now famous appearance of $E=mc^2$ (energy E is the result of mass m times twice the speed of light c).

In 1917, Einstein arrived at a new world model, a finite but unbound universe (the so-called "Einstein universe"). This marks the beginning of modern theoretical cosmology. However, at the very time, Einstein was continually preoccupied with giving the theories ever more simple forms. The laws of his physics had to be logically perfect, well-founded, *and* simple. In the Berlin Society of Physics he had said: "The ultimate end of the physician is to arrive at universal elementary laws which permit the reconstruction of the universe by a deductive way. There is no logical path which leads to such universal laws. Only intuition, founded on experience, can lead us to them. Such an uncertain methodology may give the impression of the existence of an imprecise number of systems of physical theory all equally justified. Undoubtedly, this is a correct impression from the point of view of theory."[13]

11. Einstein's article in the *London Times*, November 28th, 1919; in *IDEE*, 217.

12. See A. Grunbaum, "Philosophical significance of relativity theory", *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol.7, 133.139-140.

13. The year was 1918; see *IDEE*, 215. In the *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, vol.CCXXI/3(March 1936) Einstein spoke briefly on the same subject: "There does not exist an inductive method which can lead to the fundamental concepts of physics. The failure in comprehending this constitutes the fundamental philosophical error of many men of study of the 19th century. This was probably why molecular theory and the theory of Maxwell are affirmed relatively very late. *Logical thinking is necessarily deductive.* It is based on hypothetical concepts and axioms. How can we

In 1922, Einstein is awarded the Nobel Prize. At this point he is invited all over the world to meet people, and give conferences. In the early thirties he was visiting lecturer at the California Institute of Technology. And when the ascent of the Nazis was approaching, he became, in 1933, professor at the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton. America became for evermore his new home. In 1941 he acquired American citizenship. He died in America in 1955. An aphorism[14] Einstein himself wrote maybe is enough to explain his existence: "The joy of looking and of understanding is the most beautiful gift of nature."[15]

Philosophical implications

As a way of introducing the philosophical implications, I shall say a word on Einstein's Quantum Theory in general.[16] By presenting the QT, Einstein showed that microphenomena prove themselves to us as dual in nature. Quantum mechanics is presented as a single, unified theory, to be true. But it is a unity within which (i) wave conceptions (field/distribution/probabilistic conceptions) and (ii) particle conceptions (point mass/singularity/granular conceptions) are equally fundamental in explaining and predicting the associated phenomena.[17] The limits of the QT can be placed on two levels. First, Einstein teaches us that quantum statistical mechanics requires that nothing be said of the micro-constituents of an ensemble beyond what can be said of the macro-behaviour of the ensemble itself. In the second place, we have Einstein insisting that QT is built upon uncertainties even more comprehensive then that concerning position and momentum. Energy and time and number and phase constitute equally pervasive structural features of quanta mechanics, each involving analogous uncertainties. *Nature, then, is fundamentally indeterministic.* Elementary particles are, ontologically, always in partially

expect to choose the axioms, hoping for the confirmation of the consequences derived from them?". For this extract see *IDEE*, 287 (italics mine).

14. Written for the commemorative publication in honour of Leo Baech in 1953, see *IDEE*, 39.

15. At this point, I would like to call attention to the so-called "Einstein myth". More than one writer today rightly holds that Einstein is not history, Einstein is myth. See in this regard J.-M Levy-Leblond, "L'albero che nasconde la foresta: a proposito del mito einsteiniano", *L'Opera di Einstein* (edited by U. Curi) (Ferrara 1989), 108ff. The reader will not fail to note Levy-Leblond's dislike of Einstein. The article, I think, should be read with a pinch of salt.

16. Recalled as QT.

17. See Hanson, "Quantum mechanics", 44.

defined states, without exact position or energy. The constituents of the atom are not and may not be endowed with sensory qualities at all.[18]

Such comments already bring us to some problematics in the field of philosophy. For example, how can the basic elements of the physical world essentially exist void of any quality? However, before going into such questions, a further consideration must be made. It is well known that Bohr and most of the quantum physicists hold that the ultimate laws of nature are not causal or deterministic. In this they are supported also by some sympathizers of Einstein, at least on a philosophical plain.[19] Einstein, in fact, held that the physical reality is a 4-D space-time continuum in which events are already determined, the passage of time applying only to the human consciousness as it becomes aware of different events. The physical theory of invariant quantities, then, points to qualities that are unaltered by transformative formulas from one frame of reference to another. This shows that the axioms of physical theory, although they must be tested empirically, are not automatic inferences from experience but are free creations of the human mind, which is guided by considerations of a mathematical nature.[20]

Fundamentally, then, we have different interpretations of quantum physics. Basically, where Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen differ from Bohr-Heisenberg is precisely on the incompleteness of quantum physics. Einstein's position held that it still does not include certain significant causal factors responsible for indeterminacy. Notwithstanding the differences, the realist philosophy of science is being seriously concerned[21] with the claim that the structure of the theoretical concepts corresponds to some extent with the structure of their

18. See Einstein's own discussion on the fundamentals of theoretic physics in general, published in *Science*, Washington D.C., May 24, 1940; in *IDEE*, 307-309.

19. Popper, for example, was one of them. In his *Conjectures*, 61, we read: "There are a number of further problems connected with the interpretation of the formalism of a QT. In a chapter of *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* I criticized the "official" interpretation, and I still think that my criticism is valid in all points but one: one example which I used (in section 77) is mistaken. But since I wrote that section, Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen have published a thought-experiment which can be substituted for my example, although their tendency (which is deterministic) is quite different from mine. Einstein's belief in determinism (which I had occasion to discuss with him) is, I believe, unfounded, and also unfortunate: it robs his criticism of much of its force, and it must be emphasized that much of his criticism is quite independent of his determinism."

20. See the interesting comments on the quantistic field by D.W. Sciama in "Einstein e la termondinamica dei buchi neri," in Curi (ed), *Opera di Einstein*, 178-180.

21. For the philosophical implications of the QT's wholism and non-locality, see R.J. Russell, "Quantum physics in philosophical and theological perspective", *Physics, Philosophy and Theology*, (ed. by R.J. Russell) (Vatican City 1988) 351-354.

references in nature. This may be certainly understood within the context of truth as correspondence. However the challenge goes also into the claim of convergence. In this sense quantum physicists hold that the sequence of those terms generated by successive theories stand in increasingly more accurate correspondence to those structures.

The more or less definitive formulation of mechanical quantistics leads us to the concept of relativity in atomic physics. Einstein held that the atom and the field of radiation have to be considered together, as part of the same single physical system.[22] Atomic and field energy, and their mutual interaction, have to be observed within the context of a complex energy system and mass relativism. What we actually have here is the concept formation of the theories of relativity in respect to the definition of their basic and essential terms. In the long run, it will be seen that Einstein is thus positing some lofty philosophical questions, such as: (i) What is the significance of scientific knowledge?[23] (ii) Can we have objective information about the world? (iii) What is the real nature of physical interactions (causation) between phenomena? and (iv) What is the proper function of scientific theories? Such questions call for answers concerning basic concepts, such as, matter, energy, cause/effect, and "the external world". "According to me," Einstein would profess,[24] "nothing can be said aprioristically about the formation and interactions of concepts. The same holds about how we coordinate these concepts to sensible experience. Only success is the determining force which guides us to the creation of such an order of the sensible experience." And again:[25] "The objective of science is, on the one hand, to arrive at the most possibly complete understanding of the interactions between sensible experiences in their totality. On the other hand, it is to arrive at this latter objective with the use of the fewest primary concepts and relations possible (going as much as will allow the possibility of having a logical unity of the elements of the world, that is, saving logical elements). Science implies the totality of the primary concepts, that is, those concepts directly in relation with sensible experiences, and the propositions which they establish. In this very first phase of development, science is nothing

22. On the relation of quantum mechanics and relativity, see L. Gratton, *Cosmologia: la visione scientifica del mondo attraverso i secoli*, (Zanichelli; Bologna 1987) 316-321.

23. The question may be reformulated also in the following manner: What is scientificability? When can knowledge be named "scientific"?

24. From the *Journal of Franklin Institute*, CCXXI/3, (March 1936). Cf. *IDEE*, 273.

25. Same as note 24. pp.274-275.

but this. Our everyday thought is absolutely satisfied at this level, (...) but a scientific mind (moreover) demands logical unity."

A philosophical comprehension of Einstein's relativity theory (STR and GTR) will therefore have to go into epistemological and ontological considerations.[26] Philosophy is first and foremost interested in the fundamental basis of the theory, in the effort to establish a theory of the principles of the natural being.[27] The STR is generally considered to be founded on four main principles, each of which carrying philosophical implications.[28] In the first place, we have the concept of *movement*. This would include or point to other basic notions, such as, inertial systems, a point of stable reference (which is material), and the limits of velocity.

Secondly, the concept of the *absolute*. A basic notion implied herein would be the absolute velocity of light, which rises serious philosophical questions.

Next, the concept of *comprehensibility*. This is basic insofar as it refers to the relation of the principle of movement to the principle of the absolute light velocity. The concepts of change, and identical space — materiality and inertial mass — come to the fore.

Finally, the concept of the movement of *bodies*. Philosophical bewilderment at this point would be: What is a non-body? What is light, after all?

The GTR has three fundamental notions which, in relation to those of the STR, though precisely founded on them, have much more wide-reaching effects. These are basically three. The first is the concept of *generalization* which accepts non-inertia as a point of reference. This is directly in relation to gravitational force and phenomena, and its language, 4-D geometry.

Next, we have the concept of *real mass*, which is the cause of the gravitational field. This has to do with the space-time structure, and the "void" physics.

26. See the interesting criticism made by A. Eddington in *The Philosophy of Physical Science*,(Cambridge University Press; Cambridge 1939) 73-85. His criticism proves to be too emphatic in regards to the subjectivity of the theory in a rather personal way, more or less excluding a more generic kind of subjectivity.

27. D. Wandschneider's natural philosophy brought out such principles superbly. See his "Aspetti filosofici delle teorie della relatività speciale e della relatività generale di Einstein", in V. Curi (ed.), *Opera di Einstein*, 124-136.

28. E.L. Doriga has an illuminating discussion of these in his *El Universo De Newton y de Einstein: Introduccion a la filosofia de la naturaleza*, (Herder, Barcelona 1985) 161-172.

Finally, the principle of *equality* or inertia and gravitation.

Both theories, moreover, have a couple of presuppositions worth mentioning. The first is that of the *attraction* effect which explains the tendency of bodies to fuse under certain conditions. The second is the *determinative* effect of a complex mass present within a spacial-temporal structure.

Epistemologically, the aspect of subjectivity in relation to the theory of relativity is very much commented upon.[29] Time and space, truth, science and human knowledge all come into the picture. The crucial question would be: Is physical relativism equal to subjectivism? Can the theory of relativity be interpreted in a subjectivistic manner? Or even positively? Or yet relativistically (in the philosophical sense)? Does Einstein's theory have a purely formal and phenomenological value? Einstein himself considered the theory as confirming the objective and absolute value of human understanding and the natural human capacity to break the confines of immediate sense experience and sensible intuition. Einstein's principle of falsification is sufficient proof against this subjectivity and likewise against absolute theories. In reference to Einstein's trial and error method, Popper holds[30] that the difference lies not so much in the trials as in a critical and constructive attitude towards error; errors which the scientist consciously and cautiously tries to uncover in order to refute his theories with searching arguments, including appeals to the most severe experimental tests which his theories and his ingenuity permit him to design.

Ontologically, in relation to the nature of the physical world, the theory of relativity may offer more philosophical content. It is a clear statement against a mechanical comprehension of the world. Moreover, it casts precious light on the extension, the durability and the evolution of the universe, giving sufficient material for an explanation of its cause and life. The theory also finally rejects absolute time and space, as much as it demonstrated that they are not altogether abstract and mathematical, but are aspects of physical bodies. In relation to acceleration and velocity, or to action in general, the theory affirmed the constancy and the limit of the velocity of light, the final constant. It also rejected the unity and universality of physical time. Metaphysically speaking, this identification between the temporal and the spacial coordinates only reject the

29. See, for example, Eddington, *Physical Science*, 85-87; Grunbaum, "Relativity theory", 133; and F. Selvaggi, *Filosofia del Mondo*, (Rome 1985) 347, where a comprehensive bibliography on the subject is given.

30. *Conjectures*, 52.

existence of becoming and hence the fundamental distinction between being and becoming, between extension and movement.[31]

In conclusion, I would like to quote Einstein himself once more in a passage of considerable weight.[32] It is a passage which brings out the relation between theoretical science and philosophy, and the physical experiential foundation of human and scientific knowledge: "If one considers the proper object of the theory of relativity, it is worth while to note that such a theory does not have a speculative origin, but comes from a complete desire to adapt in the most suitable way possible the theory of physics with observable facts. It is thus not a revolutionary act, but rather a natural evolution in a direct line across the centuries. The rejection of certain concepts, which unto this day were considered unalterable, on space, time, movement, was not an arbitrary act. On the contrary, this was only imposed from the observation of certain facts."

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31. On this point, see Selvaggi, *Filosofia del Mondo*, 355.

32. Speech given at King's College, 1921; Cf *IDEE*, 233.

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CHANGING RELIGIOSITY:
Secularisation and Variation
Data Analysis of Religious Values in Spain[1]

Anthony M. Abela S.J.

The theory emerging from contemporary research in the sociology of religion posits a complex dynamic between the traditional notion of secularisation and an observed persistence, transformation or revival of religion. Just as secularisation is a multi-dimensional concept, so also religiosity has a plurality of meanings and manifestations. A nuanced understanding of secularisation requires the identification of the relevant religious factors, a consideration of the various social forces and an examination of the social significance of religious culture.

In the operationalisation of the generalised concept of secularisation change in contemporary religious culture and its relation to society is often overlooked. While contemporary social theory tends to generalise the results from phenomenological findings, analytical research often delimits the scope of investigation to a single clearly defined and easily measurable religious variable, such as participation at religious services, and elaborates on a single dimension of religious change. Accordingly, there is a need for the identification of the various dimensions of religion at work in today's increasingly complex world. Earlier I have argued that research in the sociology of religion requires a post-secularisation approach concerned with the social significance of religion in a changing world (Abela 1993). Such an approach examines how specific traditional and post-traditional religious factors vary for different social groups in distinct social settings over time.

