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**Remembering Peace:
Justice, and Forgiveness
in a Time of War**

*The Twenty-second Ecumenical Theological and
Interdisciplinary Symposium*

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The Way of Forgiveness: A Few Reflections

Introduction

There are probably thousands of books about forgiveness and that indicates a certain level of conscientization of the world about the need to cultivate this virtue in our inter-personal relationships. Yet with all that, the world, apparently, has not changed course. Some more thousands are needed, as well as a lot of hope and prayer for a change of heart and direction.

In fact every crisis created by a wrongdoing and solved or ameliorated due to an act of forgiveness deserves its own book on this topic. One might have a problem when deciding to write about forgiveness because given the immense amount of literature on it, to write about it can seem to be a banality. However, if the only effect produced by one more writing would be on the heart of the writer or the reader alone, with implications in his or her interactions with others, the decision to write is worthy.

Errare humanum est

Errare humanum est; perseverare diabolicum reads the Latin axiom. To make mistakes is only human; to persevere in mistake is diabolical.

This is a good description of the reality of our human situation. It offers a basis of understanding and is even granting extenuating circumstances when confronted with somebody's wrongdoing. It is like: this is how we are; what can we do? The proverb tells us what we can do: not persevere in error. At least.

Yet, however good the proverb seems to be, and accurate as a description of what we do, it is incomplete without a moral and theological addendum: *absolvere divinum*: to forgive is divine.

In other words, the proverb implies two players, Man and Satan and eliminates God from the equation. Or, while the idea that

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to err is human and consequently might ask for an understanding attitude towards the error, that does not necessarily imply forgiveness. The addendum *absolvere divinum* is then a moral and theological imperative, in the sense of forgiveness from the heart, which indicates completeness, depth, wholeness.

What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is an answer to sin. Thus one cannot talk about forgiveness without talking about sin. If sin is the action and forgiveness the reaction, then sin comes first. What is it? According to an ancient Patristic definition, before anything else, sin is an error of thinking. *Errare*. It is basically a misperception, a misunderstanding. That is why Jesus on the cross asked God, the Father, to forgive those who crucified Him: “Forgive them Father, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23, 34).

To forgive is basically to pass over the consequences that would normally follow an offensive action, it is to go over an obstacle or to annihilate it. One important point in the act of forgiveness is stressed by a dictionary definition (*The American Heritage Dictionary*): To forgive is to grant pardon without resentment. This responds to an often repeated deformation of the right understanding of forgiveness: “I will forgive but I will not forget.” That is why some Church Fathers interpret Jesus’ request for forgiveness, “If you will forgive other people their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive yours” (Matthew 6, 14) in the sense of forgiveness from the heart, as implied in Jesus’ exhortation for us to forgive from the heart (Matthew 18, 35), which indicates, as mentioned, completeness, depth, wholeness. In his article about cultivating sparks of the divinity in us, Bobby Fong writes that “it is through a heart pierced by pain and trouble that we open ourselves to mercy for our own frailties and to compassion for those of others. In pathos we cultivate pity.”¹ The same type of heart will also generate forgiveness.

Both English and French words for forgiveness imply one’s giving attitude towards another: for-giving, par-donner. The key word is giving, which means that to disregard due punishment for an offence (as indicated by the Latin term for forgiveness, *dimittere*, to

dismiss) is an act of generosity on the side of the one who is in the position to punish.

Forgiveness tells something important about the forgiver, his or her inner freedom and strength. The type of heart the forgiver has influences the behavior of the offender, just like St. John Perse nicely wrote: "It depends on the one who passes by that I be tomb or treasure, that I keep silence or I speak." Forgiveness is the grace that transforms one's inner mirror (the tendency to be self-centered and see oneself in the mirror) into a window through which one can see outside, see others.

Very often forgiveness is the result of an inner struggle. If I want to forgive I have to pass over the wound and pain created by the one who did something wrong against me. This is a fight within myself, and it can be a dilemma as well. If I am to forgive, I have to conquer myself instead of conquering or punishing the other, and this is where the victory is. If I can forgive, this will be a sign of my own spiritual strength that in turn will help heal my own weakness. In other words, before being a therapy for others, forgiveness is a therapy for myself.

According to Olivier Clément forgiveness recaptures an inexhaustible depth of the human being that helps strengthen one's relationships.²

As a therapy, forgiveness implies offering extenuating circumstances for sin or offence, which has to do with the other, but it also implies a different way to understand sin, which has to do with one's self. That means, I am in a constant attempt to adapt myself to the level and condition of others because I cannot understand them without this "descent" or adaptation; and as long as I don't understand, it is difficult, or even impossible, to forgive. How bad this lack of understanding can be is evident in the case of a woman who had some problems and went to a psychologist for counseling. After a usual conversation in which she disclosed that she had not had a very good relationship with her mother at a certain point in time, when she was alive, the psychologist told her that she had "unfinished business" and that she would be at peace with herself only after finishing the business in a talk to her mother. So the woman went to the cemetery to her mother's tomb and started yelling at her mother and reproaching her and cursing so that she could get all the anger out of her. Then she went back to the

psychologist and told him she was ok now. This is an example of how ignoring the benefits of forgiveness can lead, among other evils, to blasphemy.

Understanding others is like being-there-for-others and this is what raises the quality of my existence. It makes me be really human. Because, as A. Heschel reflects, it is being human that makes one a human being.³ Otherwise, human being without being human means nothing.

As mentioned earlier, forgiving others requires inner strength and generates strength at the same time. In other words forgiving others gives me a chance to improve myself, my own spiritual experience. The basis of this architecture of forgiveness consists in its permanence, or, as Jesus required, “seventy times seven” (Mathew 18, 22). The constancy of the act consolidates its foundation.

Forgiveness also requires an accomodation of my mind to the surrounding reality, a special reading of it, and a placement nearby, not in opposition, so I can have the same angle for viewing a certain thing.

With such understanding of forgiveness one might think I even need to be looking for people that I could forgive.

However, a question arises here: If I am looking for people who I can forgive in order to get the aforementioned benefit, am I supposed to scrutinize people’s lives in order to find something that needs forgiveness in order for me, then, to offer it?

What exactly should I forgive? That people are the way they are and not otherwise? That they are eventually not like me? This is a possible destructive temptation because that attitude could transform me into a judge and forgiveness risks to become an act of arrogance, thus losing its entire soteriological value. The Church teaches that in all people around us we have to discern their beauty, the Holy Spirit in them and the face of Christ on every face.

Referring to the healing of Bartimaeus, the blind man in Jericho (Marc 10: 46-52) a patristic text reads: “Oh, my God I am blind! I cannot see the beauty of my brother. ‘Son of David, have mercy on me. Make me see, Lord.’ ‘Open my eyes, Christ, so I can see You everywhere and in all’. When you have a problem with a brother, pray this way and you will see...”⁴

Another text reads: “Seeing only Christ, even in a sinner - there is nothing better than that to chase the demons away. People make many grimaces but there they do not have their own face. Look for the Face!”⁵

And also: “One needs to have the Holy Spirit in oneself in order to see It in others. The one who sees only evil in his brother is himself possessed by an evil spirit.”⁶

Forgiveness thus has to do with knowing oneself as well. The position that one takes vis-à-vis oneself (*coram seipse*) depends on the type of knowledge and how much one knows oneself. Hence the Socratic exhortation “know thyself” (*gnote seauton*). And the position one adopts before others (*coram mundo*) depends in great part on the one adopted towards oneself. Both positions in turn will determine what position one takes before God (*coram Deo*). The vertical connection to God will depend on the one developed horizontally, towards other people (that includes humility and forgiveness) which in turn grows from one’s realization of the authentic inner self. Like a solid foundation, the horizontal sustains the vertical.

Forgiveness: conditional or unconditional?

Forgiveness is based on a special, deep, authentic understanding of the human condition, in general, on the one hand, understanding shown by Christ when he asked the heavenly Father for the forgiveness of His tormenters, and on the other hand it is based on the understanding of the other with whom one is engaged in a personal relationship like in a friendship. Understanding is the key, as can be seen in this uniquely beautiful definition of friendship:

What is a friend? I will tell you. It is a person with whom you dare to be yourself. Your soul can be naked with him. He seems to ask of you to put on nothing, only to be what you are. He does not want you to be better or worse. When you are with him, you feel as a prisoner feels who has been declared innocent. You do not have to be on your guard. You can say what you think, so long as it is genuinely you. He understands those contradictions in your nature that lead others to misjudge you. With him you breathe freely. You can avow your little vanities and envies and hates and vicious

sparks, your meannesses and absurdities and, in opening them up to him, they are lost, dissolved on the white ocean of his loyalty. He understands. You do not have to be careful. You can abuse him, neglect him, tolerate him. Best of all, you can keep still with him. It makes no matter. He likes you. He is like fire that purges to the bone. He understands. He understands. You can weep with him, sin with him, laugh with him, pray with him. Through it all – and underneath – he sees, knows and loves you. A friend? What is a friend? Just one, I repeat, with whom you dare to be yourself (*C. Raymond Beran*).

In fact if here forgiveness is implied in understanding and this is the key of an authentic friendship, so is it in Christ's relation with the apostles and through them with us, if we follow their faith and dedication: "I do not consider you servants any more, but friends" (John 15, 15), Jesus is telling them.

A question that can be raised in this context of the unconditional forgiveness based on understanding is why God wants us to repent when we sin against him or against the other, and when it comes to us forgiving the other He wants us to forgive unconditionally. Moreover, in the Old Testament God punished many times the people of Israel in order to make it repent.

One possible response to this question is that in the Old Testament, God, while hidden, worked in human ways and placed Himself at the human level in order to be easily understood by the people. In the New Testament God becomes visible in Jesus Christ, Christ does not work in human ways but in divine ways. In other words, in the Old Testament God's action is human and His presence is divine, whereas in the New Testament God's presence is human and His action is divine.

Through His acting divinely Christ shows us an example, a paradigm and asks us to do the same. He acts divinely to help us integrate ourselves in the divine way of dealing with others and through this participation to move onto the way of deification.

When you do what God does, it is like reaching deification by feeding yourself from God, as Vladimir Lossky wrote.⁷

In this context it is easier for one to understand, like in a new light, St. Athanasius' statement: "God became man so that man might become god," of course, not by nature but by adoption.

God asks us to repent before Him because our vertical relation to Him does not imply equality; we are supposed to forgive others

unconditionally because in our horizontal relations we are equal to each other. In addition, God, in His economy towards the world, can make any exception from the rule of repentance, when He wants, like when Jesus asked for the forgiveness of those who were crucifying Him, without asking first for their repentance.

Therefore, our imitation of the divine model in action is meant to introduce us in the divine life through participation. Forgiveness is an act of infinite gravity, Paul Evdokimov writes, because it places us in the heart of the relationship between God the Holy and the sinner.⁸

We repent when we want to be forgiven by God, but when it comes to the others, we forgive them unconditionally.

Moreover, when we repent before God we will learn to repent, and will do it easier, when we sin against others. The ideal towards which we are thus called is for each to forgive the others unconditionally, but when it comes to his or her offending others, to express remorse and repent. Repentance is a discipline that each imposes on himself, not onto others.

If we want God to forgive us our sins in the spirit of His love, not His justice, then we have to adopt the same position towards those who offend us: “If you will forgive others their offences, also your heavenly Father will forgive you your offences, and if you will not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins, either” (Matthew 6, 14).

God works in both ways: naturally and super-naturally and we are encouraged to do the same. We cannot falsely hope that God will forgive us super-naturally (unconditionally, bypassing the divine justice and only based on His love) because the super-natural criterion of the divine forgiveness operates only in as much as we are acting ourselves super-naturally, in as much as we practice forgiveness as an art which implies learning and understanding.

To forgive those who don't repent, like Christ's forgiveness of His crucifiers, is like a crucifixion in itself, it is to assume Christ's cross, to participate in it. This type of forgiveness is like a crucifixion also in the sense that it seems we have a very hard time to forgive those who do not repent before us; if we do forgive without their repentance that makes us feel like we are renouncing something, like still being in a kind of pain. And this is exactly what

Christ did in His *kenosis*, in His renunciation to glory, in His humility. Here is the divine. *Absolvere divinum*.

More on forgiveness - repentance

When forgiveness is determined by repentance or remorse it indicates both a restoration in and of the relationship, but also of one's standing before one's own conscience. When I have sinned and remorse appears in my heart, that is a sign of me having conscientized my offence and of spiritual correction. I realize that I was wrong, as sin is an error of thinking, and I recognize that. Once the realization came I have to confess or recognize. Without that I will be like in a case of double personality, with a separation in myself, a split or schizophrenia, that generates an inner fight with tragic final consequences. That is why I need to recognize my sin and thus expel it, so that I can be purified, reconciled with myself and thus regaining my inner unity and harmony.

Since unrecognized sin produces such a split, and destroys my inner being, it is anti-nature, it tends to replace my nature. If I allow that to happen, I will be living in non-sense and becoming non-sense. On the contrary, when I realize my sin and express remorse, that brings me back to the person I offended, it brings me back in that relationship. In order to compensate, I will try to be even kinder than before, more open, give something from me and that is the work of reconciliation. In addition, as Hans Urs von Balthasar notices, it is in the light of forgiveness that I understand what sin is in its real depth⁹ and thus get the determination to stay away from it.

How can I forgive someone who doesn't repent?

Is it possible or impossible? Apparently it is impossible because the way is closed. Yet, if it is impossible why did Jesus ask us to love our enemies? (Matthew 5:44). Because forgiveness is an act of love. When I love, I forgive, without looking for expression of repentance. As hard as this might be for us to absorb, in particular in difficult relational situations, we know that if God asked it from us, it is possible. God is not absurd. The only thing is for us to get out of the human logic and enter the logic of God. *Absolvere divinum*.

As Paul Evdokimov said about the monks and nuns: when the way (of asceticism) seemed impossible, they made the impossible a

way. If the one who offended us does not open a door for us, the door of repentance, we open a door for him or her. And if we are rejected in our attempt to reach out, we can find other ways: "Search and you will find" (Matthew 7, 7). We can surround him with our understanding without asking anything from him but from us, and this is the challenge. Like a bishop one day told a priest who had done something wrong and was ready to hear the verdict: "you cannot offend as much as I can forgive!" Or as the VIIth century monk Isaac the Syrian said: "A handful of sand in the immense ocean; this is what man's sin is in comparison to God's mercy."¹⁰

That means that I will always be a few steps ahead of you with my readiness to forgive.

In this context it is clear that when I forgive you it is not that I am asking you to change your position towards me, like coming to the right position from before the offense, but it is me who changes the position towards you in my flexibility. Your sin or offense towards me unbalance both of us: you, because of your wrongdoing, me, because I am the one who is affected. So, when you do not realize your sin or do not recognize it or do not repent, I will not force you to do anything. I cannot do that. I will force myself. This I can do. I will fix from my end the unbalanced relationship. I will come back to normal in my approach to you as if nothing happened. Being re-balanced in my life, in my spirit I will be able to help you when, being un-balanced, you will go from wrong to worse, and will need real help.

There is a difference between one who has sinned and does not repent and one who has sinned and does not believe he was wrong. However, in such a case the change has to come from my end, not from his or her end. I have to empathize, to try to put myself in his shoes, which means to leave my position and to go to his place and see things from that perspective. And even if his place is smaller than mine, I have to bow down, enter the room and see if I see what he sees. This is as if I live in a big house with many windows; and you live in a small place, one room, one window, small and narrow. As I leave my place and enter yours, even if I will feel uncomfortable, I will have no alternative but to look through the only small narrow window you have. Thus I will realize that from that point you can see only what you can see, or that you see the world from that different angle, and see much less; and in some

cases, even if you have a large house and big windows, the angle of vision might still be different. This is like when every of us sees the world through eyeglasses with his or her own dioptries.

This is what it means to give to the other extenuating circumstances for the offence or to empathize.

Absolvere divinum

Forgiving is divine. How does God forgive? As mentioned before, God changes His place. He descends from His impenetrable heavenly dwelling, renounces His glory (*kenosis*), comes on earth in order to live the life of men, to enter the small house with small, narrow windows, even if that brings discomfort. God comes to us in order for us to see that He empathises and places Himself at our angle or point of view. God understands. Not that He would not have otherwise understood. As God, He knows everything before anything is done. But He changed His place in order to give a hand to the man un-balanced by sin, by error, in order to take man, as by the hand, from the small, narrow place, from the darkness of ignorance, of pain, as when one takes a child to the big house, full of light, warm and comfortable. Or as St. Paul puts it: “God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself, without counting people’s sins and placing on our lips the word of reconciliation.” (II Cor. 5, 19). And this is because God’s justice is infinitely beyond our notion of justice or equity, as Olivier Clement writes.¹¹

And this type of action, restoration, correction, salvation implies renouncement, discomfort, pain, cross.

Forgiveness as a way of being

Therefore how much are we supposed to forgive? Seventy times seven, which means, this is not a number, but a permanent attitude; forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a way of being. When I forgive occasionally, from time to time, this indicates inconsistency, even spiritual sickness or brokenness. This “from time to time” shows an inner division, a discontinuity that will make me feel like making an effort when I have to forgive something. And if I make an effort, I will become tired of forgiving, and that might bring me back to the position where I do not make the effort to

understand the other, back to the lack of inclination to forgive, which is an illness.

If forgiveness is an occasional act it loses from its value. It will be the occasion that prompts me to forgive, not my inner inclination. It will not be an expression of my way of being. I could easily fall into the “eye for an eye” law applied to forgiveness: If you repent, I forgive you, if not, I don’t. Repentance and forgiveness in this scenario are two values. Repentance is yours, forgiveness is mine. You repent, I forgive. We exchange values, we do not give! I wait for something to be given to me in order for me to give, instead of giving unconditionally.

Forgiveness implies to not pass judgment. Here is a nice story from the life of the desert father Abba Moses: “A brother in the Sketis desert committed a fault. Those around him called for a council inviting there Abba Moses as well. But he refused to go. Then, the priest sent somebody to tell him: ‘Come, because everybody is waiting for you.’ Then he got up and went there. He took a basket with holes, filled it with sand and brought it there. Those who came his way to meet him asked: ‘What is this, Father?’ And the old man told them: ‘My sins flow behind me and I do not see them, and I am coming here today to judge someone else’s faults.’ Understanding this, all those there did not say anything to the brother, but forgave him.”¹²

When we are experiencing forgiveness, offering it or receiving it, as Paul Tournier puts it, we are “in the presence of a creative act that is really free and undetermined. It is a bursting forth of life, a positive choosing of a new direction.”¹³

The Church as the school of forgiveness

The Church is the right and most efficient place where forgiveness is cultivated. This is where, like in the desert, God speaks to man’s heart. The Church is the place where the Holy Spirit is at work to change the heart of man, his or her life and make man a new being. With a new mind and heart, which implies *metanoia* man will progress in the knowledge of God and will thus be a light for the others and that brings about forgiveness; God will forgive him, he will forgive others, St. Symeon the New Theologian says.¹⁴

As a place of *metanoia* where the art of forgiveness is practiced as a golden daily moral rule, the Church assists at the formation and consolidation of *koinonia*, as forgiveness implies both humility and a change in one's understanding, and a change in understanding generates a new type of relationship and of behaviour at the same time.

Forgiveness creates community by renewing the sense of solidarity and belonging between the one who offended and the forgiver, and, as Victor Turner observes, that brings an eternal present into the relationship which goes beyond social conventions.¹⁵

In fact, isolation from community leads to a loss of the correct understanding of things, thus making one a scared captive of one's own self-deception.¹⁶

In the Church forgiveness is also an act of service, of *diakonia*, celebrated doxologically in the Divine Liturgy as this is the memorial of Christ's work for our salvation.

In the Divine Liturgy we remember God's love and forgiveness granted to us in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, and thus the experience of forgiveness has an anamnetical character, just as it has an eschatological dimension because it is implied in love, and love, according to Paul Evdokimov, "does not depend on the 'order of the day', but on the order of the last day."¹⁷

Conclusion

Forgiveness is logical and paradoxical at the same time. It is natural and supernatural, human and divine. Jesus Christ showed us not only how important forgiveness is for our life and our salvation, but also how to forgive, as stated in the Lord's prayer (Mathew 6: 9-13), in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11-32), in the parable about the unmerciful debtor (Matthew 18, 23-25) and in many other instances and situations.

Forgiveness is so important that practicing it as a way of being, heals both the offender and the offended, heals any possible inner schism in the forgiver and brings him or her, at least as far as forgiveness is concerned, from the human level to the divine one. *Errare humanum est. Perseverare diabolicum. Absolvere divinum.*

NOTES:

- ¹ Bobby Fong, "Cultivating 'Sparks of the Divinity': Soul-Making as a Purpose of Higher Education," in *Liberal Education*, vol. 100, Nr. 3, Summer 2014, p.3 (www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2014/summer/fong).
- ² Olivier Clément, foreword to *The Sacrament of Love*, by Paul Evdokimov, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1985, p. 11.
- ³ Abraham Heschel, *Who Is Man?*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1965, p. 29.
- ⁴ Jean-Yves Leloup, *Paroles du Mont Athos*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1980, p. 110.
- ⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 112.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Vladimir Lossky, *Teologia mistica a Bisericii de Rasarit [The Mystical Theology of The Eastern Church]*, Anastasia, Bucuresti, 1990, p. 232, see Hadrian- V. Contiu, "The Morbid Dimension of Sin," in *Theologia Orthodoxa*, Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, vol. 59 (LIX), June 2014, Cluj-Napoca, p. 177.
- ⁸ Paul Evdokimov, *Les ages de la vie spirituelle: Des Pères du désert à nos jours*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1964, p. 158.
- ⁹ Karl Barth et Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dialogue*, Collection Oecuménique Nr. 7, Labor et Fides, Geneve, 1968, p. 42.
- ¹⁰ ..., *Dieu est vivant: Catechism pour les familles [God lives: Family Catechism]*, Cerf, Paris, 1979, p. 366.
- ¹¹ Olivier Clément, *Anachroniques*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1990, p. 184.
- ¹² Jean-Claude Guy, *Paroles des anciens: Apophthègmes des pères du désert [Words of the Old Ones: Apophthegmata of the Desert Fathers]*, Ed. du Seuil, Paris, 1976, pp. 104-105.
- ¹³ Paul Tournier, *The Meaning of Persons: Reflections on a Psychiatrist's Casebook*, SCM Press, London, 1968, p. 98.
- ¹⁴ Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Traité Théologiques et Éthiques*, tome II, Sources Chrétiennes, Ed. du Cerf, Paris, 1967, p. 449.
- ¹⁵ See Carlo Bordoni, "La fine della comunità," in *Corriere della Sera*, Nr. 144, Domenica, 24 agosto, 2014, p. 2.
- ¹⁶ Theodor Damian, *Theological and Spiritual Dimensions of Icons according to St. Theodore of Studion*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, NY, 2002, p. 11.
- ¹⁷ Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love...*, p. 46.



Theodor Damian, organizer
of the event.



Humphrey Crookendale,
Dean, Metropolitan College
of New York,
moderator.



Clair McPherson,
the host of the event at the
General Theological Seminary,
Manhattan, New York.

The Agnus Dei Penny: Artifact of Christian Peace



Introduction

This bent coin is well known to coin collectors: it is the “Agnus Dei Penny” of King Aethelred II (“the Unready”), King of the Anglo-Saxons. It is dated around 1009 AD. What collectors know is this: it is most unusual, because Anglo-Saxon kings normally had coins made with their profile on one side and the Cross on the other.