This article is an attempt to analyze survey data on a wide range of religious values for a Western European country (CIRES 1990) and reports on the

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1. The data available from the *Centro de Estudios sobre la Realidad Social* (CIRES) was collected from interviews to a stratified random sample of 1,200 adults in December 1990.

emerging social and religious factors. It accounts for religious change in terms of past, present and prospected future religiosity for a representative sample of the Spanish population. Through a comparison with the *European Value Systems Study Group*'s (EVSSG 1981) data for the same country it investigates change in religious practice over a period of ten years. Does change in religious involvement correspond to the life-cycle, or is it rather a process of secularisation to be explained by a cohort or a period effect? Is there a significant variation in religiosity for distinct social groupings over time?

Theory

Initially, as the concept of secularisation was found to lack analytical precision (Shiner 1967), a number of European sociologists refined the concept (Wilson 1966-85; Martin 1978, Dobbelaere 1981) and set the ground for qualitative and quantitative research. Building on the theory of secularisation, British sociologists of religion moved away from the original normative functionalism and applied phenomenological methods to understand religion's resistance to secularisation, the relation between belief and action, and how knowledge, innovation and change are socially constructed (Wallis and Bruce 1989). At the same time the application of quantitative methods of research enabled other sociologists, in particular in the United States, to identify various dimensions of religion even if they tended to overlook collective phenomena. In Europe there emerged a new interest in diffuse, popular and unofficial religion documenting the importance of shared values and beliefs that served as a basis for collective meaning and action (Cipriani 1988). In this movement a shift is observed away from institutionalized religion. There is a growing awareness that the social significance of religion extends beyond the confines of formal religious organisations. Accordingly, reviewing the international contribution to the sociology of religion, Beckford (1990) suggests that as the social functions of religion continue to decline, the social significance of religion, conceptualized in a new form - as religious culture - may be on the increase.

The scientific study of World Values initiated by the *European Value Systems Study Group* (EVSSG) in the beginning of the eighties has opened the way for a new conceptualisation of the social significance of religion. In these studies religious values are examined alongside and in relation to social and political values, work occupations, leisure and family life for randomly chosen representatives of entire populations. The European studies reported on how social and religious options constitute a complex network of relations. Inter-related values formed coherent wholes both on the individual and the

collective level (Stoetzel 1983). Allowing a margin for individuals' freedom of choice, it was possible to infer the social and political orientations of respondents from their respective adherence to religion (Stoetzel 1983:15.87. 106; Harding *et al* 1986:84.216). Although local conditions and historical developments of every country have the greatest influence on people's adherence to religious values and institutions, there emerged a number of sociological constants across Western Europe. Stoetzel discovered that generally Western Europeans tend to be more religious and moral than is often assumed to be the case. Religiosity was found to vary by occupation, place of residence and education and is subject to an age effect. Catholics stand out for their reported higher religious practice and belief and for their satisfaction with their religion and the moral teachings of the Church. Stoetzel (1983:95) observed that as Catholics are more attached to their religious beliefs they seem to resist change better. However, Harding *et al* found a wide diversity of practice among people nominally affiliated to the same Church.

Catholic countries show very diverse patterns of practice and belief and seem to sustain a greater commitment among young people. The separate studies on values in Latin European countries have variously reported on religion in Italy, Spain and Malta. Calvaruso et Abbruzzese (1985) distinguished between the declining influence of Church-religiosity, the persistence of a diffused Catholic religion and the new dimensions of belief in Italian society. Orizo (1983:189.373) observed a tension between an emerging secularised consciousness and the strong traditional institutions of the Church in Spain whereas Abela (1991) investigated the transmission of traditional and post-traditional values and the meanings they assume in religious organisations in Malta.

Observing the continued widespread religious belief and the high personal acceptance of the Ten Commandments Harding *et al* caution against premature conclusions concerning the state of contemporary religion and the prevalence of Christian values. They point out that any assumed secularisation does not seem to have taken place to the degree suggested by some authors, nor was it found to be homogenous across countries and for all the dimensions of religion (Harding *et al* 1986:69). In their conclusion, however, they argued that although the data from the survey at one point in time was not sufficient evidence of social or religious change, the marked age differences over values could not be explained as a life-cycle effect.

Catholic Religious Practice

Traditional Catholic religious practice follows the cycle of human

maturity. The seven sacraments of the Church correspond to specific moments in the life cycle of a person. From the early years of their life Catholics are initiated into the various practices of the Church. In most Catholic countries it is customary to baptize babies as soon as they are born. From an early age a child is prepared to receive First Holy Communion and is then required to attend Mass every Sunday. The frequent practice of Confession confers the forgiveness of sins, reconciles to the Church and enables a person to receive Holy Communion. Then the sacrament of Confirmation, intended as a commitment to Christian life, is normally received at the age of reason. For the majority a life-long commitment to marriage is marked by a Church sacrament; a few pronounce religious vows and male celibate leaders are ordained priests for the service of the community. When a person is sick for a very long time and death is in sight, the anointing of the sick, formerly known as the last sacrament, prepares the believer to encounter the Lord. In a predominantly Catholic country the sacraments of initiation are almost universal. People are born into the Catholic faith. In modern society, however, religious practice is deemed secondary to a person's religious identity, sense of belonging to the Church and his or her relations to the external environment. In a post-traditional environment a mature Catholic personality is cultivated through a continuous education, an experience of Christian conversion and finds expression in a universal openness coupled with an integral wisdom (Carrier 1991).

Age, Period and Cohort Effects

Longitudinal studies posit an interaction between age, cohort and period effects in religiosity. Aging effects are often described as the biological, psychological and sociological stages experienced by individuals in a particular society as they age (Chaves 1989:465). Stoetzel (1983:94) gives the classical example of how the elderly think of death more often than the young. Thus, in Western Europe advancement in age was found to be accompanied by a decrease in non-religiosity, a higher attendance at religious services, an increased need for spirituality and a greater satisfaction derived from religious institutions.

An age effect theory for Catholic religious practice would have it that traditional religious practice is regular and very frequent during childhood, tends to weaken and fluctuate during adult life but acquires new vigour as a person grows into old age. An age effect, however, is often accompanied by cohort and period effects. Cohorts effects are the differences between groups of people born at different times, whereas period effects are the broad events and developments that affect all cohorts equally. A period effect theory posits

a decline in religiosity over time, whereas a cohort effect theory attributes change in religiosity to common characteristics or experiences shared by members of the same cohort (Chaves 1989). It has variously been observed that with the passage of time the rate of religious decline often caused by a time-specific event tends to stabilise itself (Stoetzel 1983:252) while post-traditional forms of religion co-exist with and at times displace traditional ones (Abela 1991).

PERIODIC

Results
Religious Practice

Our respondents have very strong traditional roots in the religious practices of the Catholic Church. Almost all recall that their parents were baptised Catholics, made their First Holy Communion and were married in the Catholic Church. In turn, this traditional religiosity was passed on to our respondents: 99 percent have received Baptism and 98 percent made their First Holy Communion in their early childhood. Lower levels of participation are recorded for Confirmation (79%). As this sacrament is usually administered in early youth we can already observe the workings of an age effect. As a person grows out of childhood one gains a measure of freedom from the overpowering social influence of parents and the Church and is able to make his or her own mind on the frequency of attendance at the weekly Mass (76%), Holy Communion (50%), prayer (72%) and Confession (38%). Again our respondents' present religious practice is lower than what they recall for their childhood. Still, the greatest majority would like to marry in the Church and to receive the last sacraments (71%) and would favour Baptism (82%), First Holy Communion (79%) and a Church marriage for their children (63%). A considerable number (42%) would like to educate their children in a Church school (8 percent higher than those in possession of a religious schooling), possibly for mixed reasons that go beyond the purely religious [Table 1].

An analysis of the religious practices for distinct age groups of our respondents enables us to distinguish between age, cohort and period effects [Table 2]. Overall, religious practices in contemporary Spain vary from the not so common weekly Confessions (6%) and Holy Communion (16%) to the more frequent practice of Mass attendance (35%) and prayer (49%). The global index of religious participation ranges from a low for the under 24 year olds (11) to a high for the over 65 year old (45). This continuum suggests that religious practice is under the influence of an age effect: apparently, as people advance in years they engage more in religious activities.

We observe an overall drop (-30) in the religious practices of our

respondents from the time of their childhood to the present. As might be expected, Catholics participate more often during their childhood than in their adult life in the weekly liturgy of the Mass (+36%), Holy Communion (+32%), Confession (+32%) and prayer (+23%). In the early stages of their socialisation our respondents are generally more exposed to religious activities, but tend to slacken as they grow into adolescence and adult life. In old age, however, there is a return to religiosity. On our religiosity index the greatest drop in religious activity from childhood to the present is recorded for the 25-34 year olds (-44) and is lowest for the elderly (-13).

Changing patterns in the practice of Confession and Holy Communion are very dissimilar to the life-cycle effect at work in prayer life and attendance for the liturgy of the Mass. First we observe an overall decline in childhood religious practice for the young (18-34 year olds) relative to the older generations. This is most pronounced for the lower participation of the younger generations since early childhood in the sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. The marked difference in Confession and to a lower degree in Holy Communion was first experienced during the sixties by the now middle-aged (35-44 year olds). The post-Vatican II transformations have since influenced the religious practice of the whole Church. Generally, the practice of prayer, participation in the liturgy of the Mass and to a lower extent in Holy Communion have remained relatively stable even though greatly renewed. Confession, however, has become increasingly unpopular. On this count, what was originally a cohort effect of the turbulent sixties has now turned into a period effect with a bearing on all subsequent generations.

Within the limits of survey research we observe an overall six percent drop in Sunday Mass attendance over a period of ten years (1981-1990). The age groups which in 1981 were in the "35-44", "45-54" and "55-64 years" cohorts (now in the "45-54", "55-64" and "over 65 years" age groups respectively) have remained stable, the "25-34 year old" cohort (now in the "35-44 years" age group) has increased by 13 percent, whereas the then "18-24 year" olds (now in the "25-34 years" age group) have dropped by 11 percent in their weekly Mass participation. A religious crisis seems to occur during the years of early adulthood, after which time for a considerable number of our respondents there is a return to a regular participation in the weekly Mass and even more so to a life of prayer.

Religous Factors

A large-scale factor analysis for a wide range of religious items in Spain as represented in the CIRES (December, 1990) questionnaire extracted eleven

distinct religious factors [Table 3]. The first three factors are concerned with our respondents' religious practice in the present (R1), as recalled for their childhood (R2) and as envisioned for the future (R3). Here religious practice includes attendance for the weekly liturgy of the Mass, participation in Holy Communion, going to Confession and spending time in prayer.[2] Other factors are concerned with a religious environment for the transmission of values (R4), traditional morality and belief (R5), eschatological belief (R6), spiritual life (R7), religious conviction (R8), the social teaching of the Church (R9), social influence in decision making (R10) and an option for a liberating faith (R11).

The religious environment factor (R4) consists of our respondents' parish activity at present (88%) and in their youth (71%), bible reading (62%), discussion of religious matters with friends (34%) and in the family (22%), regular contacts with priests (25%) and nuns (18%), participation in retreats at present (9%) and in their childhood (24%) and bringing God to mind when alone (24%).[3] The traditional morality and belief factor (R5) includes our respondents' firm belief in God (80%) and the Virgin Mary (68%) and their support of the Catholic Church's prohibition of abortion (42%), divorce (30%), birth control (24%) and not allowing priests to marry (29%).[4] Eschatological belief (R6) is concerned with the last things: belief in life after death (55%), heaven (58%), hell (40%), sin (38%) and the devil (36%).[5] The spiritual life of our respondents (R7) consists in prayer of thanksgiving (50%) or petition (43%), feeling God's presence (38%) and deriving comfort and strength from religion (30%).[6] Religious conviction (R8) is manifest in the way our

2. The factor for *present religious practice* (R1) has high positive loadings for participation in Communion (.79), Confession (.75), Mass (.74), and prayer (.69). The factor for *Childhood religiosity* (R2) has high loadings for Communion (.87), Confession (.85), Mass (.84) and prayer (.72) but a lower loading for an education in a Church School (.34). Then the factor for *prospected future religiosity* (R3) has high loadings for respondents who favour their child's baptism (.74) and First Holy Communion (.77), but lower loadings for a Church marriage for themselves (.57) and their child (.54), their willingness to receive the last sacraments (.54) and for a religious education for their child (.46). *Note*: For percentages see Table 1.

3. The factor loadings for R4 in descending order are: Talk religion in the family (.68), read bible (.67), talk religion with friends (.65), contacts with priests (.58) and nuns (.54), parish activity now (.51) and during youth (.49), think of God when alone (.51) doing retreats now (.35) and when a child (.35).

4. The factor loadings for R5 are: Prohibition of divorce (.62), birth control (.60), abortion (.58), married priests (.46), belief in God (.51) and the Virgin Mary (.41), esteem of priests (.43) and a negative loading for reading novels (-.57).

5. Factor loading for R6 are: Belief in hell (.83), heaven (.81), the devil (.77), sin (.66) and life after death (.48).

6. The factor loadings for R7 are: Derive comfort and strength (.92), prayer of petition (.92) and

respondents find it a duty and not just a matter of convenience or custom to baptise their children (43%) and to prepare them for the First Holy Communion (41%).[7]

The factor for the social teaching of the Church (R9) is concerned with our respondents' satisfaction with the Pope's teaching on the Third World (31%), the poor and political oppression (27%), democracy in Eastern Europe (75%) and the teaching of the local Church on family life (36%), moral problems, the needs of the individual (34%) and spiritual life (41%).[8] Considerations in decision-making (R10) range from the influence exercised by the family (28%), friends (7%), public opinion (5%), the most advantageous (40%), one's own ideas (41%) and religious beliefs (16%).[9] Finally, the option for a liberating faith (R11) consists in our respondents' readiness to sacrifice everything even to risk their life for the values of freedom (44%), peace (55%), justice (31%), democracy (28%), saving the life of another person (61%), God and religious faith (33%).[10]

Social Factors

The CIRES (1990) survey also enquired about people's present social objectives first for their country and second for the world. Accordingly, respondents were asked to choose their first three priorities from a list of national and world concerns. The list of items corresponds to Inglehart's (1990) battery of questions intended to discover respondents' materialist and post-materialist orientations. In the Spanish situation such concerns range from

thanksgiving (.91), and feeling God's presence (.90).

7. R8 has the following factor loadings: A duty to give child the First Holy Communion (.81) and Baptism (.79).

8. R9 has the following factor loadings: Satisfaction with the Pope's teaching on the Third World (.74), the poor (.73), political oppression (.73), democracy in Eastern Europe (.42); the local Church teaching on family life (.72), moral problems and needs of the individual (.72) and spiritual life (.70).

9. R10 has the following factor loadings: social influence by one's family (.71), friends (.70), public opinion (.66), the most advantageous (.53), one's own ideas (.60) and religious beliefs (.42).

10. The following are the factor loadings for R11: Freedom (.86), peace (.82), justice (.82), democracy (.78), God and religious faith (.71), saving life of another person (.66), Country (.66). Note that in a similar factor analysis for four Latin European countries (Italy, France, Malta and Spain) in the eighties the highest loadings were observed for justice, peace and religious faith. This suggests that in the aftermath of the democratisation of Eastern Europe, the *justice and faith* option of the eighties has given place to a *liberating faith* option, marking a shift from the priority of justice to freedom in the nineties.

drug trafficking (55%), unemployment (49%), terrorism (39%), social inequalities (30%), social welfare (23%), the environment (21%), delinquency (22%), rising prices (15%), economic growth (9%), immorality and corruption (9%), civil liberty (9%) and national security (5%). Then on a world level the Spaniards find important to avoid war at all costs (57%), eliminate poverty (54%), reduce the divide between rich and poor countries (48%), curb international drug trafficking (38%), protect the world environment (37%), promote democracy (29%), but not so much to have easy access to cheap and abundant resources (10%), the reduction of multinationals' power (8%), the control of world population growth (5%) or the restriction of the emigration of the poor to rich countries (4%).

Two separate factor analyses respectively for the national and world objectives extracted two distinct factors for each set of items. The first factor for national objectives (S1) has positive loadings for a *post-materialist concern* over inequalities (.69), promotion of civil liberty (.46), protection of the environment (.44), resistance to immorality and corruption (.31) and negative loadings for a preoccupation with unemployment (-.48), terrorism (-.39), delinquency (-.36), drugs (-.27) and rising prices (-.27). Conversely, the second factor for national objectives (S2) has high loadings for *a materialist concern* with social welfare (.60) and price control (.52) [Table 4]. Then the first factor for world objectives (W1) is concerned with *world justice and peace* as it has high loadings for avoiding war at all costs (.64), reducing differences between rich and poor countries (.59), fighting poverty everywhere (.49) and the protection the environment (.41). The second factor (W2) stands for *liberalism* as it favours the promotion of democracy and the opposition of all dictators in the world (.61), a guarantee for the availability of cheap and abundant energy (.47) but not so much a decrease in the power of multinational financial groups (.31), nor the protection of the environment (-.51) or the reduction of inequalities between rich and poor countries of the world (-.30) [Table 5].

Social and Religious Orientations

Table 6 is the result from a second order factor analysis for a number of our previously extracted religious factors in conjunction with the factors representing our respondents' *post-materialist* (S1) and *world justice and peace* orientations (W1). The emerging three factors represent the socio-religious orientations of our respondents at present, during the time of their childhood and as prospected for the future. The first, labelled *present morality and religiosity orientation* (T1) has high positive loadings for the traditional morality and belief factor (.73) and for present religious practice

(.64) but negative loadings for both the Post-materialist (-.58) and the world justice and peace factor (-.52). The second, *religious inheritance factor* (T2) has high loadings for the transmission of values (.74), religious schooling (.67) and childhood religious practice (.63) and a lower loading for membership in a religious association (.33). The third factor represents *a future-oriented and diffuse religiosity* (PT) and has high loadings for our respondents' future religious practice (.61), their eschatological belief (.53), an option for a liberating faith (.53), a concern with the social teaching of the Church (.52) and to a lower extent our respondents' spiritual life (.30).

It emerges that Spanish society stands on a continuum ranging from a traditional to a post-traditional religiosity (T1). Traditionalists tend to have a high religious practice, are strong on traditional belief and support the moral teaching of the Church on issues like abortion, divorce, birth regulation and the celibacy of priests. By contrast, post-traditionalists are low in their religious practice and belief and tend to favour post-materialist values and world justice and peace. The morality of our respondents ranges from the literal observance of the laws of the Church on personal and public life to a concern with social and international justice. On the one hand, respondents who give great importance to the observance of traditional Church morality and belief tend to overlook social issues. On the other hand, those who are highly interested in contemporary social problems tend to have only a qualified adherence to the moral teaching and the belief propagated by the Church.

From factor two (T2) we infer that the childhood religious practice of our respondents strongly favours their present religious environment. Religous values are transmitted through informal channels such as exchanges with family members, friends, priests and nuns and in socio-religious activity in the parish and during retreats. Church schooling also favours a religious upbringing that is made manifest in a high religious practice during childhood as well as a religious environment in the family of our respondents.

From factor three (PT) it emerges that there exists a latent and diffuse post-traditional religiosity in Spanish society. Although religious practice is by far lower in adult life than during childhood our respondents were found to possess a strong religious orientation. Irrespective of whether our respondents are practising or not they find a life orientation in their religious values and beliefs. Such a diffuse religiosity orients our respondents to favour the initiation of their children into the practices of the Church, marriage in Church and the reception of the last sacraments at the end of their life. Such a religiosity is guided by a diffuse eschatological belief in after-life, heaven, hell, sin and the devil and is nourished by a search for a relevant spirituality. It is also a matter

of a post-traditional option for a liberating faith, expressed by our respondents as a widespread readiness for self-sacrifice in order to promote freedom, democracy, justice, peace without the exclusion of one's religious values and beliefs. Such a diffuse post-traditional religiosity is also very likely to favour the teaching of the Church on contemporary social problems.

Variance in Religiosity

Table 7 represents the results from a one-way analysis of variance for traditional and post-traditional religiosity in Spain. The greatest variance is observed for the morality and belief factor (T1). Whereas traditional religiosity (T1 and T2) varies according to our respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, post-traditional religiosity (PT) seems to be more universal.

Traditional morality and belief (T1) is supported by the advanced in age (.58), the lower educated (.36), women (.21), the lower social class (.30), the politically right (.40), people who reside in rural areas (.24) and who never travelled overseas (.23), members of religious associations (.80) and those who were not brought up in a Church school or College. By contrast, post-traditional morality and belief is favoured by the younger generation (-.56), the higher educated (-.61) as well as those who received a long education in a Church school or College (-.56), men (-.24), the politically left (-.59), urban dwellers (-.13) and people who often travel overseas (-.54). Then, a religious environment that is conducive to the transmission of values is strongest with the middle-aged (.13), women (.21), the upper social classes (.44), the politically right (.45) and as might be expected members of religious associations and those who received a Church education. Significantly, urban dwellers, the higher educated, those who received a Church schooling and people who are experienced in foreign travel can simultaneously maintain a religious environment (T2) and favour a post-traditional morality. Such a situation posits a post-traditional religiosity whose adherents favour postmaterialism and the promotion of world justice and peace.

The factor for post-traditional future-oriented religiosity (PT) is widespread in contemporary Spanish society irrespective of age, gender, social origin, place of residence or the international experience of our respondents. The only significant variation in post-traditional religiosity is observed for level of education, type of school, political orientation and membership in associations. Thus, in Spain a post-traditional religiosity is sustained by many years of Church schooling (.25) or a university education (.14), belonging to a religious group or movement (.41) but not by a politically left orientation.

Conclusion

The foregoing analyses of contemporary religiosity in Spain, a Catholic Western European country, posits a diversity in the social significance of religious factors. In modern times, the Catholic faith has a variety of social manifestations ranging from the traditional to the post-traditional. The greatest variance on a number of socio-demographic characteristics is observed for the factors of traditional religiosity. Depending on their age, education, gender, political orientation and religious belonging, Catholics differ in their religious practice and in their degree of adherence to the teachings of the Church. A higher education at a University or a Church School and an exposure to international contacts seem to be conducive to a post-traditional and socially-oriented morality.

Variation in religious practice, in particular the one observed for the young with respect to the older generations, is not a matter of an ever-increasing and irreversible secularisation. We notice a stabilising process in the frequency of weekly Church attendance for the Spanish adult population of the nineties. Variations in the weekly religious practice of our respondents is explainable in part by an age effect. The slight drop in the overall weekly Church attendance from the eighties to the nineties can be attributed to the younger generations. Were the latter to follow the pattern of their immediate predecessors it is not expected that there will be any further major decrease in the weekly Church attendance. It remains to be seen, however, whether the younger cohorts will overcome the crisis of early adulthood and improve on their weekly Church attendance. The sharp fall in religious practice that has occurred in Spain and in many other Catholic countries over the past few years under the influence of a cohort and a period effect now seem to have stabilised.

By contrast to traditional religiosity, the factor for post-traditional religiosity, is not significantly dependent on any socio-demographic characteristic. Irrespective of their social origin or present religious practice most of our respondents have great religious aspirations for the future. In this way a future-oriented religiosity permeates Spanish society. Such a situation posits a diffuse post-traditional religiosity that is nevertheless inconceivable without the religious heritage of the past and the environment of the present. Modern religiosity simultaneously builds on tradition and secularisation but moves beyond them. A post-secularisation approach to religion is needed to account for the observed variations in traditional religiosity and the occurrence of a diffuse post-traditional religiosity.

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TABLE 1
Catholic Religous Practice in Spain
(percentages)

Religous Practice	—— P A S T —— Parents	during Childhood	at PRESENT	in the FUTURE
Baptism	97	99	DNA	82*
First Holy Communion	97	98	DNA	79*
Confirmation	NA	79	DNA	NA
Pray weekly or more often	NA	72	49	DNA
Attend Mass weekly or more often	NA	76	35	DNA
Receive Communion weekly or more	NA	50	16	DNA
Confession weekly or more often	NA	38	6	DNA
Attend Church School/College	NA	34	DNA	42*
Member of an association	NA	11	6	DNA
Church Marriage	98	DNA	71+	63*
Last Sacraments	NA	DNA	DNA	71+

Source: CIRES, December 1990. N = 1200. NA = Not Available; DNA = Does Not Apply; * Would favour practice for one's own child; + favour practice for self.

TABLE 2

Weekly Religious Practice in Spain by Age Groups
(percentages)

— 1990 —	Confession		Communion		— Mass —			Prayer		INDEX	
AGE GROUP	Ch	90	Ch	90	Ch	81	90	Ch	90	Ch	90
18-24 years	18	1	40	5	63	23	14	56	26	44	11
25-34 years	37	2	50	5	73	21	12	66	30	56	12
35-44 years	46	4	54	12	78	42	34	75	47	63	24
45-54 years	46	7	56	19	85	49	42	80	55	66	30
55-64 years	47	10	56	24	85	56	52	79	65	66	37
65+ years	36	14	46	35	76	60	59	77	75	58	45
ALL AGES	38	6	50	16	76	41	35	72	49	59	26

Source: CIRES, 1990; EVSSG, 1981. Ch = Childhood, 81 = 1981, 90 = 1990, INDEX = Religious Practice (100-point) Index.

TABLE 3
Large Scale Factor Analysis for religious values in Spain

%	Present Religious Practice (*Weekly or more often)	R1
16	* Communion	.79
6	* Confession	.75
35	* Mass	.74
40	* Prayer	.69
43	Religious at 17 years	-.62
52	Religious family	-.57
32	Talk religion often	-.53

%	Childhood Religious Practice (*Weekly or more often)	R2
60	* Communion	.87
48	* Confession	.85
76	* Mass	.84
72	* Prayer	.72
34	Church School	.34

%	Future Religious Practice	R3
	Favour:	
79	Child's communion	.77
82	Child's baptism	.74
69	Church Marriage for oneself	.57
63	Church Marriage for child	.54
71	Receive last sacraments	.54
42	Child's religious schooling	.46

%	Religious Environment, Transmission of Values	R4
	Often:	
22	Talk religion in family	.68
62	Read Bible	.67
34	Talk religion with friends	.65
12	Contact with priests	.58
10	Contact with nuns	.54
88	Active in parish now	.51
71	Parish activity in youth	.49
20	Think of God when alone	.51
9	Retreats at present	.35
24	Retreats at 10 years old	.35

%	Traditional Church Morality and Belief	R5
	**Support Church prohibition of:*	
30	* Divorce	.62
24	* Birth control	.60
42	* Abortion	.58
29	* Married priests	.46
52	Firm belief in God	.51
	Importance of God in life	.51
38	High esteem of priests	.43
68	Belief in Virgin Mary	.41
61	Read Novels	-.57

%	Eschatological Belief	R6
40	Hell	.83
58	Heaven	.81
36	The Devil	.77
38	Sin	.66
55	Life after death	.48
28	Has a relative religious	.26

%	Reasons for Prayer	R7
30	Derive comfort	.92
43	Petition	.92
50	Thanksgiving	.91
38	Feel God's presence	.90

%	Religious Conviction	R8
	A duty to give child:	
41	Communion	.81
43	Baptism	.79

%	Church Social teaching sufficient:	R9
	** Pope's teaching on:*	
31	* Third World	.74
27	* Poor social classes	.73
27	* Political persecution	.73
75	* Democracy in East Europe	.42
66	Pope's work satisfactory	.33
	+ Local church on:	
36	+ Family life	.72
41	+ Spiritual needs	.70
34	+ Individual/moral problems	.72

%	Influence Decisions	R10
	A lot:	
28	Family	.71
7	Friends	.70
5	People's opinion	.66
51	One's own considerations	.60
40	The most advantageous	.53
16	Religious beliefs	.42

%	Post-traditional Religiosity: Option for a liberating faith	R1
	Sacrifice everything for:	
44	Freedom	.86
52	Peace	.82
31	Justice	.82
28	Democracy	.78
33	Religious Faith, God	.71
18	Country	.66
61	Save life of another person	.33
90	Family	.46

Source: CIRES, Spain 1990. N=1,200. Varimax rotation.