This one instead shows us the Lamb of God on one side, and the Dove of Peace on the other. The peculiarity makes it particularly interesting and valuable to collectors.

But it makes it interesting for historians of theology as well, because it is a visual version of one of the most important prayers in Christian use, the *Agnus Dei*, one of the classic Prayers for Peace, and it marks an important stage in the development of that prayer. Let us trace its complicated history.

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Timeline of a prayer

The prayer makes its first appearance embedded in the Greater Doxology: *Gloria in excelsis* (in the West). Here is a direct translation of the Greek text, as it was first used: “Glory to you who has shown us the light.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to all people.

We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory,

Lord, King, heavenly God, Father, almighty; Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit.

For you only are holy, only you are Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.”

But that is not quite the prayer used today in the Byzantine Rite during the *Orthros* service, and during the Latin Rite as an opening Hymn of the Mass. Originally, *that* prayer seems to date to the 2nd century as one of the *Psalmi Idioci* (“Private Psalms”) which were popular among the very first Christians. For the earliest written forms we have go back to the *Apostolic Constitutions* (380) and the *Codex Alexandrinus* (5th century).

The “greater Gloria” is, of course, the hymn the shepherds sing at the birth of Christ (Luke 2:13-14). But by the time it was written down, the *Gloria* inserts this: Κύριε ὁ Θεός, ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς, ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, ὁ αἴρων τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ κόσμου—”Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us, you, who take away the sin of the world.”

That insertion is based on two verses: 1. The Baptist’s words (John 1:29), “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” as he saw Jesus coming towards him, which is itself based on Isaiah 53:7, which calls the suffering servant a “Lamb to the slaughter”; 2. The words of the penitent tax collector in Luke 18:9-14, who says, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” which itself is a quote from Psalm 51, “have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.”

But some time between 450 and 700, the insertion became an independent Hymn, in the following form: O Lamb of God...have mercy on us, 3 X., used as a Fraction Hymn—a Hymn to be sung while the priest/bishop breaks the consecrated Host (“the Lamb”).

Then in the 11th century, a new final verse inserted: “grant us peace,” *da nobis pacem*. Where did that come from?

From another, separate Hymn, *Da pacem Domine, in diebus nostris*, a 6th century hymn:

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostri
Quia non est alius
Qui pugnet pro nobi
Nisi tu Deus noster.

That too, of course, is a pastiche of Scripture: 2 Kings 20:19, 2 Chronicles 20:12,15 and Psalms 72:6-7. It became feature of the Medieval Liturgy, sung during the Hours. At the time of the Western Reformation, it was translated by both Martin Luther and by Thomas Cranmer, who inserted it into the Rite for Evensong in the first Book of Common Prayer, 1549: “Give us peace in our time, O Lord.”

It has had an interesting recent history: Neville Chamberlain, who knew it from the Anglican Prayer Book and from a speech by Benjamin Disraeli, returning on September 30, 1938 from the Munich Conference with Adolf Hitler, stood on the steps of Number 10 Downing Street and proclaimed, “My good friends, for the second time in our history, a British Prime Minister has returned from Germany bringing peace with honor. I believe it is peace for our time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Go home and get a nice quiet sleep.”

He lived to regret it: the following year, Hitler invaded Poland, and World War II began, and the King asked Winston Churchill to assume the Office of Prime Minister.

Yet both Noel Coward and Ernest Hemingway borrowed the phrase as a title for literary works (Coward’s play *Peace in our Time*, Hemingway’s short story collection *In our Time*); it had become part of the stock phrase library, so to speak.

And in the early 1960s, John F. Kennedy invented a new version. Kennedy had been dogged forever by the perception that his father, Joseph, had been an appeaser in WW II. So, in a speech for Commencement at the American University in 1963, Kennedy “corrected” it to read: “not merely peace in our time, but peace in *all* time”—which between the lines also reads “I’m no Chamberlain.”

Barack Obama even alluded to it in his 2013 Inaugural: “And we must be a source of hope to the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the victims of prejudice--not out of mere charity, but because peace in our time requires the constant advance of those principles that our common creed describes: tolerance and opportunity; human dignity and justice.” And he was criticized for quoting the hapless Neville Chamberlain.

Christian peace

We have three elements from this tradition in Anglican Prayer Books: the Collect for Peace: “Give peace, O Lord, in all the world, for only in You can we live in safety.” A Collect that fuses the prayer with Augustine’s precept that service to God is freedom: “God, the author of peace and love of concord, to know You is eternal life and to serve You is perfect freedom,” And of course, where we began, the Holy Eucharist offers this as one of the choices for the Fraction Hymn (sung while the consecrated bread is broken): “O Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world.”

Now returning to the phrase “grant us peace,” in the Agnus Dei - how did that get there? The ancient hymn simply says: “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us” three times.

Look again at Penny. The final catastrophe of the Dark Ages was the eruption of the Vikings. Beginning with the siege and ransacking of the monastery at Lindisfarne in 973, the Vikings from Norway had attacked these nearby victims, what is now Ireland, Scotland and the Celtic Islands, and Anglo-Saxon England almost continuously. Alfred the Great, Aethelraed’s great grandfather, had held the Vikings off and in the process made his kingdom, Wessex, the basis for the future hegemony of England, but in the early eleventh century, Gorm of Denmark tried forcibly to convert his nation, and recusant chiefs took to the seas once again—one last time, as it turned out, and Anglo-Saxon England was their immediate target.

Aethelred, known traditionally as “Aethelraed the Unready” because of his ineffectual character, did what he thought best: he declared a national fast; he asked that the prayer *dona nobis pacem* be said at every service; and he had it imposed on the very special

penny issued at the time: The Lamb of God on the obverse, the Dove of Peace on the reverse.

Peace in Christian theology

Christian Peace, what we have been begging of God for twenty-one centuries and more, is not what Webster's Dictionary says: "a state in which there is no war or fighting."

That is backwards. Peace, in Christian tradition, is not the absence of war. War is the absence of Peace.

We have known this as Christians from the start: we have never "officially" said: make war stop, we have always said rather, "grant us peace." Grant us, that us, a positive entity, something that exists. Simply put, that means that we have something we need to be rid of. It means that we lack something we need to have.

So War is not a "something" we need to abolish. War is merely - no matter how enormous it seems to us - the absence of Peace. So today, on the border between Syria and Iraq, in North Africa, in Ireland, wherever there is contention, the question is not how do we rid ourselves of war. The question is, how do we avail ourselves of Peace.

Thomas Aquinas expresses it in a classic definition: "Peace is the product of Love; harmony of the individual with himself, with the Cosmos, and with God."

And on the classic principle of *lex orandi lex credendi*, it is expressed by the Old English penny that stands for the prayer: *dona nobis pacem Domine in temporibus nostris*: Give us peace in our time, O Lord.



Alina Feld



Richard Grallo



Doru Tsaganea

From the right:
Theodor Damian,
Humphrey
Crookendale,
Doru Tsaganea,
and Alina Feld.



Four Functions of Experience in Human Learning¹

“Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived
to be understood.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Roles of experience and their importance in learning

In various helping professions over the last fifty years, it has become increasingly important to work with people “where they are.” For example, in the 20th century Carl Rogers signaled a shift in counseling practice away from classification and use of a medical model to a focus on clients’ lived experience.² More recently, the movement in education known as “differentiated instruction” takes aim at students’ interests and abilities in the ongoing attempt to assist them in learning a variety of course content.³ In these fields and others, each person’s experience will be crucial in accurately describing his or her perspective both present and past. This raises a general question: What is the role of *experience* in complex human learning and problem solving?

It should be noted that the word ‘experience’ is an abstract noun and is therefore likely to have multiple uses. Common meanings include expressions such “survived events”, “conscious events” and “expert knowledge.” Common dictionary definitions list these related, but distinct, referents for the term: (1) an event or a series of events participated in or lived through, (2) the apprehension of an object, thought, or emotion through the senses or mind, (3) active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill.⁴

To be more specific, one can distinguish three types of experience as defined in the general language and as reflected in philosophic and psychological literature. First, experience has been identified as the sum total of anything that is lived through. This

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may be regarded as the “survival definition” and it is the most comprehensive of all three. This would include anything that one lives through in the course of a day, including dreamless sleep. This is consistent with definition (1) above. Second, a more restrictive definition of experience is given as the sum total of consciously apprehended events. This may be regarded as the “stream of consciousness definition.” William James described consciousness as being constantly in flux, and being associated with a person’s ability to focus on external objects as well as internal states.⁵ This is consistent with definition (2). Finally, the most restrictive definition regards experience as emanating from sensations. This definition prioritizes sense experience as the origin of all other conscious events. A common example of this is the persistent philosophic doctrine that “Nothing is in the intellect which is not first in the senses.” This view had precedent in ancient and medieval philosophy and was carried into the philosophy of the British empiricists such as Locke⁶ and Hume.⁷ It is consistent with a reading of definition (2) that lays emphasis on the senses.

Given that experience may be widely or narrowly defined, what functions does experience, however understood, play in complex human learning and problem solving? Four functions or roles for experience in learning will be posited here. (1) Experience is a *source* of learning. As such it provides the information (or data) that is the content of all thinking. This aligns with the dictionary account given above of “the apprehension of an object, thought, or emotion through the senses or mind.” (2) Experience is an *environment* for learning, since it is the personal and contextual conditions that either facilitate or hinder learning efforts. This relates to the dictionary entry of “an event or a series of events participated in or lived through” already noted. (3) Experience can function as a *testing ground* for learning, by providing data that can confirm or falsify insights. This accords with the dictionary rendering of “participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill”. (4) Experience can also function as a *haven* from learning if it is the kind of “simple experience” (almost equal to the “world of immediacy” of the infant) that is devoid of the problem solving activities, such as question and insight. This type of experience also counts as a series

of events lived through, but these events are not of an active problem solving nature.

This paper offers a structure for understanding “experience,” in its multiple conceptions, in relation to human learning and problem solving. More specifically, it has three related aims: (1) to explore the basic roles of experience in complex human learning: *source, environment, testing ground* and *haven*, (2) to explore how experience gets organized into patterns, (3) to identify implications and recommendations for making the most out of experience.

Why bother with these aims? If experience plays any role in human learning, then a deeper understanding of how it works increases the probability of greater self-knowledge, especially knowledge about how one learns. Increased self-knowledge about learning increases the probability of achieving increased facility and freedom in the management of one’s own learning and in becoming an independent thinker. In contrast, lack of this kind of self-knowledge leaves learning as largely a hit-or-miss enterprise, with the likelihood of a vastly reduced cumulative beneficial effect.

Experience as source of learning

Experience, however defined, functions as a *source* for human learning by providing information (or data) that is the content of all thinking. This “data” is what is given in consciousness. (It includes much more than the more narrow meaning of scientific “data”, which is the product of systematic observation & measurement.) The philosopher Franz Brentano and the psychologist J.P. Guilford argued that thinking of any sort must be *about* something, and that “something” is the *content* of thinking.⁸ Without this content, there is no thinking. Consequently any problem solving or learning efforts that depend on thinking will collapse if it is devoid of content.

Whatever is admitted as content (or “data”) then will largely depend on one’s definition of ‘experience.’ Broader definitions of experience tend to admit more types of data. The narrower definitions either admit less data or give priority to one type of data over all others.