TABLE 4
Factor Analysis for National objectives

%	Objectives	S1	S2
30	Reduce social inequalities	.69	
9	Gurantee civil liberty	.46	
21	Protect environment	.44	
49	Reduce unemployment	-.48	.21
39	Combat terrorism	-.39	-.38
22	Combat delinquency	-.36	
9	Combat immorality and corruption	.21	
9	Economic growth	.16	
55	Combat drug traffic	-.27	-.68
23	Social welfare		.60
15	Price control	-.27	.52
5	National security		.23

Source: CIRES Spain 1990. N = 1,200. Varimax rotation. S1 = Post-Materialist values; S2 = Materialist values.

TABLE 5
Factor Analysis for World Objectives

%	Objectives	W1	W2
57	Avoid war at all costs	-.64	
48	Reduce differences between rich-poor	.59	-.30
38	Fight against drug traffic	-.50	
54	Fight poverty everywhere	-.49	
5	Control population growth	.28	
29	Oppose dictators, promote democracy		.61
37	Protect environment	.41	-.51
10	Gurarantee access to cheap and abundant energy		.47
8	Reduce power of multi-nationals		.31
4	Control emigration from poor to rich countries		.25

Source: CIRES Spain 1990. N = 1,200. Varimax rotation. W1 = World Peace and Justice; W2 = Liberalism.

TABLE 6
Second Order Factor Analysis for Religious Practice and Morality

	T1	T2	PT
Traditional morality and belief	.73		
Present religious practice	.64	.40	
Local Solidarity: Post-materialist orientation	-.58		
World Solidarity: Peace and Justice	-.52		
Religious environment, transmission of values	.28	.74	
Religious schooling	-.27	.67	
Childhood religious practice		.63	
Membership in a religious association		.33	
Future religious practice	.38		.61
Eschalological belief			.53
Option for a liberating faith			.53
Church social teaching satisfactory			.52
Spiritual life			.28

Source: CIRES (December, 1990). N = 1200. Varimax Rotation; T1 = First Traditional Factor: Present Morality and Belief, T2 = Second Traditional Factor: Religious Inheritance, PT = Post-Traditional Factor: Future-oriented and diffuse religiosity. Total variance explained = 38 %. Factor loadings acceptable at .25 or higher.

TABLE 7
One-way Analysis of Variance for Religiosity in Spain

		T1	T2	PT	N
AGE GROUPS	8-34 years	-.56	-.08	-.03	425
	35-54 years	.05	.13	.05	358
	55+ years	.58	-.03	-.01	377
	F Ratio	166.67**	4.73*	.NS	
EDUCATION	Primary	.36	-.21	.00	710
	Secondary	-.46	.17	-.09	297
	Tertiary	-.61	.50	.14	193
	F Ratio	130.90**	44.15**	3.01*	
SEX	Male	-.24	-.24	.06	561
	Female	.21	.21	-.06	621
	F Ratio	59.66**	61.88**	.NS*	
SOCIAL CLASS	Upper	-.01	.44	.29	87
	Middle	.02	.28	-.05	967
	Lower	.30	-.11	.13	120
	F Ratio	3.39*	12.15**	.NS	
POLITICS	Left	-.59	-.26	.06	347
	Centre	.06	.18	.16	134
	Right	.40	.45	.17	182
	F Ratio	69.70**	22.83**	7.29**	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Rural	.24	-.11	.08	327
	Small Urban	-.07	-.02	-.02	532
	Large Urban	-.13	.13	-.05	341
	F Ratio	13.44**	4.74*	.NS	
OVERSEAS TRAVEL	Never	.23	-.10	-.03	607
	Sometimes	-.19	.09	-.02	436
	Often	-.54	.17	.17	106
	F Ratio	41.91**	6.59**	.NS	
ASSOCIATION	Member	.80	1.36	.41	67
	Non-member	-.04	-.07	-.01	1106
	F Ratio	46.14**	141.74**	11.03**	
CHURCH SCHOOLING	None	.23	-.41	-.10	789
	1-8 years	-.37	.43	.16	242
	over 8 years	-.56	1.31	.25	169
	F Ratio	67.33**	354.97**	11.94**	

Source: CIRES (Dec, 1990) N = 1200. T1 = Traditional Morality and Belief; T2 = Religious environment; PT = Post-traditional future-oriented and diffuse religiosity. ** $p < .005$, * $p < .05$, NS = Not Significant.

ONE BOOK: TWO DIFFERENT REACTIONS

When I received Giuseppe M. Zanghi's book, ***Dio che è Amore. Trinità e vita in Cristo*** *(Città Nuova; Rome 1991) for review in* ***Melita Theologica*** *I thought it would be useful to enlist the services of a colleague who comes from a different background, and offer two different and perhaps contrasting readings of the volume. Dr Sant finished his review in July 1991 while I succeeded in finishing writing mine in September 1993.*

The Editor

Dr Lino Sant: CRITIQUE OF "DIO CHE È AMORE" BY GIUSEPPE M. ZANGHI

La premessa dell'autore proprio all'inizio del suo libro ci promette che qui non si tratta ne di manuale di teologia ne di una opera scientifica "specialistica". Sembra quindi che si tratta di cossidette "meditazioni" di cui faremo bene di prepararci. Origina da quei luoghi di fanatismo religioso che cerca una riabilitizazzione nella società contemporanea. Una società che fa dell'attività meditativa e di comportamenti relatati oggetto di grande derisione e ne trae degli accusi di emarginizazzione dalla vita societale. La contra-offensiva sembra trovare sbocchi in articolazioni che cercano con esasperazione un orientamento dando un abito moderno, contemporaneo ma un corpo ben diverso. Deve dunque prendere impegni da un vocabolario filosofico di fattura moderna. Così si spera di riuscire a mascherare efficacemente proprio quel estremità di espressione di un'interiorità fitta che si classifica come inesprimibile. Eppure se ne parla con grande facilità e verbosità. Un'interiorità che di intelletuale poco ha che da fare.

Ma stiamo ben attenti. L'autore così dicendo non rinuncia alla pretensione di star facendo della filosofia. Addirittura della scienza. Basta semplicemente dire che qui non si tratta di roba da specialista. Ma dobbiamo essere disciplinati pure noi. Dobbiamo rivolgerci all'opera capitolo per capitolo per vedere meglio e con precisione come si è realizzato quel che abbiamo detto.

Capitolo 1: Parlare di Dio Oggi

Appena comincia il discorso Dio si capisce quanto sia privo di sistema e di precisione. Le primissime pagine ci introducono proprio nel cuore di una posizione che ideologicamente ed anche epistomologicamente sia inaccettabile quando si crede di affrontare un problema che non deve conoscere alcun confine culturale. L'autore ci soggetta a tante dichiarazioni che pongono più problema di quanto non cercano di mettere in rilievo. Se l'autore cerca di parlare di Dio dal punto esistenziale, quello che è contrapposto a quello che non è, non è mica molto intelligente fare una catena di affermazioni che al minimo sarebbero contenziosi. Se alternattivamente l'autore vuole prendere come punto focale i discorsi veri e propri di "Dio" che si fanno tra donne e uomini, attraverso culture, religione (o mancanza di religione) allora sarebbe roba da ingenui la mancanza di cominciare con un elenco, magari uno molto sintetico, che coglie in se tutte le tappe considerate come fondamentali nei vari correnti culturali ed anche gli scontri maggiori tra le diverse discipline teologiche.

E nossignori, ne l'una ne l'altra. L'esistenza di Dio è presa come tale, ipotetica ma senza imputazione. Parlare di Dio con metafore molte pompose e con pochissima concretezza fa, da una difesa mai proposta, una superfluità a chi non sta ben attento. Una referenza all'ateismo è fatta nelle pagine 12-13. Ed è proprio qui che si capisce quanto la rigorosità non piace all'autore. Fa di tante forme di ateismo, che si sono formulati durante secoli, una fonte sola come se ci fosse un modo solo di produrre degli atei. Basta che si sviluppi degli squilibri tra periodi diversi di cristianità e si produce degli atei. La possibilità che ci sia un'uomo, che non ha Dio, è gettata fuori perchè per l'autore è difficile concepire un'uomo che non abbia l'aggettivo "religiosus" in compagnia di "sapiens" e "faber"! Ma neppure questo non accontenta. Dobbiamo anche fare della psicologia molto povera per arrivare ad una conclusione che fa degli brividi dolorosi a che segue attentamente gli sviluppi nell'intelligenza artificiale e nelle neuroscienze. Chi crede nella necessità metafisica per la religione nella psicologica umana farebbe molto bene a tacere e istruirsi meglio di come la nostra comprensione di materie relatate si sta allargando negli ultimissimi anni.

È un racconto molto impressionistico, simplicista e in tanti riguardi addiritura sbagliato, quello che l'autore ci propone del profilo culturale della civiltà occidentale. Le grosse imprese analitiche fatte da punti di viste economiche, sociologiche, militari, tecnologiche ed anche filosofiche durante gli ultimi due secoli fanno di queste povere parole commenti da dilettante. Come ne fa il dibattito metodologico soffisticato fra la psicologia e la sociologia del povero attentato che copre le pagine 20-23. Un attentato che cerca di dare

una perspettiva esclusivamente religiosa del problema uomo singolo appartenente alla communione societale e descritta come la differenza persona individuo. La rivoluzione effetuata nel pensiero religioso, specialmente nel mondo giudaico, coll'affermazione del Dio col quale si può portare avanti un discorso privato non saremo certo noi a negare o minimizzare. Si deve interpretare questo avvenimento con una responsabbiltà professionale da quelli che di studi sulle culture religiose fanno carriera. Cioè nell'ambito di un contesto storico che sa vedere l'importanza dello spirito comunitario sugellato nel rito, ma dall'altro conto perseguitato da un pensiero teologico che cerca temi più ragionati e meno dominati da isterismo di massa. In effetti questi correnti non fanno che proporci un palcoscenico sul quale si recita un testo sotto il quale brucia una lotta al potere mai dichiarata publicamente. Le parole scritte da K. Rahner al quale si fa referenza danno testimonianza di questo. Ma nel leggere un padre molto stimato nella gerarchia ecclesiale occorre capire nelle parole pietose quel che manca testualmente perchè è stato scrupolosamente cosmetizzato. I disperati attentati di una gerarchia sfiduciata sia internamente con delle critiche mosse contro il modo inaccettabile di fare la religione. Una gerarchia che corre un grave rischio di non essere più ascoltata se non da quei fedeli che poco vogliano capire fine in fondo. Insomma una gerarchia che vede la sua autorità, il suo potere reso alle banalità di denaro ed associazioni massoniche.

Se poi ci s'interessa più al testo strettamente filosofico allora invece di un discorso, che dovrebbe essere molto più lungo e difficile, dobbiamo accontentarci di ben altro. E figuriamoci quel che possiamo raccogliere da una spiegazione che sintetizza quello che è accaduto più recentemente in una sentenza. La cultura filosofica occidentale si è precipitata nella crisi più grave per una sola ragione. Si è secolarizzata! Che analisi profonda! Non penso che si tratta più di filosofia da questo punto in poi. Perchè non ci potrà essere più un'analisi accurata dei discorsi sviluppati dai vari Cartesio, Kant, Hegel, ecc. Il Dio che appare così frequentemente nei loro scritti non si può più vederlo come un patrimonio culturale che coglie in se tantissimi problemi sia dialettiche che logiche (più correttamente si deve dire problemi sospesi). Questo Dio è l'Oggetto Dato per l'autore, e con questo oggetto si può continuare un monologo che fa interpretazione unidirezionale magari contraddittoria. Ma sopratutto si fa un lavoro di appropriazione mal riuscita da tante genialità intelletuali e la si copre di gergo pseudo-teologica. Quanto sarebbe più semplice vedere nel linguaggio teologico un edificio intelletuale nei primissimi passi bisognosi di appoggi che col tempo si sorpassano perchè di utilità più non hanno.

Capitolo 2: Teologia e Vita

Questo capitolo comincia con una esortazione per un'iniziativa urgente che possa assicurare una "grande teologia". Gran segnale questo di una crisi mal percepita. E mal diregita. Dai limiti autoimposti in quello che concerna discorso e motodologia logica su dio si vorrebbe fare una prova bizarra quasi quasi di autenticità. La grandezza di Dio sarà allora un gioco quasi infantile di parole che esalta con ferocia tutte le deficienze che si possa attribuire al pensiero umano. Non un'esortazione ad uno sforzo più grande per superare un centimetro più in avanti in terreno arduo. No, un'arresa completa all'irrazionalità. Così i superlativi possono piovere sulla deità senza alcun attenuazione.

È proprio in questi termini che si possa capire perchè dobbiamo essere soggetti a pagine che fanno poesia meschina. Un'abbondanza di superlativi corona una diarea di verbosità davvero nauseante. E poi di nuovo c'è un lavoro di appropriazione da misticismo orientale. Un misticismo vernicciato da colori ellenici. È proprio qui che si capisce di quanto ben lontani siamo dalla storia del Cristo umano che nell'aride paesaggio israeliano si dimostra crocefisso. Qui siamo nei trasportazioni cosmici dove l'essere non è prerogattiva umana. In questo contesto non c'è scampo per l'uomo. Lo si deve umiliare e minimizzare le proprie capacità intelletuali. Così fece Tommaso nel pezzo citato (pagina 47). Ma facendo questo non se ne accorse che fa delle proposizioni che siano ontologicamente ed ancora peggiore epistemologicamente problematiche, se non addirittura senza alcun significato. Costatare che un entità conoscitiva non può accedere ad un tipo di conoscenza porta la responsabilità della dimostrazione. Come posso dire io che questa o quella cosa che io conosco, e riconosco apertamente di conoscere, in maniera molto imperfetta e vaga, come posso dire che è e sarà questa stessa cosa inconoscibile per tutti? E poi come faccio a stabilire che il modo con cui posso accedere a qualche aspetto di conoscenza di questa cosa sarà limitato da parametri scelti arbitriamente da chi dice che lui non vede per niente bene. Chi dice di non sapere farebbe bene a tacere. Se poi crede di avere stabilito dei limiti allora questo non ha nulla del triviale. Questa è una affermazione che epistemologicamente esige una dimostrazione.