Buddhism presents one of the widest understandings of ‘experience.’ This includes not only the data of the senses but the data of other conscious states as well. “When Buddhism speaks of

empirical experience, it has a broader understanding of empiricism, which includes meditative states as well as the evidence of the senses.”⁹ In Buddhism, sensations are one type of conscious state among many, and they are not assigned any particular priority. William James also takes a view of experience wide enough to include all conscious states. These states flow in a “stream of consciousness.” This stream is not just a succession of conscious states, but it also has a direction or tendency.¹⁰ Bernard Lonergan also takes the wide view when he identifies data of sense and data of consciousness (i.e. of conscious states other than sensations). Lonergan also accepts the directionality of the stream of consciousness and identifies a limited number of *patterns of experience* that can result.¹¹

Among the more narrow definitions of experience, the empiricists tend to reduce conscious states to what they regard as the more basic data of the senses. Sense data are given a chronological, if not logical priority, over other conscious states (or ideas). They follow the ancient dictum “Whatever is in the intellect is first in the senses.” This is exemplified in the writing of John Locke¹² and certainly David Hume.¹³

Experience as environment for learning

An environment surrounds, includes, and permeates something. It is an aggregate of conditions in which a person lives or in which something exists. An *environment for learning* will include inner and outer conditions that either promote learning or hinder it. Kant attempted to uncover conditions for the possibility of knowledge.¹⁴ Among psychologists, Robert Gagné explicitly worked to identify factors that promote learning¹⁵ and Alan Newell attempted to identify conditions for successful problem solving.¹⁶ In 1990, summarizing the literature to that point Locke and Latham identified internal and external conditions for any high performance in any area.¹⁷ In 2007 Schunk and Zimmerman summarized this literature specifically as it concerns human learning.¹⁸

These accounts integrate well with the idea of experience as learned expertise and expert knowledge. Students who choose to go through a long professional development (as in law, medicine, nursing, or psychology) are exposed to a series of learning situations

and environments. To facilitate their own learning, they must also master and manage their own inner environment of thought and emotion. Expert knowledge builds over time with specific honest feedback from teachers, mentors and colleagues.

As useful as these accounts of complex human learning are, they generally take little notice of two important mental events: *question* and *insight*. Questions and insights are pivotal conscious events that occur as part of our intellectual life. As events, both question and insight as mental events are fleeting. Yet, despite their swiftness, they are crucial in human learning and problem solving. Who would claim much learning without any insight? How can any problem said to be solved if questions were not answered?

A *question* (as mental event) is the recognition of a gap somewhere in our experience, understanding, knowledge or practice. If this recognition is taken seriously, it functions as an *operator* by reigniting the effort to learn. However, questions (as mental events) are fleeting. To derive the most benefit from them, they must be captured in some formulation (in words, symbols, formulae etc). The interrogative proposition is a question (mental event) expressed in words. Without questions, no gaps are recognized. Without their formulation, no persistent pursuit of them is likely to occur.

The *insight* goes hand-in-glove with questions. It provides a possible answer to a guiding question by integrating relevant information to answer the question. It functions as an *integrator*. Without insight there is no understanding, because insight is an act of understanding. Without insight learning and problem solving cannot proceed because without insight they do not exist.

Together, both *questions* and *insights* provide the ongoing and developing context for understanding, comprehensive learning and problem solving. If learning and problem solving are stripped of questions and insight, they collapse.

Oddly enough, some philosophers and psychologists have attempted to describe human learning and problem solving without any mention of either question or insight. In this author's view, any account of knowledge, knowing and human learning that fails to incorporate question and insight as mental events is incomplete to the point of misunderstanding.¹⁹ This general neglect continues to this day.²⁰

Experience as testing ground for learning

Experience may also be viewed as a *testing ground* for perceptions, memories, understanding, knowledge claims and values. Among the ancient Greeks, Aristotle clearly profited from experience through systematic observation. Epictetus stressed the continual interrogation and testing of one's sense impressions and judgments. Francis Bacon, in his *Novum Organum*, emphasized recourse to experience through experimentation as a means for settling scientific disputes. William James indicated that testing predictions would be the best means for determining truth in any situation.

Testing in this sense often involves some version of a *reflective question of fact*. Reflective questions of fact are questions that admit "yes" or "no" as answers and may usually be of the form "Is P true?" or "Is X probable?" In these cases P may be any proposition, and X may be any event. If the eventual "yes" or "no" is to be well supported, it must be based on sufficient evidence and compelling reasons. Hence, in the case of reflective questions of fact, the entire enterprise is an instance of *factual critical thinking* designed to resolve some issue of fact. Consequently some version of truth (however defined) is at play.

There are three criteria for truth that can act as aids in addressing three distinct questions about what we learn.²¹ In the *correspondence account of truth*, there is a search for a match between evidence and the proposed judgment. Its advantage is that, if successful, it relates our judgments to states of affairs in the world. Its limitation is that relevant evidence may be scattered across time and space, even to such an extent that it is irretrievable. This poses a real problem for any theory that is advertised as "evolutionary," whether it is in biology, psychology or any other field.

In the *cohesion account of truth*, there is a check for consistency among known propositions. Its advantage is that, if our developing knowledge is inconsistent, then we may be in the neighborhood of an error, and it is useful to identify errors. Its disadvantage is that it is difficult, or nearly impossible, to give a complete inventory of what we know.

In the *pragmatic account of truth*, the search is for the impact and usefulness of a specific claim, embodied as a prediction. Its

advantage lies in its focus on a specific time and place for a test (formulated as a prediction). Its limitation is that it must wait for the data to be collected, and such tests may be difficult to arrange.

Using experience as a testing ground leads to a number of effects. There is a gradual accumulation of knowledge. This knowledge may then find some practical applications that will transform the situations in which they are applied. Transformation often involves the introduction of some relatively enduring change. Finally, situations are not the only thing that is changed by such knowledge; there is a transformation in the knower as well. With an accumulation of transformations of this sort, over time the novice is gradually changed into an expert.

Experience as a haven from learning: simple experience

If some wider definitions of experience include all conscious states, then in many of those states the mind is active: pursuing questions, formulating answers, calculating, testing, etc. To the extent that questions and insights are involved, learning is proceeding. However, learning is work. It involves expenditures of energy and, therefore, cannot be pursued all day every day. While learning requires the extended work of perseverance, it also requires appropriate rest.

This raises the possibility of conscious states devoid of virtually any kind of problem solving activity, including question and insight. What would a conscious state be like in which the mind is basically “shut off” or simply idling. Is there a “neutral gear” for consciousness? Is there a state in which one is conscious but not engaged in any problem solving activity? Can we be aware without pursuing questions, having insights or solving problems?

Such conscious experience with no questions or insights or problem solving efforts of any kind may be termed *simple experience*. It is a state of a kind of free-floating attention, perhaps like lying on a beach just watching a cloud on a sunny day – having no particular thoughts or cares. Achieving this state may require some practice. Achieving it may also produce a number of beneficial effects, to be determined by each person on their own.

Effects of this state may include: (1) the experience of tranquility and rest from problem solving, (2) the “re-creation” of

energy, (3) the inducement of sleep, or (4) the gentle emergence of insights and more comprehensive understanding. The free-floating attention of this state may be focused on breathing alone, leading to effects (1),(2) and sometimes (3). Or the free-floating nature of this state may be focused on some object or event leading to effects (1),(2) and then (4). Based on this, one can distinguish the whole process of achieving tranquility as *calming exercises* (a kind of “meditation”) from the process of *focusing and following* an object or event (a kind of “contemplation”).²²

Patterns of experience

For most of us, our experience falls into patterns. There is not just a “flow of consciousness” with one thing appearing and then receding, followed by another new appearance. There is also a direction and a clustering of activities around aims and purposes. How does our lived experience get organized into patterns?

“Pattern” involves not just a stream of consciousness but also direction (attention, selection, decision)²³ More specifically, Lonergan has identified four patterns of experience: the *biological pattern* involves simply surviving (staying alive). It is exemplified by the soldier operating in combat situations or by others living in extremely dangerous environments. The *dramatic pattern* is concerned with getting individual and social things done with some dignity or flair. It is clearly exemplified with the attempt to develop a career in one’s chosen field and in making a reasonable living. The *aesthetic pattern* is a playful release from biological and social routines. It is exemplified by the artist who seeks to rise above merely biological and social routines and to envision and, perhaps, communicate other possibilities. Finally, the *intellectual pattern* of experience is a form of consciousness directed by the desire to know. It is exemplified by the scientist who seeks to find out how things work or by the troubleshooter who attempts to develop workable solutions to a concrete problem.

Patterns of experience are in stark contrast to the diminished experience of the schizophrenic²⁴ or the episodically disconnected experience of the severely developmentally delayed adult.²⁵ Therefore, the patterning of experience allows for the ongoing

development of ever greater coherence in everyday living than is common with these special populations.

Implications, applications and summary

We will now consider some implications and recommendations. The implications address this question: “How can we derive the most from the understanding of experience presented here?” The recommendations address a related question: “How can we derive the most from our own experience in general?”

A first set of implications concerns *attentiveness and inattentiveness to our own experience*. If the four roles of experience described here exist, then attentiveness to them and practice of them will facilitate learning, whereas inattentiveness will minimize learning. In addition, if our experience is a ground of our uniqueness, then attentiveness to it increases the probability of developing self-knowledge, whereas inattentiveness to it reduces that possibility. Finally, if there are qualities in our experience that we share with others (forming a basis for community), then attentiveness to those qualities will increase the probability of understanding others, whereas inattentiveness to them will shrink the possibility of such understanding.

A second set of implications regards *patterns of experience*. If anything like the biological, dramatic, aesthetic or intellectual patterns of experience exist, then some people will function more naturally than other people in some patterns but not in other patterns. Those who are proficient in the biological, dramatic, aesthetic or intellectual patterns of experience are likely to lead very different sorts of lives since each pattern differs to its goals and methods for achieving those goals. Also, if patterns of experience exist and if people vary in their ability to manage each pattern, then difficulties in communication are likely to follow. For example, the person of the everyday dramatic pattern of experience may have some difficulty in understanding what the scientist or artist is really doing. Artistic and scientific activities are often regarded as too disconnected from “everyday life.”

A third set of implications focuses on any *biasing factor* that would unnecessarily choke off the stream of experience in any of its functions. By limiting a person’s experiences, the *source* of learning

is blocked, and what learning does take place may be vastly reduced and unduly influenced by vicarious experiences provided by the media and by secondhand reports of others. If experience is reduced, then a succession of *environments* for learning are not traversed and the person does not get to practice learning and interaction with multiple environments. If efforts of *testing* ideas through one's own experience are blocked, there remain limited options for evaluating ideas that finally are accepted as true. Such options are frequently subject to the management agendas of others. If there is no rest or *haven* from the labors of learning, burnout is a likely result.

Finally, recommendations here pertain to how we might manage the four roles of experience in our own learning. Managing our own experience requires both attentiveness and planning. To some extent we can plan the experiences we seek out and the environments in which we choose to learn; however, uncertainty and unpredictability accompany both of these. We can choose those experiences and ideas that we will put to the test and subject to critical thinking. We can also plan the rest that we will take from learning and problem solving activities. Implementing these choices will also require both a change in and maintenance of learning habits. If habits exist that promote learning, the maintenance will be relatively easy. If such habits do not currently exist, then the difficult work of their acquisition is required.

In summary, we began by noting that the very word 'experience' is ambiguous and has been associated with a spectrum of definitions ranging from the all-inclusive "whatever is lived through" to the rather narrow "whatever is sensed." Next, four functions of experience were identified and described: experience as *source*, *environment*, *testing ground* for learning, and *haven* from the work of learning. These descriptions were related to the various definitions of experience surveyed at the beginning of the article. Next, some attention was given to how experience organizes itself into patterns of living. Finally, implications and recommendations were considered. Without an understanding of the implications, not much of the discussion in this article will have any force to it. Finally, the recommendations pertain to the management of our conscious experience. Such management, or lack of it, involves a positive choice or a refusal. Without any attempt to implement these

recommendations and to develop them into an ongoing practice, any insights presented here will have little long-term effect on learning.