A questo punto sarebbe molto opportuno se l'autore ci avrebbe regalato una argomentazione ontologicamente chiara e logicamente accettabile, intesa come difesa della tesi dell'impossibilità delle facoltà intelletuali umani di capire sottiliezze di metafisica divina. Invece no. Dobbiamo confrontarci ad una digressione che sembra avere più utilità come manuale a chi vorrebbe imparare il misticismo da dilettante. In effetti l'impressione lasciata è di quanto di

comune c'è tra le tecniche che inducono l'individuo allo slancio del misticismo e quelle altre usate nei film "horror" che cercano la sospensione della stabilità garantitaci dalle facoltà razionali con un'abbandono ad una forte emozione di paura, o di sentimento amoroso. L'importante è che sia un emozione capace di esibirsi in un modo intensissimo.

La storia non finisce qui o così. Dobbiamo ricordare che in primissima fila abbiamo incontrato l'argomento che in questa opera si fa della scienza sviluppando temi e pensieri cossidetti teologici. E allora qui bisogna non perdere ne il rifugio dell'irrazionalità nel misticismo, ne la pretensione di potere fare attività del più alto valore intelletuale sia in questione di rigorosità sia in questione di attualità. Facile la soluzione. Avere due teologie e poi chiamare alto che qui ci sarà sintesi compiuta nell'individuo che interpreta bene ambedue le attività. Questa non può non essere chiamata altro che disonestà intelletuale. È uno schema nefasto che non fa onore ne a chi lo propone, e molto più meno a chi crede di praticarlo.

In primo luogo la definizione stupida che ci viene offerta della scienza è roba che pochissima gente che sta al corrente di quanto succede nelle scienze da alcuna retta. L'unica cosa che l'autore capisce benissimo nella scienza è l'origine completamente umana. Sarebbe meglio per lui cercare di convincere che la sua definizione sia corretta a degli astrologi. Troveranno tantissimi punti d'accordo. Ma forse la cosa che più colpisce è la maniera schifosa nella quale si cerca ancora una volta di appropriarsi del bagaglio linguistico, tecnico e analitico dell'opera di quelli che hanno dato degli interessantissimi sviluppi nella filosofia e nella sociologia delle scienze. Tentare di mimetizzarne una sociologia della religione in uno spirito corporattivo dentro il quale si accede soltanto colla fede. L'elemente strettamente ideologico ed anche evangelico che corrompe il cristianesimo mentre dice che vuol capire meglio il mondo viene tutto fuori qui. Se non per altro perchè questo tipo di teologia incestuosa e invidiosa del successo altrui mai può avere alcun pretensione di scientificità. Per quei studiosi che vorrebbero col minimo pregiudizio, senza sentire su di loro alcun dovere ne di predicare quel che credono che sia vero, ne di lanciare guerre sante contro quelli che non sono d'accordo con loro, e col massimo rispetto solo a un minimo di regole logiche che garantiscono la possibilità del discorso, ebbene per questi signori sarà difficilissimo accettare un processo continuo di rivelazione mantenuto da una catena di santi! E in oltre mettere al primo piano la realtà ecclesiale non risolverebbe niente. Questo sarebbe una mossa tattica che offre dei temi che andrebbero bene in quei luoghi che di politica parlata si fa molto.

Se l'autore vorrebbe dare un'autenticità e maggiore credibilità alla teologia

perchè non decida al più presto possibile di schierarsi esclussivamente da parte di quelli dove si trova meglio? I focolarini cercano di fare del misticismo fenomeno di massa e non una scienza teologica per quelli che certamente non vogliano percorrere le vie ardue di chi vuol sapere più senza risparmiarsi nulla.

Capitolo 3: Essere e Amore

Il tema di questo capitolo è sinteticamente proposto nella citazione fatta dal Papa Paolo VI proprio all'inizio. Dio è quello che è, e poi se dobbiamo elaborare prendiamo il discorso evangelico di Giovanni: Dio è amore. A pensarci sopra non ci voleva mica l'autorità di un pontefice per fare questa pronuncia che tante apparizioni ha fatto nei testi cattolici. Essere e amore. E invece chi crede che questo dice tutto quello che c'è da dire sarebbe ben consigliato a stare fermo su queste parole. È la voce di una fede che non vuole riconoscere la mancanza di comprensione come tale, anzi tenta di apparire meno cieca e più ragionata, ma non troppo.

La tecnica adoperata deve molto a quel tipo di retorica che cerca di afferrare prima l'attenzione con una affermazione che consiste in una grossolana simplificazione. Una simplificazzione che ha una dosa di verità, che sembra molto originale e dunque promette a chi la segue una comprensione globale con uno sforzo intelletuale non così massiccio, Ed è proprio per questo che si sceglie una forte sensazione psicologica. Basta pensare a quei grandi capolavori litterari che hanno come tema una affermazione del tipo "la vita è un dramma di gelosie" (L'Otello Shakespeariano). Quanti sogni e speranze ci promette l'affermazione che Dio, la nostra vita interna, non è che un dramma d'amore. Anche se qualche cosa di noi dice che quel che succede proprio davanti ai nostri occhi poco ha in comune con questo. Ma questo non riesce a distruggere in noi la delusione di poter in qualche modo fare vendicare questo sogno. Da avviliti dalla vita quotidiana ci prometta una speranza che non tutto è così male e brutto come sembra. Bisogna guardare le cose in maniera diversa. I maestri della retorica e dell'arte di persuasione di massa di certo sapranno molto di come si fa a realizzare questo lavoro. In tempi più moderni i grandi manipulatori di "mass media" sanno fare un'analisi molto profonda di questo tipo di gioco. E forse capiranno una volta per sempre quei apologisti poco soffisticati perchè la cristianità è sopravissuta per così lungo tempo.

Ma purtroppo per quelli che cercano una posizione intelletuale più difensibile, più credibile, poco rifugio possono trovare nella consolazione di vedere simplificazioni del genere guadagnare consensi così larghi. L'intelligenza dell'uomo è molto più scabrosa da permettere chi vuol guardare le cose più in fondo di fermarsi sul primo divano che trova nel suo cammino.

E no, non si può andare avanti così. Il lavoro ci chiede molto più circospezione e più rigorosità.

Ma riprendiamo il filo: l'argomento Dio è amore. C'è lo dice il vangelo, dunque ci si deve credere. E la cosa più facile sarebbe di credere alle parole così come sono. La storia della redenzione, del Dio che vuole riscattare il genere umano, sacrificando il proprio figlio è un tema di grossissima drammaticità. Ma se si pensa che sarebbe stato molto più logico che il Dio poteva benissimo, lui che è omnipotente e infinitamente pietoso e disposto al perdono, lui poteva benissimo perdonare tutto? Senza fare tanti drammi. Senza aspettare millenni e così condannare milioni di antenati nostrani ad un divieto assoluto di entrare in paradiso. Perchè il padre, il buonissimo padre, vorrebbe soggettare il proprio figlio a delle umiltà e sofferenze le più orribili? Castigando il proprio figlio come mai si può classificare la più grande prova dell'amore divino? Un sacrificio farebbe molto senso proprio quando non ci sono altre vie d'uscita. Quando è in un senso *necessario* per togliere qualche disturbo dai partecipanti. Altrimenti si chiama melodramma. E poi per complicare di più il lavoro di esegesi il sommo dramma si situa proprio in mezzo ad un popolo che di questa vicenda fa un'altra interpretazione molto differente. Un popolo che cerca un messia che gli ridà la integrità storica entro confini geografici che saranno saldamente nelle sue mani non in quelli romane.

Insomma l'unico modo di dare senso a questo discorso è proprio nella rinuncia di capirlo nel senso storico-logico. Di nuovo ci troviamo di fronte ad una attività retrospettiva che ha come compito quello di riinterpretazione. Fare dipingere quello che ci appare essere in un tal modo in colori diversi. Ci sarà lavoro per secoli di ermeneuti del primissimo rango. All'estremità è anche lecito chiamare in causa la debolezza della ragione umana. Anche se la si utilizza così largamente senza alcun scrupolo. Ecco perchè ci vuole uno strumento delicato col quale arrivare ultimamente ai bersagli più difficili: il mistero.

Capitolo 4: La Trinità

Qui si affronta una delle più grandi, se non addirittura la più grande, difficoltà della fede cristiana. Continuare nella cultura ebraica di un solo Dio ed allo stesso tempo mantenere una posizione di intransigenza nel dare lo stato di Dio a bene due altre persone. La maniera sottomessa nella quale l'autore deve ammettere un'incompatibilità logica tra le due posizioni stimola in noi tanta simpatia perchè è tremendo l'incarico.

Quello che colpisce nell'arco intero degli argomentazioni che mirano allo

stabbilire l'unità della trinità (chi dice di capire che cosa veramente significa questo?!) è la tecnica costante di dare più peso a certe dichiarazioni, come per esempio, questi tre sono un'unica cosa, col invertire il ruolo dell'antecedente con quello della conclusione. La perfetta communione tra i tre non si deduce dal fatto che bisogna ad ogni costo stabbilire l'unità dei tre. Si tratta di aritmetica semplicissima qui. O meglio del concetto del numero creato dal uomo. Chi sa forse un dio, se esistesse non avrebbe alcun bisogno della matematica. E chissà forse invece di fare l'equazione tra il tre al uno sarebbe più opportuno stabbilire i criteri secondo i quali si decida quanto un'unità costituisce un'identità: si tratterà di separazione e autonomia, una questione che da ancora tanti fastidi a chi studia il problema dell'identità mente-cervello. Invece il nostro teologo qui mette il rapporto tra i tre-uno come oggetto di ricerca. Non ci meraviglia affatto che così facendo questo tipo di teologia si è inciampata in una sterilità che spinge l'autore a chiedere uno sforzo per darla nuova vita e grandezza.

Il disagio dialettico si trasforma e si molteplica in altre modalità. Interpretare l'amore come morte ci serve molto come esempio (pag. 117). Perchè tradisce il tramonto di un pensiero grande ed edificante come fosse, messo in difficoltà dalle contradizioni che ha partorito. Un percorso evidenziato da tante altre tradizioni di pensiero. Ricomincia per l'autore il cammino familiare imperniato sulle distinzioni tra esistenze e sostanze. La chenosi ci aiuta per non trivializzare l'idea del figlio-dio fatto uomo e l'amore divino come dinamica delle trasfomazioni divina in due personalità. Si, per Dio tutto è facile, ma occorre anche dargli molto merito.

Poi trasferiamoci sul piano umano di nuovo. Quella che sarebbe la più grande difficoltà di fronte a un determinismo crudele e prepotente è spazzata via chiamando in causa la libertà concessa dal creatore alle sue creature. È come se un drammaturgo conferisce più realismo a suo modo per poi dire che le sue creature si sono scelti loro stessi i ruoli e hanno fatto le proprie decisioni per far scorrere un dramma che al inizio loro non hanno potuto nemmeno immaginare. Il mondo edenico è dichiarato irraggiungibile dalla scienza (e la teologia si?). Allora è proibito a noi contestare o almeno rivalutare la storia della caduta di Adamo ed Eva. Il dramma si consuma nelle volontà libere dei protagonisti con un dio che veglia su tutto benevolmente colla minima interferenza, e per arrivare al culmine si bagna tutto nel sangue dell'agnello. Il resto è un susseguirsi indisciplinato di commenti e riflessioni che fanno più gioco di parole e più vaghezza. Finalmente si tratta di un mistero! Anzi di una molteplicità di misteri. Chiamando l'uno triipostaticità e l'altro qualche altro termine poco importa perchè starà al di sopra alla ragione. Ma allora perchè si fa tanto sforzo per ragionarli? Perchè non risparmiare tanta energia destinata a esaurirsi finalmente nel silenzio del mistero?

Capitolo 5: Ad Immagine o Sommiglianza — ovvero Così È Se Vi Pare

Visto che il labrinto, che la teologia cristiana ha creato e nutrito attorno a se, sarebbe stato di una grandissima complessità e ripetutamente contestatissimo, ci voleva un'istituzione colla propria gerarchia per garantirne i propri confini e per controllarne l'accesso e la gestazione. Questo sappiamo tutti si chiama chiesa. E per legittimare la sua autorità allaciando al discorso che identifica Dio con l'amore bisogna delineare la geografia di partecipazione nel amore universale al cuore della chiesa. Per completare questa opera di dominazione dobbiamo disporci di qualunque forma di disaccordo dottrinale o dissenso nell'interpretazione come opera dei diavoli al massimo, della mancanza di umiltà verso dio al minimo. Sono disposizioni come queste che danno nascita ad intolleranze paurose. Le idee le più semplici e le teorie le più corroborate non suscitano uno sforzo così ponderoso per la propria difesa. È solo quando si chiama in causa l'autorità di chi crede d'essere depositario della verità che comincia la caccia agli infedeli.

Ma riprendiamo questo discorso dell'amore. Sarebbe opportuno qui osservare che se si vuole prendere seriamente l'amore come soggetto di studio sarebbe saggio cominciare col comprendere la sua manifestazione umana. E dai lavori di filosofi e sociologi come E. Fromm e tanti altri si capisce che utilizzare questa parola con estrema leggerezza non è ammesso agli studiosi. Se poi si pensa che la dimensione temporale nella quale si è maturato questo "concetto-processo" guidato da una dinamica evoluttiva allora abbiamo abbastanza davanti a noi per avvertirci. Parlare con metafore è un mezzo communicativo che facilita lo sviluppo del nostro pensiero. Dunque non dobbiamo abbusarlo nel intento di rivelarci un impegno assoluto verso la chiarezza e la validità logica. Le grande imprese intelletuali, sia quelli di stampo scientifico sia quelli di levatura culturale, ci hanno insegnato che i lavori del pensiero umano si costruiscono sulle spalle di altre imprese che l'hanno preceduti. Ma non bisogna mai riversare il progresso ritirandosi negli stadi più antichi. Quelle strutture intelletuali che ci hanno servito qualche tempo fa non reggono oramai al confronto di un mondo conoscittivo che pretende fondamenta molto più robuste.