NOTES:

- ¹ This paper is based on a presentation at the 2014 Ecumenical Symposium in New York City. The author wishes to thank Professor Theodor Damian for his invitation to participate. The author also wishes to thank Bert F. Breiner and William McArdle for their many conversations with me on these topics and for reviewing drafts. Of course any errors or unclarities that remain are my own.
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The Ukrainian Conflict and Christian Moral Values

The Just War Theory

The Ukrainian conflict has generated the most serious crisis in the relations between NATO and Russia since the end of the Cold War twenty five years ago. This situation is dangerous because it could lead to a New Cold War and to a complete change of alliances and world distribution of power. Therefore the resolution of this conflict is a current problem of paramount significance and its analysis from the vantage point of Christian moral values might be beneficial.

War implies organized killing on a relatively large scale followed in most cases by confiscation by the conqueror of significant properties of the defeated parties. Therefore it is in contradiction with the requirements of the 6th and 8th Commandments – “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not steal.”

At the same time each adversary presents its descriptions of the events as being the true one and its own political, economic and military interests as being consistent with the basic moral principles and norms of international action. In parallel the opponent’s views on the events are wrong and intentionally deceiving, and its interests contradict the basic moral principles and norms of international conduit. But according to the Christian beliefs there are not multiple truths and multiple sets of ethical values. There is always only one truth and one set of moral values – that based on the Bible. Subsequently war might be rejected by Christians on the basis of the uniqueness of truth and set of moral principles.

Observing the overwhelming theoretical and practical significance of these contradictions some of the greatest Christian theologians have focused on them since the early times of Christianity. The Christian ideas on war initially formulated by Saint Augustine four hundred years after Christ were thoroughly analyzed and developed by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. He

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associated the Christian theology with the Aristotelian logic and – among other remarkable contributions – opened the way for the future theological, legal and political study of war within a Christian framework.

In this way the contributions of the distinguished jurists and theologians of the sixteen century School of Salamanca as well as the ideas developed by Hugo Grotius in *De Jure Belli ac Pacis (On the Laws of War and Peace)* would be incorporated in the peace treaties of Osnabruck and Munster that ended the Thirty Years War. The basic principles included in these treaties would create a new European order - that would remain known in history as the Westphalian Peace – and would be regarded as the virtually unanimously accepted norms of waging wars among civilized nations and Christians rulers.

But - obviously - the interest in the study of war from a Christian moral perspective did not end with the scholarly treaties of the seventeen century and the Peace of Westphalia. The emergence of new types of warfare, the continuous development of more complex and destructive armaments and the extension of war scale from regional to global have lead many Christian theologians and political philosophers to focus on the causes, conduct and moral assessment of war. As a result a coherent body of theoretical principles and norms of conduct - usually called “The Just War Theory” - has emerged.

In general terms this theory solves the contradictions between war as an action that implies relativity of truth and moral principles, organized killing and (frequently) unwilling transfer of property and the Christian conceptions with regard to the uniqueness of truth and moral principles, interdiction to kill and interdiction to steal on a rational basis and not on a dogmatic one. The evils/wrongs/injustices/damages/harms of war can be accepted and a war can be fought or even initiated if it would prevent greater evils/wrongs/injustices/damages harms than it would cause,.

According to the Just War Theory a war can be defined as “just” if two coherent sets of criteria are simultaneously fulfilled. The first refers to the right to go to war, and the second to the conduct of war.

Going to war is in accordance with the moral Christian values only if:

- the cause is just - that means that the life of civilian population is in absolute and imminent danger;
- one party has suffered incomparable more injustice than the other;
- the authority that leads to war the party under imminent and absolute danger is de facto representative for this party;
- the intention is right – that means that the war if fought in order to protect life and not in order to acquire economic goods and privileges;
- there is a reasonable probability of success;
- all the other means for solving the conflict were extensively but unsuccessfully used and the use of force remains the “last resort;” and
- the expected disutility of the losses would not be higher than the expected utility of the benefits.

However if a war started despite all efforts to prevent it, the Christian morality requires that the two adversaries:

- must not attack the civilian non-combatant population, they might attack only the enemy combatant forces (the principle of distinction between civilians and military);
- the harm and damage caused to the civilian population by a military action must not exceed its benefits (the principle of proportionality);
- the destruction of an objective must be strictly necessary for the defeat of the adversary from a military point of view, it must not be destroyed only for causing useless losses of life and property (the principle of military necessity);
- must treat in a fair manner the prisoners of war: and
- must not use prohibited fighting means and methods like weapons of mass destruction, drinking water poisoning, etc.

Main data in Ukraine's history

In order to unbiasedly assess the current Ukrainian conflict a rigorous knowledge of the history of that geographical area is strictly necessary. This is obviously impossible to be done in a short paper like this and for this reason I include only a brief list of the most important historical events. In chronological order those were:

- the creation of the incipient state of Kievan Rus' by Scandinavian Varangians in the last centuries of the first millennium on a vast territory going from Ladoga and Novgorod to Kiev that was founded in 880.
- the extension of Kievan Rus', Kiev becoming the most important city of the new state, and the state itself becoming the ancestral homeland of both Russians and Ukrainians.
- the assimilation of the Varangians by the local Slavic populations and the ascent to power of the Rurik Dynasty.
- the Christianization of Rus' by Vladimir the Great (980-1015) in accordance with the Eastern Orthodox rite of the Byzantine Empire;
- the remarkable development of Kievan Rus' during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise (1019-1054) and Vladimir II Monomakh (1113-1125);
- the disintegration of the Kievan Rus' in several principalities in the middle of the twelve century;
- the Mongol invasion of 1240 that ruined the Kievan Rus' and completely destroyed Kiev;
- the founding of the Golden Horde Empire in 1240 and its survival until 1502;
- the inclusion of territories and populations of the former Kievan Rus' in various state structures more or less dominated by Poland and Lithuania between the thirteen and seventeen centuries;
- the creation of the Crimean Khanate as an independent state in 1449, the change of its status in a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire in 1478;
- the creation of the Cossacks Hetmanate or Zaporijhian Host by the Ukrainian Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky during the anti-Polish uprising of 1648-1657;
- the conclusion of the military alliance between the Cossacks Hetmanate and the Tsardom of Russia in 1654 during the Council of Pereyaslav, that alliance that has been regarded and celebrated by both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union as marking the de facto unification of Russia and Ukraine into an unique state;

- the inclusion of Crimea in the Russian Empire in 1783 as a result of the defeat of the armies of the Crimean Khanate and Ottoman Empire by Catherine the Great's generals;
- the division between Austria and Russia of the former Ukrainian lands that had been under the Polish control as a result of the partitioning of Poland between the two empires in 1772, 1792 and 1795;
- the inclusion of 350000 Ukrainians in the Russian Imperial Army and of 250000 in the Austro-Hungarian Army during World War I;
- the inclusion of Ukraine in Soviet Union as a founding member in 1922;
- the inclusion of Crimea in the Russian Soviet Socialist Federative Republic in 1921 and as a part of this in Soviet Union in 1922;
- the occupation of Ukraine by the Germans during World War II and the fierce battles between the two armies;
- the transfer of Crimea from the Russian Soviet Socialist Federative Republic to Ukraine by Nikita Khrushchev in 1954 with the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereyaslav or of the unification of Ukraine with Russia as that event had been considered by both the Tsarist Empire and Soviet Union;
- the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 and the proclamation of Ukraine having Crimea as part of it as an independent state; and
- the beginning of the Ukrainian conflict in December 2013.

Brief remarks on the Ukrainian conflict

The Ukrainian conflict started as an open acute one in December 2013, but its roots have been older and of a twofold nature – internal and external.

The internal causes of the conflict have been:

- the high level of corruption;
- the very difficult economic situation; and
- the ethnic structure of the population.

The foreign causes of the conflict have been:

- the military and political interests of NATO in general and of United States in particular;
- the geostrategic interests of Russia in general and its military interests in particular; and
- the economic interests of the European Union.

Assessing the Ukrainian conflict on the basis of the Just War Theory

The Ukrainian conflict did not start as an interstate or intrastate/civil war. It started - according to the current Kiev officials and most of the Western media – when the former President Viktor Yanukovych decided to repress the Maidan pro-democracy popular movements by force. But it started – according to the Russian government and the Russian media – when as a result of a “coup” initiated and funded by the West the legally elected president, Viktor Yanukovych, was deposed by force and a chaotic situation was created in order to impose to Ukraine a government handpicked by Western intelligence agencies.

The internal tension gradually increased after the assumption of power by the provisional government in February and the annexation – in Western terms – or unification – in Russian terms – of Crimea with Russia, in March 2014. The conflict got a significant military dimension after the May 2014 presidential elections when Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk sent their troops against the “terrorists” from the Eastern territories regarded by the Kiev government and Ukrainian nationalists as being an integral part of Ukraine. But being called by most of the local population the “New Russia” and considered by them to be a part of Russia on the basis of more than two hundred years of history and population’s ethnic structure. As a result of Kiev’s military intervention Russia started to covertly deliver weapons to the ethnic Russian fighters from the Eastern territories. Initially those were simple, but as the conflict intensity was increasing considerably more complex, sophisticated and powerful weapons were delivered. Among those were short range missiles systems and tanks.

It is true that during the spring of 2014 there were some armed clashes in the Eastern territories and that there were pro-Russian extremists engaged in anti-Ukrainian activities. But these have not justified and legitimated the use of Ukrainian regular armed forces against the population from that region.

Most of the grievances of the Russian minority as well as those of other ethnic minorities were to a large extent right and justified. They had been caused by Kiev's policies on nationalities that had significantly limited minorities' opportunities and possibilities of affirmation. They had also been caused by the rampant corruption tolerated or - as most people have believed - promoted and encouraged by all Kiev governments since 1992 regardless of their political color or foreign orientation.

Under these circumstances one observes without any difficulty that the armed conflict in Ukraine as it has evolved since May 2014 does not fulfill the two sets of criteria required by the Just War Theory and subsequently cannot be regarded as a just war. The actions of the Poroshenko-Yatsenyuk government have been unchristian.

The Christian way of dealing with the requests of the ethnically Russian population from the Eastern territories of what is today Ukraine is the unconditional application of the principle of self-determination. It is not the use of the national armed forces and the submission of the local civilian population to very harsh living conditions.

This conflict must be solved in accordance with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter of 1945, that are based on the points 2 and 3 ("territorial adjustments must be in accord with the wishes of the peoples concerned" and "all people have a right to self-determination") of the Atlantic Charter signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1941. This means that it must be solved by Ukraine assuming a grand strategy similar to that adopted by Finland since 1945 as Prof. Mearsheimer and Dr. Kissinger have suggested in the fall of 2014. Or even better in the current circumstances, by applying the highly civilized model of the Czech and Slovak Republics' separation.

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Welcoming the Stranger: Richard Kearney's Anatheism

In the second half of the most traumatic and explosive century, thinkers are considering the possibility of viewing our time as a new axial age affecting all areas of existence and thinking. In theological philosophy the interpretation of God and of the self in relation to God continues to change in the direction of a growing awareness of God's otherness while celebrating this very otherness. An effervescent debate over the meaning of God and of God's Other, and the future of a continental philosophy of religion after Nietzsche-Altizer's kerygma of the "death of God" has been enlivening ever wider circles in and outside the American and European academia. Various debates have opened up in relation to this theme and inhabit presently the center of what has been identified as the "theological turn" in phenomenology and philosophy. I will refer to Richard Kearney's *Anatheism (Returning to God After God)*¹

In *God Who May Be*, Kearney's metaphysical revision of the nature of God, he explores "ontological and eschatological dimensions of Transcendence addressing issues of metaphysical truth and being."² The more recent *Anatheism* is a hermeneutic narrative that investigates the possibility and nature of religion after the death of the God theologies. The paradigm of his investigation into the question of God is circumscribed to Abrahamic traditions and informed by his personal journey thorough Biblical theism, interreligious dialogue, modernist literature, adventures in European thought and politics in the 20th century, and especially the challenge of a return to the sacred at the birth of the third millennium.³ He questions the meaning of the sacred in a godless world, the possibility and relevance of faith after scientific enlightenment that changed the vision of both our selves and the universe, and two world wars that rendered absurd the idea of history as a divine drama. He proposes anatheism (ana-theos) as a wager of faith

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beyond faith for Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic believers and non-believers alike.

What is anatheism? A third way between militant atheism and dogmatic theism, a return to God after God, second time around free choice of faith after the purging (kathartic) experience of “radical dispossession” that takes many diverse forms—such as existential loss of belief, doubt, and confusion, dramatic katharsis, mystical night of the soul, philosophical Socratic knowing that one does not know or *docta ignorantia*, phenomenological *epoche*. Apophatic theology as well as atheism are modes of radical dispossession and as such *sine qua non* moments for anatheism. The paradigm of anatheism is the suspense provoked by our encounter with the Stranger or Divine Other residing in the human other. Anatheism is an “invitation to revisit a primary scene of religion: the encounter with a radical Stranger whom we choose or don’t choose to call God”: the “event of the Stranger” is at the core of the anatheist wager.⁴

To this encounter we have the option to respond with hostility (by giving in to a natural impulse) or hospitality (by appeal to a faith beyond faith, that involves five moments, imagination, humor, commitment, discernment, hospitality - In the Wager, chapter 2). Kearney finds abundant evidence for the significance of the encounter with the Stranger,

1. In the Moment, chapter one, Biblical: Do we respond with hostility or hospitality, fear or trust, or both when the sacred stranger appears? Inaugural moments of faith begin with our response to an uninvited visitor. Thus “moments of anagnorisis,” “agnostic abandonment, crucial transition to deeper faith”, “liminal events.”⁵ Here “anatheist suspensions of theistic certainties allow for a return (ana) to a second kind of faith, a faith beyond faith in a God beyond God.”⁶

Abraham under the Mamre Tree, Mary at the instant of Annunciation, Muhammad in the cave on Mount Hira are examples selected by Kearney to make visible how religions respond to the advent of alterity in the midst of the human by waging war or peace, by caring or hating.

Kearney provides:

a. A theological discussion, *In the Name*, answering the questions of what we mean when we speak of God: master or servant, sovereign or stranger, emperor or guest.

b. A philosophical perspective, *In the Flesh*, which addresses the sacramental experience of everyday adumbrated by contemporary philosophers like Merleau-Ponty or Kristeva.

c. A poetical musing, *In the text*, adducing Greek drama; Romantic Revolution with Keats' negative capability, the ability to be in uncertainties, doubts; Hopkins, aftering, seconding, over and overing, abiding again, ana (up, back again, anew), retrieving the divine in a world ostensibly estranged from God, recovering the sacred in a time of disenchantment; the nadir of descent katabasis becomes a moment of ascent, anabasis, a second yes to the no of dereliction; Holderlin's double movement of estrangement and epiphany introjects the strange into the homely, poetics of the uncanny, the shortest route from wonder to wonder is loss, sense of homelessness and journey of homecoming); radical experiments in modernity (Joyce, Proust, Woolf) retrieving sacred epiphanies in ordinary existence

d. A hermeneutics of political action, *In the World*, covering recent controversies on the role of theism and atheism in matters of war and peace, democracy and violence and compassion and intolerance

e. Social action in the world and the political, *In the Act*, evoke exemplary figures who refigure our understanding of faith by encountering the sacred in the secular world of action and suffering: Dorothy Day, Jean Vanier, Mahatma Gandhi.

Kearney is critical of anti-theism, the anti-theistic squad as he calls it, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens, which reduces religion to its perversions, judges it accordingly, and dismisses it, thus denying critical dialogue. Anti-theism is as biased and absolutist as dogmatic theism, its arch-enemy. Both fall into unsophisticated literalism and make the category mistake of confusing the domains of science and religion.

Why is a return to God beneficial to or relevant for us at the beginning of the third millennium? It reintroduces the sacralization of the secular, of existence in the flesh and in the world by letting the Transcendent or the sacred manifest in and through the

immanent or the secular. The divine Other, he maintains, comes to us as human others. In the face of these others we may see God if we choose hospitality, namely love and trust over fear and violence, as our response to the Stranger.

Kearney insists that atheism is indifferent to both archeology (origins) and teleology (ends), is not a Hegelian dialectical third moment, a grand finale. It is a Kierkegaardian movement of faith, the option of choosing God again or not. The atheist God to which one returns, no longer the God theodicy, the God we assumed and possessed, is not all-powerful but rather powerless, servant rather than master, a God who suffers and dies (on the Cross) and returns to life, atheistically.

What is the Transcendent? Is atheism a form of global religion? The transcendent is the more (as William James termed it), the untranslatable remainder, which makes the humanly impossible possible, and has been called God. Kearney adduces Habermas's program of translating faith and religion into rational discourse and global democracy. Kearney argues that such a program is both impossible and disquieting. Genuine religions grow around an untranslatable core, the mystic *fonds sans fonds*, which must be attended to and preserved as the root of love and justice in this world. To reduce traditions of faith to a universal moral code means to exile the sacred from the world, or hostility toward the stranger. To the question of humanism, "why does the stranger have to be a divine other, why can't it be just human?" he responds:

recognizing something more in the stranger than the human is a way of acknowledging a dimension of transcendence in the other that []exceeds the finite presence of the person before me a transcendence in and through immanence which far from diminishing humanity, amplifies it.⁷

Certainly, transcending the human may go both ways, can be good or evil. A simple test is enough: listening to the call of the stranger and submitting it to an interrogation:

does the Other in the other bring more abundant life or not? Does it invite us to have more hope, charity—and wonder—than we might have if we did not respond to something higher and deeper in the other person than what meets the eye?

Something that summons us to greater heights and depths than are available at a purely humanist or naturalist level? This is

what I refer to as the call of the stranger in the other, and it is a dimension of alterity that invites belief in the *impossible made possible*.⁸

The call of the stranger is one of hope, charity, and wonder, a summons to greater heights and depths than those available at the humanist or naturalist level. To illustrate what he means, Kearney does not invoke the mystics but social activists. Dorothy Day, Jean Vanier, and Gandhi responded to the call of the stranger by their “fidelity to something sacred - something graciously greater than themselves - [which] gave them the audacity to transform injustice into justice and the passion to serve others in need.” Or recovering addicts and alcoholics who could give up their addictions by acknowledging and “surrendering to a higher power.” A theology of goodness emerges. Kearney explains his wager on the “stranger as an infinite Other incarnate in finite others” as based on a “phenomenological testimony of goodness.” Thus:

The wager on the stranger - as infinite Other incarnate in finite others - is a wager based not on a logic of calculation or probability (Pascal) but on a phenomenological testimony of goodness.⁹

Richard Kearney commences *The God Who May Be* with a kerygmatic declaration as thesis, “God neither is nor is not but may be.” Kearney’s hermeneutics of religion explores two rival interpretations of the divine, the onto-theological and the eschatological. By privileging the latter, he proposes “a God who possibilizes our world from out of the future, from the hoped-for eschaton.”¹⁰ In order to retrieve the eschatological and challenge the classical metaphysical subordination of the possible to the actual, Kearney adduces four biblical texts, the burning bush, the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the Shulamite’s song, and the Annunciation. He invites us to rethink God not as an actuality, but rather as a possibility. Inscribing his thesis in the contemporary philosophical debates - phenomenological, hermeneutic, deconstructive - he proffers the view that God’s potentiality-to-be is not a lack but in fact more divine than traditional divine actuality.¹¹ The God who may be is neither the God as *actus purus*, the “disembodied cause devoid of dynamism and desire” of traditional metaphysics, nor the God of dark nature of German Idealism, but a

“God of desire and promise who calls out of burning bushes, makes pledges and covenants, burns with longing in the song of songs, cries in the wilderness, whispers in caves, comforts those oppressed in darkness, and prefers orphans, widows and strangers to the mighty and the proud.”¹² The possible God who does not overwhelm us by sheer power represents a denial or reversal of the association of the divine with the triumphal God of theodicy, and reveals an otherness of a different order. This otherness of God brings him closer to us since we are called to acknowledge and respond to God’s powerlessness, from our own “powerlessness.” It is precisely in this “vulnerability, fragility, brokenness that we find ourselves empowered to respond to God’s own primordial powerlessness, to make the potential Word flesh.”¹³ Both our brokenness and empowering correspond and mirror God’s own, since “God can be God only if *we* enable this to happen,” by receiving and responding to his call and promise. The nature of God matters to us because “God depends on us,” his promise remains powerless unless we respond to it, thus if we say no to the kingdom, the kingdom will never come. Theodicy is dissolved one more time since the evil in the world is our responsibility, it is the “consequence of our refusal to remain open to the transfiguring call of the other persona - the summons of the orphan, widow, or stranger, the cry of the defenseless one.”¹⁴ The possible God as the eschatological may-be who reaches us in our weakness and calls us forward toward the future into actualizing the promise is 1. “radically transcendent,” 2. “calls and solicits us in a personal summons,” and is 3. possible only in so far as we have “faith in the promise of the advent,” 4. a “power of the powerless.”¹⁵ As the “power of the powerless,” he invites us to remain open to the possible divinity whose gratuitous coming is always surprising and graceful. Kearney names and defines his philosophy of God: dynamatology, metaxology, metaphorology.¹⁶ Dynamatology since God is movement (from the future, toward us); metaxology refers to a theory of God situated in-between theories of God as being itself (onto-theologies); theories of God as other than being, such as beyond being (contemporary forms of mystical and apophatic discourse Marion, Levinas, Derrida) and beneath being, teratology (monstrous, Zizek; Sublime, Lyotard; abject, Kristeva; an-khorite, Caputo); metaphorology, in that the God the possible always traverses being and requires semantic

intersecting and augmentation.¹⁷ To prepare the grounds for a theology of the loving possible and a poetics of *deus posse et ludens*, Kearney reads selectively Husserl, Bloch, Heidegger, Derrida; and retrieves hermeneutically Aristotle, Nicholas of Cusa, and Schelling. It is Heidegger's "loving possible" (a play on *mögen*, love and *vermögen*, to make possible) that defines Being after "the turn" that is the closest approximation to Kearney's intention and he adopts it while transferring it from a discourse on Being to one on God. Heidegger's Being as loving possible is the power that possibilizes the authentic being of things to which human beings may respond by love-possibilizing Being and thinking things and selves in their authentic essence.¹⁸ What does the kingdom mean for us in the third millennium? Kearney maintains that God the loving possibility invites us to actualize the promised possibilities by our "poetical and ethical actions contributing to the transfiguration of the world." We refuse the call to this transfiguring task every time we do "evil or injustice or commit ourselves to non-being."¹⁹ According to the theology of the possible, together and individually we are called to participate actively, lucidly, and lovingly, in the creation of our own world and future. Moreover, the eschatological vision of the kingdom is articulated with the help of an ontological model of play which Kearney finds analogous to the eschatology of the possible. In the image and likeness of possible God as *deus ludens*, each individual is a *homo ludens* transfiguring the world. Kearney retrieves the notion of *perichoresis* (*peri*, around; *choros*, dance) circumcession in Latin, to refer to the Trinitarian play that includes humanity by the second person's entering history.²⁰ God the loving possible appears as advent (rather than *arche*), *eschaton* (rather than *principium*), promising fecundity, natality, fragility, powerlessness, making the impossible possible.

Kearney's eschatological hermeneutics envisages humanity as always on the way, attending or refusing to attend to a radically transcendent call. The individual is a fully responsible creator of his or her world and together responsible for the destiny of the shared world. There is thus a will or intention at work in his elaborate thinking: one of retrieval of a deeper meaning of existence, sacred texts, texts *tout court*, and a gesture toward comprehending more or the more (in both physical and intellectual senses), that reaches a vision of this our world in the third millennium made sacred. For

Kearney the skies have opened, humans and God are again as always conversing with one another, working together for the transfiguration of all.