È proprio attraverso queste considerazioni che si capisce in quale grande difficoltà si trova un'incarico del tipo proposto a se stesso dall'autore. Vede nel movimento di pensiero umanistico, probabilmente con invidia, un patrimonio di grande fecondità. Fa dall'uomo una misura di tante altre cose e crea così la facilità di interpretare tanti fenomeni in un'altra maniera, e di parlarne con più sicurezza, più tranquillità e con un aumento notevole nelle udienze. Non vuole fare meno di questi. Ma deve stare attento perchè l'umanesimo può benissimo

finire per diventare il nemico delle religioni. Dunque bisogna attentamente destituirlo dal suo antropocentrismo. Dio deve essere ben stabbilito come la misura assoluta. Ma forse se si fa di dio un superuomo allora il giuoco è fatto. L'uomo entra come interlocutore con un dio che è stato da tanto tempo. Dio è il fuori tempo, l'uomo semplicemente l'inizio di una conferenza universale incominciata da dio. Quando questo dialogo commincia sul serio si capisce ben presto che la posizione della divinità diventa sempre più difficile a difendere. Allora si è definito un tecnica di attacco e difesa; un uno e due molto efficace contro chi si lascia impressionare più dal suono delle parole che da quello che dicono. L'attacco utilizza l'esagerazione al infinito qualità umanità fino a renderle oltre ogni possibilità dell'uomo ma nello stesso tempo nell'ambito di un orrizonete immenso divino. La difesa vuole negare alla razionalità l'appello all'ultima parola. Quando il caldo dell'attacco di chi ci aggredisce con la sua argomentazione può davvero ferirci allora gli tagliamo anche la ragione citando il nostro diritto di stare sopra la legge!

Questo umanesimo trinitario ci appare stupido. È un linguaggio rubato alla sociologia, alla filosofia e alla visione storica più contemporania. Rubato, incompreso per quello che è stato, mutilato e mal utilizzato. L'aspetto sociologico di cui tanto si stanno preoccupando le religioni, che sono raggiunti in tante nella fase storica del superamento della fase puramente dommatica fa riferimenti ben precisi alle critiche mosse da tanti studiosi contro tante ingiustizie su cui si sono imperniate le società moderne. Per rispondere a questa sfida ci manca altro che far vestire da altre cose un misticismo populista. La teologia di liberazione sarebbe opportunamente chiamata in causa qui. Ma quante personalità nei corridoi del Vaticano vorrebbero silenziare questa voce considerata arrogante e marxista. Se dall'altro canto si vuol fare della teologia che continua nella grande tradizione dai tempi quando l'attività si mescolava con la filosofia e tante altre discipline che stentavano a crescere, allora la via è più difficile di quella del calvario. Che gli attentati, umili e poco convincenti di certi teologi, di allaciarsi al impresa della cosmologia e della fisica quantistica lo testimoniano questo.

Come trascendere da un'uomo che misera creatura della divinità vuol essere? Come fare di un dio depositario di tante cose inventate dall'uomo che ragiona e parla con se stesso e con gli altri? Uomo che legge quello che hanno scritto i suoi antenati per cercare di superare nuovi confronti e orizzonti. Come si può parlare di un dio fuori dal tempo in cui ci troviamo da tantissimi secoli; ossia fuori dall'istoricità che ha creato l'uomo? E come parlare di un dio che di tutto ha pensato prima di fare l'opera di creazione, dei dibattiti grandi tra filosofi che hanno contestato tanto e tutto per recuperare l'uomo al centro e al lavoro del proprio pensiero?

La secolarizzazione della conoscenza umana deve rimanere intatta. Gli sfidi che l'uomo affronta in questo secolo vanno compresi nel linguaggio delle scienze umane. E poi se si vuole capire di più del mondo, del universo che non manca di stupirci periodicamente allora che si dedica agli studi della fisica quantitistica e i suoi dilemmi, alla cosmologia e agli studi della nostra terra. C'è un immensità di cose da scoprire e assimilare alle nostre capacità intelletuale, limitate pur quanto siano. E finalmente dare direzione e significato ai nostri sforzi con l'impegno sociale positivo verso quelli che entrano nel raggio della nostra azione. Non lasciarsi paralizzare da una divinità che chiede tutto accanto a se, anche delle responsabilità che tanti cercano di evitare. Riacciuffare il discorso per portarlo al uomo coi tanti difetti che deve ammettere e dunque aggiustare. Senza aspettare che dio fa tutto lui.

Questo sarebbe un umanesimo autentico.

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Rev. Dr Anthony Abela: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE HUMANISM

A brief "compendium theologie" is the description that imposed itself upon the reviewer as he leafed his way through this dense, slow moving synthesis of speculative and spiritual theology. Its author identifies the literary genre of his work as "una meditazione sul mistero di Dio amore e dell'uomo amore nel Verbo", generated by reflection on his own spiritual experience within the framework of the Focolare Movement spirituality of Unity (p.5 cfr p.173). Z steers the "poche pagine di questo libro" away from the realm of a "manuale di teologia" or of an "opera scientifica nel senso specialistico del termine" by leaving out "un apparato scientifico" usually required for offering adequate discussions of theological topics. This "testimonianza d'amore" as the book presents itself is nothing less than a profound, thickly written, beautifully printed, deeply theological, essay into the acute crisis that European and Western culture finds itself in. This essay merits close and considered perusal and discussion by anyone with responsibility or pretension of influencing the cultural formation of any country in the western hemisphere.

Contents

Only two of the five chapters of the volume offer explicitly philosophical and theological investigation into the Christian (and Catholic) perception of God. The other three chapters treat related subjects. Reading Z is arduous not merely for the excessively slow pace (generally speaking) of his argumentation, but also for the intimate interlocking of the concepts he builds.

The first chapter focuses on "speaking of God today" (pp.7-41). This reflection is scanned by the recurring motif "How come the European and Western culture has become secularized and atheistic in orientation given its evidently Christian roots?" Z patiently leads his reader to his own "theological" [although other interpretative keys are considered as possible, Z prefers the theological hermeneutics because "mi sembra la più rigorosa" (p.34 note 9)] understanding of this phenomenon, on the way stating that speaking of God is essentially a cultural act (pp.7-11), exposing in details the dynamics of the transformation within European culture of God as mystery into God as problem (pp.11-15), and describing, often relying on contributions from Pope John Paul II, the consequences of this emptying of European culture of its essential element which is man's relationship to God seen as constitutive to his nature (pp.15-19).

Z's exegesis and hermeneutics of European secularism and atheism, as well as his proposal for rendering theology within such cultural context, reflect Pope John Paul II's conviction that "le crisi e le tentazioni dell'uomo europeo e dell'Europa sono crisi e tentazioni del cristianesimo e della Chiesa in Europa" ("Discorso al V Simposio dei Vescovi europei," *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 7, 1982). Essentially, the process that led to this cultural negative situation was inaugurated when Christianity adopted Greek conceptual categories (in a special manner the term and category 'persona') in order to articulate her understanding of the mystery of the triune God. During this inculturation exercise Christian theology was "hellenized" so that one is justified of speaking "di una eccessiva influenza e di una illegittima penetrazione di elementi estranei" [Here Z quotes Sergej Bulgakov, *Il Paraclito* (Bologna 1971) 186, who, together with other exponents of Eastern theology exercised huge influence on our author and shaped his thoughts]. This excessive influence of Greek thought, and an illegitimate penetration within Christian theology of other pagan elements, led to a mere speculative formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine which remained without the necessary translation into the corresponding Christian praxis. The result of this double negative procedure was the sheer irrelevancy of the Trinitarian dogma for daily life (Kant).

For Z correction of this unfortunate development is possible only through the recuperation of the communitarian dimension of the individual's relationship to God. The community is the "locus" where this relationship can adequately take place and mature. "Questo è sempre il primo sul piano dell'essere: è sempre e solo in Dio che incontro gli altri, è nella sua apertura verso di me (quella per la quale esisto) che posso aprirmi agli altri; sul piano della realtà esistente, però, esso è il 'secondo': è nell'apertura all'altro che realizzo l'apertura a Dio, e maturo in questa nell'apertura all'altro" (p.19 cfr pp.30-31). Z quotes Hans Urs von Balthasar's proposal of "dialogical metaphysics" and Victor von Weizsaecker's hypothesis of "inter-subjective thinking" as entering within this perspective (p.30). "Mostrare Dio è, allora, mostrare se stessi in communione, e il cosmo tutto vivente in maniera significativa nella comunione tra gli uomini" (p.32). The Christological dimension of this communion is never far away from Z's thought and discussion (p.32). Unfortunately little articulation is offered of what in practice living in communion means; instead Z outlines the outcome of this communitarian living in cultural terms: "La persona può far passare la cultura dell'Occidente e un rinnovato e magnifico umanesimo (offerto in dono alle altre culture), dove la realizzazione di ciascuno non è cercato nella solitudine ma nella communione, né affidata allo scontro o al confronto, ma all'incontro e al

dialogo" (p.31). One has to read the entire monograph to deduct that Z's cultural model constitutes the articulation and elaboration in universalistic terms of a lived experience (cfr p.173).

Doing theology anew

In his second investigation (pp.42-71) Z approaches "il parlare di Dio" as theological research; he starts with stating that the Church is in great need of a theological synthesis that would heal theology of the analytical dispersion that characterizes Western thought in general. Z aims here at offering in outline this new type of theological synthesis. His enquiry snakes through the meaning of theology (pp.42-43), the inherent limitations of human language when it comes to deal with the subject of God, and the flowering of theology into contemplation of the divinity. "La punta estrema del parlare di Dio è raggiunta allora nell'amore — dono di sé nel sacrificio, nella preghiera, in cui tutta una cultura si offriva all'Assoluto nella semplicità confidente, nella speranza che Egli si dia a conoscere nel suo Volto nascosto e desiderato" (pp.44-45). Drawing from *Trésors mystiques de l'Inde* (Paris 1968) and *La ricerca di Dio nelle religioni* (Bologna 1980) (In neither is the editor mentioned) Z exemplifies this transcending human language through love "che si esprime nel silenzio orante" (pp.45-46). Christian theology overcame the limits inherent in human intelligence as it searches for God by accepting divine revelation "nella quale Dio si è dato a conoscere nella sua vita intima, trasformando e arricchendo l'uomo cristiano nella partecipazione al mistero della divino-umanità del Cristo" (p.46). Of course it is not natural human love that surpasses the frontiers of human reason and intelligence in order to grasp God in his mystery; rather it had to be love donated by God himself, charity, accepted by man in so far as he is a person. Human love and intelligence should let themselves be crucified (a leitmotif in Z) "perchè l'uomo trovi un rivolgersi a Dio radicalmente nuovo," where this love/charity bears faith beyond conceptualization and beyond negative theology which consists of discourse on God through concepts.

Z labels his approach to the knowledge of God "theologia mistica" which he describes in some detail through a long citation from John of the Cross (cfr p.50). This mystical theology requires of its practitioner the emptying of his complete self, an event that occurred in man on Incarnation (pp.51-52). In Jesus, the created person, due to his participation in divine nature, "è introdotta nella conoscenza e nell'amore di Dio nel modo di Dio" (p.52; one should read in this context what Z says in note 31 on pp.65-66). "In Jesus" the human person comes to know God in himself "*nella pericoresi trinitaria.*" This introduction

of the human person "in Jesus" within the Trinitarian pericoresis, opens two ways for knowing God: "la persona creata può nello stesso tempo conoscere e amare Dio (e se stessa e la creazione tutta) nel modo di Dio nella relazione con il Padre nello Spirito del Figlio; e può conoscere e amare Dio Signore della creazione, se stessa come creatura, e la creazione tutta, nel modo della creatura" because this person maintained its corporeity (p.53). Jesus therefore, constitutes "il parlare di Dio nel modo di Dio" (p.53). In the last, dense pages of this essay (pp.53-60) Z discusses theology as a science which is the synthesis between "la conoscienza di Dio nel modo di Dio (theologia mistica) e la conoscenza di Dio nel modo dell'uomo (teologia 'naturale')" (pp.53-54). Theology seen as a scientific effort respects both human reason as well as the object of its enquiry, God in himself. And as such it takes place within the Church and must take account especially of the experience of God had by saints (pp.54-55). "Questo è il discorso di Dio, dove la Scrittura si fa carne nelle membra del Cristo. I cristiani con il Cristo risorto tra loro sono la teologia *prima*! Quella teologia che ha la sua radice e la sua espressione massima nell'Avvenimento eucaristico, e la realizzazione 'quotidiana' nella comunicazione esperienziale dell'amore di Dio operante nelle storie 'quotidiane' dei redenti dalla croce del Cristo... È solo nell'esperienza di comunione profonda, la comunione nel Cristo fra noi, che essa si apre intera, e può, senza mortificare, proprio per la sua novità, proporsi come apice di ogni altra esperienza di Dio. Da questa teologia nasce la teologia *seconda*, come coscienza riflessa, coscienza di quell'esistere nel Cristo che è appunto la Chiesa" (p.55).

In the next two chapters Z focuses on God. Chapter three (pp.72-101) is introductory; taking the cue from the *Credo* of Pope Paul VI, the author scrutinizes the propositions of God as Being (pp.72-76) and of God as Love (pp.76-93). His approach is metaphysical while his categories are strictly Aristotelian filtered through thomism. Z's point of departure is "being" as an "act"; without entering the details of the dynamics involved the author states that "being" in creatures leads one to the Being God (p.73) to which human intelligence leans without being able to grasp adequately: "L'ombra del non essere (in man) oscura gli occhi davanti al grande sole dell'Essere" (p.74). Man, however, cannot possibly abandon his search for a deeper comprehension of the Godhead since here lies his dignity. This experience of "dipping God as a Pure Act of Being" is both joyful and "crucifying" "perchè strappa sempre di più l'uomo da ciò che gli è abituale per condurlo di fronte a Dio" (ibid.).