NOTES:

¹ Richard Kearney, *Anatheism {Returning to God after God}*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010

² *Ibidem*, p. xvii

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Richard Kearney, *The God Who May Be: A Hermeneutics of Religion*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2001, p. 1

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 2. "Refusing to impose a kingdom and declare it already accomplished from the beginning, the God who may be offers us the possibility of realizing a promised kingdom by opening ourselves to the transfiguring power of transcendence."

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 5-8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-93.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-109.

The Practice of Peace and the Engagement of Social Justice through Education During the Never Ending Global War on Poverty

The never-ending global war on poverty is still happening today. As the United Nations completes the implementation and the assessment of results of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we continue to see the overhead issues of poverty even in the most developed nations. By the end of 2015, the United Nations will officially launch a new list of goals to address global poverty ratifying the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are scheduled for implementation for next fifteen years (2015-2030).

The face of poverty is seen in the most vulnerable and dire communities in every country around the world. Access to education, engagement in peace, and commitment to social justice movements geared to alleviate poverty exist as a transformation for the individual and for society. Education for peace, solidarity, and prosperity entails the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and the environment.¹ Without this, we are setting up a contagion of disparities between the abstracts and the realities on addressing various systematic approaches to eradicate poverty. This is true especially in high need communities around the world. Education, I believe, is one opportunity that everyone around the world should have access to. It is education that promotes our well being and it stimulates our awareness about what is right and what is wrong. Unfortunately, the truth is that in many poverty-stricken areas education does not come as easily available.

Living in poverty is a hardship that no one wants to be in. Although theories are debated and presented that poverty are inherited, I actually believe that poverty can also be a situation that is a phantom. At any given time or place, someone can end up in

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poverty because of the circumstances that one is in, not because of who one is. In fact, “poverty is not a Black or White issue and concern – it is a human one and not only national, but also global. Poverty is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. It stands at the apex of multiple intersections, at a minimum, the intersections of race, gender, and class. Ideally, it provides, a deeper and fuller understanding of the gendered nature of racism and capitalism and how these elements frame, shape, and underpin poverty, and its perpetuation ...toward social transformation and social justice.”²

In this paper I will be addressing the importance of engaging the youth and the communities in peace and social justice movements. Most importantly, I will be describing how education plays an active and major role in keeping these movements effective, inspiring, and a great example to bring about change in vulnerable communities. In 2014-2015, I traveled to five specific cities in the developing world (Bogotá, Colombia; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Manila, Philippines; Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire; and New Delhi, India). I was able to conduct face-to-face interviews with individuals who are leading the frontline poverty to preserve the safety, security, the rights, and whole well being of individuals living in the poorest area in each city. Everywhere I go, I think deeply of this statement by Jim Ziolkowski who founded an organization called, *buildOn*,³ to make a difference in the world we live in: “I’ve seen how much suffering there is in the world. Hardship doesn’t discriminate, so I focus on progress.”⁴

The practice of peace is not as easy in many places around the world. But I truly believe that the development of peace is an inevitable requirement for many places to obtain their modernization goals in this generation. Pope Francis in his August 2014 visit in Seoul, South Korea, declared in his speech that “Peace is not simply the absence of war, but the work of justice.”⁵ Historically, in the countries I visited, the peace process is a long shot deal or can be political after a certain devastating event that would somehow shake the city. Let’s take for example Haiti: the United Nations has taken a toll of the city of Port-au-Prince. It was the time after the 2010 earthquake that really triggered a call for peace, structure, and calmness so that people will not riot or danger the distribution of resources throughout the country. In the southernmost part of the Philippines, Mindanao, the desire for the longevity of peace has

been vulnerable over and over again. Historically, Mindanao has been engaged in various military breakouts against the rebel forces which create fear amongst locals in the region. In Colombia, the country has been fighting for peace for decades. People have been displaced from their homes and/or kidnapped by members of the left wing rebels' guerilla armies. In Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), the city of Abidjan went through turmoil when the army rebellion happened in 2002 which prompted the United Nations to launch an operation to implement a model of stability and to facilitate peace agreements between Ivorian parties. In India however, the issue comes down to religion and the outmost conflict between the military and those practicing Islam in the country.

In many cases the act of one's kindness to support a cause geared to help humanity can be seen as a true meaning of engaging in social justice. Participating in causes that provide a voice for one's self, a sustainable living, food, shelter, and other resources, as well as education, is an act of what it means to be a humanitarian. In my personal experiences in visiting and talking to different organizations in Bogotá, Abidjan, Manila, New Delhi, and Port-au-Prince, I was fascinated of how these organizations might have each a different mission, but nevertheless, they are similar in that people truly believe that education is the first pathway to get involved in practicing peacemaking and engaging in social justice. To them education is an..."investment in community as a way to ensure individual freedom and social order."⁶

The following are my reflections during my first visits in the five cities mentioned above. They are first impressions which include vulnerabilities, excitement, and curiosity. In particular, these reflections also provide the very key examples of organizations that I was able to talk to in regards to their amazing work - organizations that are weighting in to the holistic effort to alleviate poverty around the world creatively, working to promote peace and engaging in activities of social justice.

Bogotá

Bogotá, Colombia is experiencing the effect of modernization, slowly but surely. The city is holding tight to its early century Spanish roots. Upon arrival, we found a city busy with

residential construction; small businesses (which seem to be the way of surviving, but we are not too particularly sure of its economic sustainability and its longevity); a congested/polluted city (though every city experiences rush hour traffic, Bogotá is packed with cars, buses, motorcycles, bikes and especially people). Though the country has a wealthy Gross Domestic GDP compared to other Less Developed Countries (LDC), the people of Colombia will not greatly benefit from all the constructions and new developments. Most people cannot afford to live in the new homes/apartments being built and the ones who qualify for the work are not the ones living in the residential areas. There is a lot of people and traffic in the city but poverty is still rampant. People come from far away for work and try to make a living. There is great potential for the city with residential buildings and very few economic opportunities when it comes to new businesses opening there.

World Vision Colombia has been working with a group of committed youth through a local community organization called *El Movimiento Gestores de Paz (The Managers of Peace Movements)*. When my team and I drove to the village of Chinuata, four hours outside of Bogotá, we had no idea that we were about to meet the most hard working, energized, dedicated, and service driven youth from different cities of Colombia who are creating and implementing their very own ideas on how to save their communities.

Today, El Movimiento Gestores de Paz continues its wonderful work around Colombia and hoping to promote the peace movement internationally. It has been awarded several prizes and international awards including two nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize.⁷ The movement is powerful; in fact, it works not just in Colombia, as members have been sharing what they are learning all over the world. Its members over the years have become advocates and teachers of Peace Education, the way Dr. Ian Harris of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, wrote:

The achievement of peace represents a humanizing process whereby individuals manage their violent tendencies. Peace educators contribute to this process by teaching about peace - what it is, why it doesn't exist, and how to achieve it. They use their educational skills to teach about how to create peaceful conditions. Peace education has both short and long term goals. Peace educators

address the sources of immediate conflicts and give their students knowledge about strategies they can use to stop the violence. Peace education hopes to create in the human consciousness a commitment to the ways of peace. Peace educators address the violent nature of society, and ask, "Must it be this way?, Aren't there nonviolent ways that human beings can solve their conflicts? How do we get to these other ways?"⁸

Abidjan

Before coming to Abidjan, I was told that it was the "Manhattan" of West Africa - *It's not*. To me personally, Abidjan stands alone as an emerging West African city filled with economic opportunities not just for the locals but for international investors. I say this because as soon as we arrived, I observed something quite different about Abidjan from other cities I visited in the past. I did not have any sort of culture shock here. In Abidjan most small businesses are open for business while other cities might have buildings with many closed businesses. There's not a lot of "western influence" yet in the city, not even McDonalds or other globalizing companies. After waking around the city on our first day I felt that the city is very business-oriented; however, it is not as crowded as I thought it would be. People have been very helpful and respectful, from the hotel to the local restaurants and even to our taxi experience. Culturally, just by observing the locals, they are very professionally driven, they stand tall and proud, and they greet you with a smile and they just go about their own business.

Of course, just like any developing cities, there are regular problems like pollution, traffic, and public sanitation that are of concern. I also found, even just by driving around, that the outer boroughs of Abidjan are more in "high needs" when it comes to poverty issues. Within the city there's not much to see as a tourist; I think the most interesting thing about Ivory Coast is that coffee and beer are what they are known for when it comes to production and exportation. I would be very interested in learning more about this country and to see how the rest of the country is doing compared to the city of Abidjan, given that the country has been in a long turmoil of crises, which ended in 2011, not long ago. Overall, I have lots of good things to say thus far of my experience here and anything "not

normal” that we experienced is not out of the ordinary compared with our visits to other countries.

One organization that has been committed to the movement of social justice in Abidjan is called *Le Soutien* (Support). *Le Soutien* is located in the Koumassi Slums established in 2006. It works primarily with mothers in the slum areas to provide some sort of stability for their kids. In addition, *Le Soutien* also works with the community to provide education for those kids who have no proper identification.

Port-au-Prince

Twenty-four hours at Port-au-Prince, there was a lot to take in. Haiti has always been the country that I became very curious about ever since my initial study of development. Upon arrival, the heavy presence of poverty is noticeable. Yet, the city is alive and clustered. It felt like it’s naked without any skin. The stereotype I learned is that Port-au-Prince is a city of all wrongs when it comes to development and government was in my mind. Secondly, the effects of globalization, modernization, and the city’s rebuilding efforts after the 2010 earthquake piqued my curiosity. Unfortunately, the reality is that Haiti is poor. You can see that right away. You can tell within hours here that the areas where the most broken down slums crave survival of the fittest. On a good note, even when you realize the gap between the magnitude of poverty and those who are well off, the common denominator is compassion. Everyone here is compassionate. People are aware of the situation. They know the culture of disorganization, corruption, and how to maneuver around a city that holds more than a million while it is originally built to accommodate 500,000 people. The presence of the UN, NGOs and humanitarian organizations runs along the streets of Petionville, Montagne Noire, and Delmas. Organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, World Relief, the Red Cross, CARE, UNICEF, and others, are there.

What you observe in the streets are people selling used merchandise such as handbags, jeans, shoes, bootleg CDs, mattresses, electronics, clothing, kitchen supplies, cell phones, basically an open market of almost anything and everything. But again you can feel the savoir-faire of people. They are street smart.

This is a gripping but heart breaking entertainment for curious minds. Port-au-Prince was hard to take in during the first couple of days; I was finally in the reality of all the abstract literatures I had been reading about. Because I came here to learn through a careful experience, I knew that we could definitely make presence here.

The work of religious missionaries since it started many years ago is both respected and criticized. Nevertheless,

the framework is grounded in the conviction that the pursuit of justice and peace by peaceful means is a sacred priority, and it is employed as a way of examining the texts, traditions, and practices of one religion to another for their contribution to the promotion of justice and peace.⁹

It is in Port-au-Prince, out of all the developing countries I have visited, that the practice and engagements of local and international religious organizations are more than visible. Charities like World Mission and Stone of Help Haiti are organizations working to provide services, education, and resources all over the country. Their engagements to different communities are essential. They are committed to the well being of the locals and their work is in the center of social justice.

Manila

The Philippines is known as the “Pearl of the Orient” in the Southeastern Asian region. With 7,107 islands making up the archipelago, historically the nation has been under the control of Spain for centuries, later a territory of the US and becoming an independent nation in 1946. The Philippines is a hub for imports and exports between the West and the East. It has been the home for many natural disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, and volcanic eruptions. It was just in 2014 that I started touring the Philippines and I believe that its tropical characteristics certainly add to the flair of tourism in the country. Living in the provinces is different from living in the heart of Manila. The heavy traffic in Manila is the same as in the other cities we have visited thus far. Because of the fair amount of my own family members around Manila and the provinces, we were able to set up some local meetings without any problem. I know life can be hard in the Philippines, but I am quite

surprised that I haven't met a single individual from all my interactions who had the desire to stay and live in the Philippines. Almost everyone wants "the out". I realized how desperate people are to go abroad.