This "attingere Dio come Atto Puro d'Essere" (is this pure metaphor?) takes place within a spatio-temporal framework; it's revelation in history, which reaches its climax in Christ. "Il Cristo diventa, in questa prospettiva, il Rivelatore stesso dell'essere e di Dio come Essere, conducendo l'uomo a una

intensità di comprensione mai raggiunta prima. E questo proprio mediante la Croce, dove ogni pretesa di destoricizzazione dell'essere è respinto e superato: *ora* e *qui* Dio-uomo, l'Essere muore" (p.75). This is one of the instances in Z of "leaps" within his argumentation: not every intermediary stage between the knowledge of Being in space and time and revelation is properly scanned.

Christian reflection on God as Being reacted to the revelation in Ex 3,14-15. Z chooses to ignore the debate on the textual and form-critical problems raised by this text; he opts to merely consider "come quel Nome è stato capito e le conseguenze che se ne sono tratte" (p.94 note 9), but has not refrained from applying to the text a number of readings which have all the air of being "eisegesis" rather than "exegesis" (p.94 note 10). Once reason discovers God as Being it has reached the "punta estrema del pensare umano" (p.76). Deeper knowledge of God requires the self-revelation of Being itself (Does the citation from St Bonaventura on pp.76-77 fit the present context?), a self-revelation which constitutes an "uscita di Dio da Sé per raggiungere l'uomo nella sua umanità" (p.77). This has taken place in a special manner in Jesus Christ. Again some brisk passages can easily be noted as the author directs his focus from over Being onto Love (pp.76-78). But some high points of theological reflection may be read in these pages as well as in what remains of this study. Just to reproduce one brief passage: "La piaga del Crocifisso, quella della carne nella trafittura del costato e quella dell'anima nella trafittura dell'abbandono (technical term borrowed from the spirituality of the Focolare Movement for Jesus's experience as reported in Mk 15,34 and parallels), è proprio l'appirsi di Dio nella sua Parola, l'uscire di Dio da Sé nell'estasi dell'Amore per entrare nella sua creatura e condurla a Sé attraverso la medesima piaga. Il Cristo è la porta per la quale Dio esce nell'uomo e l'uomo entra in Dio (cf Gv 10,7). È la porta che si apre nella chenosi dell'incarnazione e introduce in sé nell'abbandono sulla croce. La risurrezione è l'essere entrati in Dio" (p.77). This citation from Z's profound meditation on the mystery of the Incarnation requires from the author more than one explanation especially for readers who are not altogether knowledgeable of his code. The same could be said of Z's use of the term "apofatismo" borrowed from Eastern theology (p.78).

In Christian revelation "Being" is not God's ultimate name; this name is rather "Love". Here (p.78) one has to register once more brisk crossing from one essential content of theology to another. Only Love explains Being "... È un essere che non è amore che può diventare problema per l'intelligenza. Il Dio che è Amore non è l'abisso del silenzio che inghiotte intelligenza e tensione degli enti, ma il Silenzio che si apre *tutto*, nella Parola in atto d'amore" (pp.78-79). God's love for creatures is a natural consequence of God being

Love itself (p.79) which is revealed in Godhead being a Trinity (p.80). It is within the framework of this Trinitarian love "che si apre lo spazio per una relazione *reale* fra Dio e la creatura, nel Figlio incarnato. L'Essere come Amore getta un ponte tra creazione e incarnazione" (p.80). Z settles within the "linguaggio degli amanti di Dio" in order to establish that man's search for God "non dice mai tensione ad una Essenza infinita come tale... ma tensione di persona a Persona, e in questa all'Essenza infinita" (ibid.).

The author then leaves the realm of theological speculation to enter the consideration of Scriptural texts which witness to the progressive understanding within the Jewish/Christian context of God as love. Of course Z does not outline the slow development of the concept within history — he relegates to a footnote (note 23 p.96), for instance, the relationship between God's *Ṣ^{e}daqah* (justice) and God's *'ah^{a}bāh* (love). Rather he concentrates on the moment of maturity of this development process, the contribution of such prophets as Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and of the Song of Songs. "In essi l'amore di Dio assume il linguaggio, la modalità dell'amore sponsale, culmine degli amori creati e insieme massima compenetrazione naturale di spirito e corporeità" (p.80). Z's main sources for this part are A. Mattioli, *Dio e l'uomo nella Bibbia di Israele. Teologia dell'Antico Testamento* (Torino 1981) and A. Chouraqui, *Il Cantico dei cantici e Introduzione ai Salmi* (Rome 1980) (The latter author features often in Z's considerations, but there are times when his terminology may call for some metalinguistical exercise as when he employs the term 'incarnation' on p.81). His treatment is deep and insightful especially what he writes upon the "culmine della rivelazione veterotestamentaria di Dio Amore" (p.81), that is, the Song of Songs. On reading these beautiful pages of Z's book one may remain with the impression that he takes as canonical not only the textual reality of this *m^{e}gillah*, but also its allegorical interpretation; this was not the case though some scholars do believe that such interpretation may have procured its entrance and perdurance into the Hebrew canon — cfr Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (SCM Press; London 1979) 569-579 for a different evaluation — Z's reading God's word beneath the female voice (p.81) is probably arbitrary; this reading leads the author to attribute meanings to the leitmotif in Cant 2,7; 3,5 and 8,4 (p.82) which probably were not intended by the original author even if he was envisaging an allegorical agenda for his opus. Which leads to the conclusion that the greater part of what Z writes of God on the basis of the Song of Songs rests more on tradition than on exegesis of Scripture.

His overview of the concept 'God is love' proceeds with the NT. "Gesù riassume in sé, nella linea di Israele, la ricerca d'amore di Dio e dell'uomo e la conduce al compimento, introducendola là dove da sempre essa ha le sue

radici" (p.82). In Jesus the Godhead enters man's spatio-temporal dimension. "Dio cammina con noi verso l'eternità e vive egli stesso l'attesa e dunque il tempo, la restrizione imposta dall'estensione dell'offerta del suo amore. Vive simultaneamente l'eternità nella relazione intratrinitarie e il rapporto temporale con le creature spirituali. È una *kenosi* accettata volontariamente da Dio nell'ordine della creazione, una discesa nel rapporto col mondo, che Dio vive simultaneamente con l'eternità della propria vita trinitaria" (pp.82-83). The Incarnation constitutes the revelation of God's love and of God's intimate life (p.85), with Christ becoming 'testimone e ermeneuta' of the divine Love, especially through the Cross Event (p.84). A number of NT texts are cited (pp.84-86) with pride of place being given to 1John where the revelation of God as love receives "la sua massima espressione formale" (p.85). Quoting R.E. Brown Z considers the proposition 'God is love' as a description rather than a definition of who is God (note 41, p.98). 1John 4,19 leads him to the threshold of the Trinity though the transitus appears elliptical (p.86).

Before venturing into the mystery of the Trinity in the following chapter, Z offers some methodological considerations to the question of evil and suffering in human experience (pp.87-92). His indications for a solution of this 'most series problem to faith in God as love' are basically two: (a) That before conceptualizing this reality one must experience God as love in one's own life: "la ricerca di una risposta non può essere condotta senza una partecipazione profonda all'oggetto che viene interrogato, sino a porsi davanti ad esso per farsene 'catturare'" (p.87). A long citation from Chiara Lubich, foundress of the Focolare Movement follows (pp.88-89), wherein she narrates how she 'discovered' the love of God. The implications of the citation for Z's own 'theologizing' are not difficult to see. "La comprensione di un Dio che entra nella storia degli uomini e realmente soffre le nostre sofferenze, le nostre angosce, apre una prospettiva diversa. L'*Assoluto è vulnerabile*!" (emphasis his) (p.89). (b) Because man is free "L'uomo deve farsi coinvolgere dall'abisso di Dio, come si fa coinvolgere dall'abisso dell'uomo" (p.90). And the drama consists precisely in this "mancato coinvolgimento dell'amore dell'uomo nell'amore di Dio" (p.90). It is this adventure that Sacred History in Scripture tells (pp.90-91). Had man ventured completely in God's love, God's mystery would not have been transformed from a "grembo dell'amore" into a "nulla che inquieta". Nor would man's relationship to the universe have been so profoundly changed as Gen 1-11 implies. Here Z resorts once more to the magisterium of John Paul II, his message for the 1990 World Day of Peace where the Pontiff comments on Gen 1-3. Through sin man deliberately opposed the plan of the Creator and brought upon himself and the universe the tragedy (reference to ecological issues) we know of. The next two pages offer in outline

the entire doctrine of redemption formulated in terms that are vaguely Teilhardian. "L'amore di Dio penetra le ferite aperte dell'uomo, le assume e trasforma, facendone dell'incredibile Amore" (p.91). Another long citation from another booklet by Chiara Lubich helps Z spell out the redeeming transformation by God of the universe through Christ whom man 'consumes' at the Eucharist (pp.91-92). "L'amore di Dio sa far diventare amore anche le conseguenze della male usata libertà dell'uomo, sempre, però, che l'uomo liberamente cooperi. *E questo è avvenuto nel Cristo*" (emphasis his) (p.92)

It is in chapter four (pp.102-142), entitled simply 'The Trinity' and introduced by a recapitulating quote from Gregory of Nazianzus, that Z reaches the nucleus of his theological and philosophical reflection. Initially the author peels the mystery rind by rind in a cautious manner, until he reaches the heart of the matter, which for the author is the "kenosis" experienced within the intimate life of the Trinity (pp.115-123). But then rambles freely across a number of related topics which he summarily examines through the prism of his own understanding of the Triune God (pp.123-132).

One may say that Z's meditation on this mystery unfolds within a double delimiting wall: there is first of all the consciousness that human intelligence can but scratch this mystery knowledge of which has been obtained through revelation. A quotation from St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cathecheses*, cfr *PG* 33,542) that in discussing God it is science confessing one's ignorance, serves our author to perfection (p.109). Later on he describes his own speculation into the inner life of the Trinity as a "cercare di balbettare della Trinità" (p.123). This warns the reader not to expect the book to exhaust the subject-matter in just forty pages. But there is the more serious delimitation for research on the Trinity: Z dedicates the first three pages (102-104) of this chapter to its discussion. For him the *locus theologicus* for any reflection on God is the context of Church life since the "cammino della comprensione cristiana del Dio di Gesù Cristo non è altro che il cammino della comprensione del Cristo stesso e della Chiesa" (p.102). Eph 1,23 is quoted because it defines the Church as Christ's *sôma*, body. This understanding of what theology is would exclude for Z other contexts for theologizing. "Per questo la riflessione trinitaria ha il suo luogo reale *solo* all'interno della Chiesa, la quale può attingerla e maturarla coscientemente nella misura in cui coscientemente della Trinità vive" (emphasis his) (p.102). Is Z's model of what the Church consists of that of Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*'s concentric circles?

The direction taken here where trinitarian reflection marries Christian praxis and ascesis — Christian research is not "il tentativo di includere Dio nel pensiero, ma di offrire il pensiero a Dio perchè lo crocifigga vi si esprima

'umanamente'" (p.104) — would exclude trinitarian studies conceived as mere articulation in language of concepts gleaned from Christian primary and perhaps secondary sources. This elaboration of a Christian doctrine rather than being an intellectual exercise is the "risposta all'offerta che Dio fa di sé nell'incarnazione. Anche la mente dell'uomo deve lasciarsi assumere da Dio" (p.104). But is theology as the 'science of God' simply the articulation of one's own experience with the God of Jesus Christ? Z states his own rules of the game but does not carry his statements to their logical conclusions.

Z's own Trinitarian reflection opens with a brief though essential exposition of biblical data (pp.104-106). All classical NT passages are included, texts that shed light on Jesus' divinity, on his relationship to an "Other" whom he addresses as his Father — "È nel rapporto unico con Dio, che gli è Padre, che il Cristo è Dio. Un rapporto di unità assoluta che non cancella la distinzione" (p.105) — and on yet his relationship to "Another" whom Jesus designates as Holy Spirit. These texts are interpreted according to mainstream Christian traditions. For the reading of Johannine texts the author is dependent on the Italian version of R. Schnackenburg's three volume monumental commentary published respectively in 1973, 1977, 1981. No hint is offered on the history of exegesis of these important Christological texts except perhaps for Jn 1,1 (pp.132-133 note 1) where one may notice an apologetic concern [For a recent discussion I would refer to Robert H. Countess, *The Jehovah's Witnesses New Testament* (Phillipsburg NJ 1982 ^{2}1987) 41-70].

Z spends pp.106-115 for explaining the arduous task facing western thought of having to reconcile absolute unity and multiplicity within the Godhead as presented in Christian canonical writings. His real interlocutors in these pages are western thinkers and representatives of the "riflessione intellectuale" (p.107). For the formulation of the philosophical/theological issue involved he borrows extensively from Massimo Cacciari's paper "Cristologia e teologia nell'Idealismo. Hegel-Scelling" read in Pordenone, Northern Italy, in 1988 (No details of the paper are provided). According to Z we have to "tear" ["squarciare": the author mistakenly looks towards the Greek version of Jn 19,34 as the source of this metaphor (p.107): the Greek term *nyssō* means 'prick, stab, pierce' but not 'tear, lacerate' as the Italian verb means. The metaphor derives from a misreading by the Vulgate of the verb *enyxen* as *ēnoixen* which it translated "aperuit", opened. Cfr R.E. brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII-XXI* (AB29A; New York 1970) 935]. In a way "l'Unità dell'Assoluto quale è pensata per affermare in esso una circolazione realissima di Soggetti che sono l'Assoluto — che è l'Assoluto" (p.107). Christian thought distinguished in God nature and personhood; these do not

coincide. The discussion on the relationship between the two concepts occupies Z for the following pages (108-112). Christianity's answer to this dilemma ultimately draws on revelation. God is not simply Absolute Being, He is Love by nature (1Jn) "Perchè la Natura divina, l'*usia*, è Amore, essa è allora Trinità di Soggetti, Persone che si danno l'una all'altra in una originaria ed eternamente data distinzione relativa *tra Esse Persone e la Natura*, che è assoluto Essere, ma come Amore. Distinzione nell'unità, unità nella distinzione" (emphasis his) (p.111). Z's terminology and approach in these pages is metaphysical (cfr note 15, pp.134-135). Towards the end of this sub-paragraph (pp.113-115) the author examines briefly how the Son could incarnate and how the Three Persons mat participate in human suffering. The more original contribution of Z probably lies in his discussion of the Three as reciprocal love; here he attempts to combine the approach to the mystery of the Trinity that focuses on the processions with the other that concentrates on God as love (p.115).

In this exercise Z marries the concept of mutual love (pp.116-117) to that of *kenosis* by speculatively building on Phil 2,6-11 (pp.117-123). The entire construction rests on the theological principle: "... la Parola di Dio rivela i Tre come reciprocità assumendo la sua condizione umana come icona della sua condizione divina, e promettendo dunque alla tensione umana la possibilità di compimento che pure la conservi nella sua bellezza — un compimento che mentre è in atto, è tutto ancora tensione: le relazioni in cui i Tre sono nella assolutezza dell'Essere, non sono infatti, anche e 'sempre' in atto ma *proprio come relazioni*, dinamicamente?" (p.117) (emphasis his). Z pays special attention to the anthropological implications involved in the revelation of the Triune God. The Three live a relationship of 'reciprocità compiuta' which remains for man "l'approdo offerto alla nostra ricerca d'amore: la certezza che l'amore compiuto non è utopia" (p.117). One feels he has reached the summit of Z's speculative theology as he goes through his description of the kenosis experience of the Son within the life of the Trinity (pp.117-120), as well as that of the Father (pp.120-121) and that of the Holy Spirit (pp.121-123). This theme is met once more in the following sub-section (pp.123-132) where creation is read in the light of the trinitarian Mystery: "... dandosi l'un l'altro ciascuno nel suo modo, l'Essere di Dio, *su questa chenosi dell'Uno nelle Persone*, nella libertà di reciprocità dei Tre, 'appare' nell'Uno, nell'Essere, ciò che non è uno, ciò che non è: appare la moltiplicità, la (possibile) creatura" (p.125) (emphasis his). Creation came into being "all'interno dell'amore reciproco che è i Tre" (p.123); room for creation was had "nel non-essere relazionale che non sono le Persone divine (p.124). In other words the philosophical possibility of creation (Z writes of "pensabilità" [p.124]) derives from one's acceptance of the "verità trinitaria" because "... è nella libera pericoresi dei Tre l'Uno

nell'Altro che trova radice la creazione come libero frutto di questa libertà" (p.126). From this perspective creation appears as ""narrazione' dell'amore reciproco che è i Tre" (p.127).

In the remaining pages Z hops over a selection of related subject -matters: Mary as "l'icona ipostatica della creazione" (p.127), sin and human freedom (pp.127-128), angels (p.141 note 51), redemption (pp.129-131), the Eucharist, and the history of salvation as found in the Scriptures. Worthy of comment are his reflections on Adam's sin: "L'Adamo poteva realizzare, nella comunione iconica dell'uomo e della donna, inclusiva del cosmo, quella immagine di persona che nel Cristo avrebbe la sua verità. E proprio qui Adamo è fallito, come dice la Parola rivelata. Non in assoluto, ma nel relativo del rapporto uomo-donna, e, all'interno di questo, del rapporto uomo-cosmo e uomo-Dio dalla parte dell'uomo" (pp.128-129). My impression is that history flowed in the inverse order according to Gen 3: it was because man failed in his vertical relationship that his horizontal relationships (woman/cosmos) became blurred.

The translation into cultural praxis of the foregoing reflection on the Divinity as "Unitrinità" is spelled out in the fifth and last chapter of this book (pp.143-180). One may note Z's habitual tendency to include within the overarching theological framework as many subsidiary themes as are allowed, thus creating the impression of a coherent theological synthesis. As the construction Z builds is deeply biblical and Pauline, the author appears less original in the details of his argumentation and in his handling biblical data, and more his own in the analysis of the crisis of Western forms of humanism. Z puts this crisis at Christianity's door for failing to transform into cultural categories trinitarian metaphysics. For the biblical substratum of his theological synthesis Z depends upon a number of biblical scholars like H. Schlier and E. Lohse; unfortunately some of the stones he quarries from their works need further refinement. For an instance we quote his adoption of the doctrine of the principalities and powers (One would wonder what the significance of his statement in note 8, p.176 could be) somehow expressed in Eph 6,12 and elsewhere in the corpus paulinum without asking whether the author(s) of these NT writings was/were not indulging in a demythologizing process. The operations of these powers within the "spiritual atmosphere" which humans "breath" (p.146) would seem to conflict with man's liberum arbitrium which is so basic to Christian ethics.

Z's argumentation in this chapter moves quite swiftly. Its linchpin is his motif frequently recurring in chapter one that European culture owes its crisis as well as its self-banishment from the ecclesial community among other things to the fact that "la comunità ecclesiale non è sempre stata capace di tutta la

vastità che dovrebbe tenderla e di quella novità esistenziale e intelletuale che le è stata affidata: l'Assoluto come Trinità" (pp.152-153). This crisis and this divorce between Western culture and Christianity featuring in this context occasions one of the few references to Z's personal involvement (p.152). Z means to demonstrate in this last part of his theological essay that the metaphysics involved in the datum of revelation that God is the Trinity is translatable into culture; this latter he defines "il condensato — qui e adesso e sempre aperto a trasformazioni — di risposte, di strutture, di progetti che nascono dal profondo di ogni uomo che cerca se stesso, posto di fronte al mondo, agli uomini, a Dio" (p.150). As this has to pass through the Church, Z first (pp.143-148) outlines what Scripture (Paul) says on the Church and its relationship to the "world", taken in its negative connotation (note 1, p.175) and on the Church as redeemed humanity and creation (= the Kingdom). At various moments in this reflection (pp.145.147-148) the writer stops to define what the Church is supposed to be. Ultimately "la Chiesa è cultura in mezzo al mondo" (p.149). Z then examines the ingredients of a Christian culture (pp.148-153), focusing on the relationship that passes between culture and Gospel (pp.149-150), the essentially multiple character of Christian culture (pp.150-151), and the presumed vocation of such a culture: "Da una parte la cultura è — è chiamata ad essere — certamente la testimone del Signore risorto; in essa la creazione ritrova la sua voce autentica, in essa i grandi problemi dell'uomo si trascendono nell'unitrinità della vita nuova e sono condotti a soluzione immanente nella luce della risurrezione. Dall'altra parte, però, la cultura cristiana è anche la memoria e la testimone della chenosi e dell'abbandono del Signore in croce. E i due momenti — abbandono e risurrezione — non vanno separati, anche se sono distinti. È l'Abbandonato e morto sulla croce che risorge. La cultura cristiana, allora, è chiamata a rivivere l'atto unitario del Cristo che è morto ed è risorto nell'unico Amore. Una grande cultura cristiana deve essere capace dell'immensa trasmutazione operata dal Cristo" (p.151). The universalistic dimension of such Christian culture is stressed (pp.152-153).

The next nine pages (153-160) offer a discussion on what form of humanism should flower from the Christian culture as conceived by Z. Three types of humanism are first sketched, labeled respectively as the "umanesimo della creazione," "umanesimo della croce," "umanesimo della resurrezione". Z offers a short critique of the three of them and attributes to their failure to effect an encounter and mutual penetration the crisis of European culture. "Ciascuna di queste tre forme ha anche i suoi limiti e le sue derive, sia per la non definitività di ogni attrazione culturale cristiana, sia perchè esse sono state sviluppate storicamente in contrasto l'una con l'altra — il mondo è sempre

nascosto nell'intimo della Chiesa e la sfida nelle sue stesse realizzazioni. Ed è in questo contrasto, in questa mancanza di incontro e mutua penetrazione (che è proprio l'epifania culturale della Trinità!), che si è originata e sviluppata la crisi della cultura dell'Europa" (p.157). For Z the humanism that should flower from a really Christian culture is what he labels "l'umanesimo della persona come comunione" "dove la Trinità può revelarsi in tutta la sua verità, e l'uomo raggiungere il suo massimo compimento storico —e in tutte le dimensioni della persona — insieme alla massima apertura alla piena maturità escatologica. Nel dialogo vissuto come respiro della persona in un pensare che sia pensare — nell'altra i tre umanesimi possono incontrarsi, integrarsi e trascendersi, custodendo il positivo elaborato, assorbendo in salvezza quanto può essere redento della cultura in rivolta, verso la novità cui lo Spirito chiama: una civiltà dell'amore. Una cultura trinitaria" (p.160). This articulates the aim towards which this essay has been slowly moving.

The concluding pages of this theological monograph constitute a parenaesis to the Church that she should answer the Spirit's urgent calls "a fare della vita ecclesiale una icona sempre più luminosa della Trinità" (p.161). Z offers three "sentieri" of reflection: (a) That the Church as an institution is essentially the communion among its members, so that its structures and norms should reflect this communion "in quanto essa accade nel Cristo fra le sue membra" (p.163). This aim can be reached by insisting on the *Unum* (Jn 17,20) without forgetting that unity is realized in being *Unus* (cfr Gal 3,28) in Christ (cfr pp.108-109 and note 7 on p.133 for these distinctions). (b) The Church should appreciate better the role of each individual Christian "in ordine alla consumazione nell'unità che è la Chiesa stessa" (p.164). Without preparation of any sort the author introduces us to H. Urs von Balthasar's famous discussion of the four principles of ecclesial unity, petrine, pauline, johannine and marian, which Z reads in its Italian version: *Il complesso antiromano. Come integrare il papato nella Chiesa universale* (Brescia 1974). Z attempts to show that one may view ecclesial unity from a variety of perspectives (pp.164-166). Of the four principles Z privileges the last mentioned and it is to Mary that the author dedicates the concluding pages of his monograph (pp.165-175) "L'oscuramento di lei in tanta coscienza ecclesiale — sia per emarginazione sia per riduzione devozionale — è uno dei segni e delle cause della crisi attuale" (pp.166-167). (c) The Church is to reconsider Mary "come colonna di fuoco che illumina la via nel buio del deserto, come roveto ardente consumato e mai consumato che rivela l'unità e da intendersi nella luce della Trinità" (p.167). In these pages the author offers an original re-reading of traditional mariology stressing Mary's role as woman and lay person. Z's reflections, rather than focusing on the historical personhood of Mary of Nazareth, reach out to the

Marian principle within the Christian Church: he identifies her lay personhood with the attempt to build "una vita sociale che in tutte le espressioni (culturali e istituzionali) riesca a dire nella storia l'unitrinità" (p.174).

This is, therefore, Z's cultural and social project which he offers in this essay. He warns us readers, that his considerations will remain abstract and airy unless "ci si riferisce all'esperienza vissuta della comunione delle persone, nella quale ciascuno può cogliere in pienezza il Dio che è in sé e il disegno di Dio (cf Lc 7,30) su di sé, e rendere percipibile la verità degli esseri in tutta la sua ampiezza" (p.173).

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Nicola Ciola, *La Crisi del teocentrismo trinitario nel Novecento teologico*, (Edizioni Dehoniane; Roma 1993) 510pp. ISBN 88-396-0482-0.

The author's main contention in the present study is that modern atheism and the religious indifferentism prevalent in the first part of the present century are now being replaced by a more authentic Christian understanding of God. It had been, in fact, the gradual removal of the authentic trinitarian image of God from theological thought and teaching that has, to a large extent, accounted for the humanistic atheism of the modern era.

The author, for several years dedicated to teaching and research in the field of dogmatic theology at the Pontifical Lateran University, takes up the task in the present scholarly contribution of analysing the thought of the main exponents in the field of secularization and "secularist" theology, thereby showing that the return of the image of the Trinitarian God at the centre of doctrinal theology and of the Christian preaching has indeed accounted for the renewal of theology in general and of Christian living.

This renewed interest in trinitarian theology is attributed by the author, above other things, to the influence of Vatican II which, while being predominantly ecclesiological in content, was necessarily marked by numerous christological insights and hence characterized by trinitarian reflections less structured on abstract philosophical analogies and deductions and more enriched by the very self-revelation of Triune God in the Person and message of Jesus Christ.

As the author himself admits, one cannot blame secularization alone for the crisis of theocentrism and of trinitarian theology in the modern era. One must accept, however, that the impact of secularization on theology and on religious life cannot be overestimated. This conviction, which one cannot but share, justifies the author in embarking upon a detailed analysis of the writings of some of the main "secularization" and "death of God" theologians such ad Bonhoeffer, Gogarten, Altizer and Cox. Their ideas are presented and discussed in a very clear and direct way; this alone, among other things, is a great merit of the present study, as it is well known how difficult it is for the average reader to grasp their diverse and often conflicting ideas.

A good part of the merit for what one might call the rehabilitation of trinitarian theology in our days is attributed by Ciola to today's outstanding theologian Karl Rahner; the latter's deep insights into relationship between the "economical" and the "immanent" Trinity have, in fact, made it possible for all theological treatises, including anthropology and eschatology, to be seen under a different light and hence to be authentically grasped both in their true richness and in their mutual relationship.

The present work, by no means easy to read by the man in the street

but a veritable treasure of deep insights and a mine of information for the professional theologian, gives credit to the author who has succeeded in putting together a wealth of historical analysis and theological reflection around a topic which is usually considered as difficult as it is important. Besides being richly annotated and highly scholarly both in method and presentation, Ciola's outstanding work is enriched by a bibliography of 28 pages. The book is obviously a must for the professional theologian, but should be of great help for students of theology and for those who are in any way committed to Christian living.

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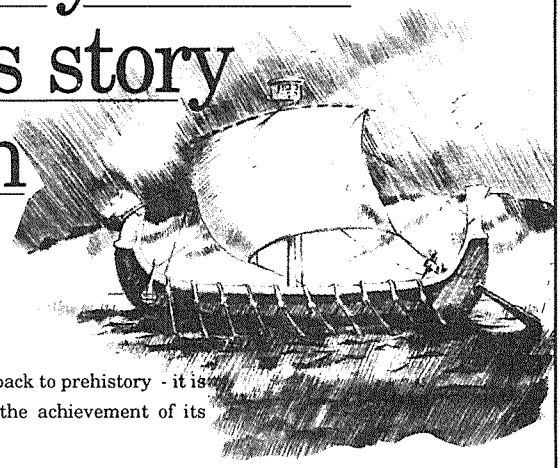

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