In 2013, because of Typhoon Yolanda which hit the eastern part of the Philippines, Visayas, the presence of international organizations in the country doubled. There are organizations that are familiar to many of us such as Habitat for Humanity – Philippines. Habitat has been involved in the rebuilding process of many communities there, but it is through its educational programs that it is able to attract volunteers to assist in projects all over the country that ultimately are producing results. Habitat is also a Christian organization whose mission is to help those who are in need of shelter. Because of its work more and more people are becoming involved. It is apparent that when catastrophe hits in dire areas around the world, people are always willing to help. Because of that very passion of humanity, many are starting grassroots movements or foundations in the Philippines. We have seen in the past ten years that even huge entertainment companies such as ABS-CBN network, financial institutions, colleges and universities, and the people of its Diaspora are getting involved in charities. Which proves this statement true:

People need to be made aware that they, too, can work towards the creation of a more peaceful world. People need to be reminded that an individual who acts with pure intentions can make a profound difference, can influence events that are important to the continued existence of mankind.¹⁰

New Delhi

It is a fair statement to say that not all of New Delhi has reached the 21st century modernization I thought it would have. As a city known to rebuild itself over and over again and having the name changed from Delhi to New Delhi, I was disappointed to see that New Delhi is not so "new". There are pockets of the city that are posh but most are not. It is a fascinating city filled with rich history from the original Mungal Empire to the British Empire. There is a sense of conservatism versus liberalism, from the way people dress

to the way people communicate. The city is polluted, packed, but alive. Local food is delicious but can be tiring. The sanitation system in the old town seems to be a big concern given that there is a lot of garbage around. Big government agencies and NGOs are present all over downtown but it seems very difficult to access them. Walking around, I felt like I was back in time. Tall buildings are standing but most are age-weathered or even abandoned. Just being here feels like you are in a place which was once left behind, then it aged, then it was discovered again.

We visited the Community Development Center at the Janjeevan Slums in the Karpoori Thakur area during our visit in New Delhi. We met with Mrs. Rani Dorcus Stark who is the lead Community Organizer of the center. Mrs. Stark has been a community organizer for 25 years and also was a primary and secondary school teacher. The Karpoori Thakur CDC has a staff of 25 people, three of whom are fulltime and the remaining being part-time activity instructors. Over tea, Mrs. Stark explained to us (with the help of Daya) that the YMCA's Department of Social and Human Development works with the underserved and poor communities. The work is coordinated through five Community Development Centers and 16 Alternative Learning Centers (ALCs) in the Delhi area. Each center offers 21 enrichment activities. These activities include education for children below the age of three (who are placed in the crèche group) and ages 3-5 (Balwadi) (until they are eligible to attend school), remedial education (after-school), vocational training for adolescents, community health programs for women and children, family counseling, self-help groups, awareness programs (legal rights and advocacy, food and nutrition, and leadership building), youth sports programs (including self-defense for girls) and summer camps for children and teenagers. The CDC also offers daily milk, crackers, and other food to the children, which is tracked on a weekly chart. This particular CDC serves approximately 450 children. The YMCA fully funds these outreach centers with about 21,000 people being reached in a fiscal year by all of the CDC and ALC locations.

Conclusion

Addressing the War of Global Poverty represented a major shift in many nations' government international priorities or public policy – including the United States. Education plays an important role and will produce a large number of returns for many families when it comes to economic stability as one reads in a document:

when economic mobility is high, individuals and families can lift themselves out of poverty by taking advantage of opportunities to improve their economic well-being. When economic mobility is low, it is difficult to change one's economic status and people may become stuck in poverty.¹¹

Nevertheless, I will argue that education also comes hand-in-hand with peacemaking and the movement of social justice; all combined can address the very problem we have: fighting poverty. Fighting poverty should not be “politicized” and it should not be a profitable business. It is a movement of social justice itself. In the peace process, “not all interventions go well, but the UN is quite good at peacekeeping, despite its well publicized blunders;”¹² it is the same thing when it comes to development. The effort to make education an important category in international development will always be needed. Education gives all of us an opportunity. Because education is an “all round progress” and “the sole basis of achieving's one purpose”, with that, it is easier to handle negotiations or form agreements without violence.

Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, India, and The Philippines are countries that represent work in progress. They all have cities that are emerging and indeed there are a lot of opportunities there. People living in these cities are *hungry* – they are eager to learn, to do, and to get involved. The religious organizations involved in providing education, working in peace movements, and engaging in social justice should be commended for their efforts and activities that are visible and effective. We might not know when the war on global poverty will end, but I know that every single individual involved in this humanitarian act of kindness to help people out of it will do whatever it takes, until sacrifice as this is what gives everyone the satisfaction and the peace of mind one needs in life.

NOTES:

- ¹ Paul Cheptkuto, Jemimah Ombongi, and Stanley Kipsang, “The Role of Education in Fostering Peace, Solidary, and Prosperity in Kenya,” in *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 8, August 2014, p. 347.
- ² Kay Ann Taylor, “Poverty’s Multiple Dimensions,” in *Journal of Educational Controversy*, Kansas State University, www.wce.wvu.edu.
- ³ *buildOn Mission*: buildOn builds schools within villages that have historically had no adequate school structure around the world and it engages students in challenging urban areas and shows them the limitless power they can achieve through community action (www.buildon.org).
- ⁴ Jim Ziolkowski, *Walk In Their Shoes, Can One Person Change the World?*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2013, p. 233.
- ⁵ Francis X. Rocca, “In South Korea, Pope Calls for Peace, Democracy, and Social Justice,” in *Catholic News Service*, August 14, 2014, www.catholicnews.com
- ⁶ Annelise Orleck, “The War on Poverty and the Battle for Community Control,” review in *American History*, Volume 41, The John Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- ⁷ World Vision International (www.wvi.org/es/GestoresdePaz).
- ⁸ Ian Harris, “Peace Education: Definition, Approaches, and Future Directions,” in *Peace, Literature, and Art*, Vol. 1, Department of Educational Policy and Community Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
- ⁹ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁰ Paul Cheptkuto, Jemimah Ombongi, and Stanley Kipsang, *op. cit.*, p. 352.
- ¹¹ The Council of Economic Advisers, *The War on Poverty, 50 Years Later: A Progress Report*, Washington, DC, January 2014, p. 33.
- ¹² J. Martin Ramirez, “Peace and Development in Africa,” in *International Journal on World Peace*, Psychobiology Department, Institute for Biofunctional Studies, Universidad Complutense Madrid, Spain, September 2005, p. 68.



Ana Chelariu



Bert Breiner



Steven Cresap (left) and Louis Tietje

Jesus' Curse of the Fig Tree (New Testament) and The Bráhmaṇ of Two Birds in a Fig Tree (Rig Veda), Parables of Teaching

This paper offers a discussion on two parables from different cultural areas, both revolving around the fig tree. The symbolism and metaphorical imagery surrounding this tree transpire from its function in ancient teachings and stories from antiquity. A brief recall of the most familiar of these stories could reveal ways in which this fruit tree was perceived by people in antiquity.

In Homer's *Odyssey* (12. 430 ff.) we find the fig tree instrumental in saving Odysseus from drowning: after reaching the Island of Helios, Odysseus' men overstep his orders and eat the god's livestock; upon the Sun god's complaint of this sacrilege, Zeus starts a big storm killing all Odysseus's men smashed with their boat between Scylla and Charybdis. Only Odysseus saves himself by hanging on a fig tree rising from the cliffs of Charybdis. Here we could speculate that by abstaining from eating flesh in the land of the Sun, the land of the divine light, the Greek hero was saved from peril by a sacred fig tree.

Ovid tells in his *Fasti* (Book II: February 14) the story of Phoebus who, preparing a feast for Jove, asks his Raven to bring some fresh water from the nearby stream. On the way to the water the Raven sees a fig tree with unripe fruit, forgets about the job he is supposed to do, and decides to wait there until the fruits ripens. Pleased, the Raven comes back with a snake in his beak blaming the reptile for his tardiness. Angered by the delays and lies, the god punishes his bird not to drink cool fresh water from springs "Until the ripened figs cling to the trees." Again, we see Phoebus Apollo, the god of light, punishing his sacred bird for setting his own desires ahead of those of his divine lord.

Other occurrences related to the fig tree include the Roman tradition in which it is said that Romulus and Remus, the twin

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founders of Rome, were suckled by a she-wolf under a fig tree. In the time of Pliny Roman people revered the fig tree as sacred. In the Far East, it is known that while sitting under a fig-tree, Siddhartha Gautama had the revelation that formed the foundation of Buddhism. In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve used fig leaves to cover themselves. God gave Israel the land of wine and fig trees, symbol of blessing, peace and contentment and the fig tree was considered a symbol of Israel.

Figs have been praised for both medicinal and nutritional value. The Greek king Mithridates, (120-63 B.C.) viewed figs as antidotes for all sicknesses, teaching his physicians to use this fruit as medicine. For Pliny of Rome (62-113) figs were regenerative food for those with long sickness, increasing the strength in young people, helping the elderly to attain good health, and so forth. In the original Olympic games, winning athletes were crowned with fig wreaths and given figs to eat.

From this short narrative it seems plausible to presume that since in ancient cultures the figs were highly appreciated for their sweetness and therapeutic qualities, people believed they were a gift from gods. Thus the fig tree became a symbol of life and immortality, playing an important role in metaphorical imagery of the sacred, often utilized in parables and religious teachings.

The well-known Christian parable, Jesus Cursing of the Fig Tree, which became the subject of many discussions and interpretations, is comprised in the following text from the Gospel of Matthew 21:19 (New International Version):

Seeing a fig tree by the road, He went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then He said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again!' Immediately the tree withered.

The other parable/bráhmaṇ from Rig Veda in which the fig tree is at the center of teachings, reproduced here in the translation of Willard Johnson (Poetry and Speculation of the Rig Veda, Univ. of California Press, 1980, p.45):

Two birds, paired companions, occupy the same tree
Of the two, one eats the sweet fig,
The other, not (yet) eating, looks on.

Where birds unwinkingly celebrate contests, their life's bounty

There he, the splendid herdsman of all creation,
Wise (Agni) entered me, unrealizing (before that).

Onto that tree honey-eating birds all alight and mature,
At the top of it lone, they say, is the sweet fig-
No one reaches up to it who knows not the father!

(Rig Veda 1.164.20-22)

Since both these parable center around the fig tree some characteristics of the tree should be mentioned. In natural circumstances, the fig tree had fruits even before growing leaves. By the time leaves grow, the fruits blend so well among them that seen from afar one could assume the fruits may be ripe. Here we could note that figs were a traditional Jewish food at Passover and that Jesus entered Jerusalem on this holiday, thus the figs should have been ripe. As the fig tree was the symbol of Israel, we could assume that for Jesus the fig tree symbolized the spirituality and piety of His people. The leaved but fruitless tree associates with Jesus' actions, first (according to Matthew 21:12-13) driving out the merchants from the temple, followed by the cursing of the fig tree. Metaphorically, the barren fig tree denotes the barren souls of the people, their lack of spiritual piety in the house of prayer. Through parable Jesus teaching refers to the act of true prayer as a way of reaching spiritual enlightenment, thus not only leaves but fruits, not only formal enactment of religious rituals but true piety through prayer.

In the Sanskrit verses cited above the elements of the parable received various interpretations: some regard the two birds as two aspects of the same self, one indulging in the sweetness of the nature's fruits, the other looking over, not yet eating or perhaps abstaining. Other interpretation regards the two as companions engaged in a symbolic challenge of attaining immortality epitomized by the fig tree, the tree of life.

For Willard Johnson the two birds represent one the father who, by savoring the sweetness of the sacred fig, shows the other, his son, the way of enlightenment, the way into the realm of immortality and cosmic power symbolized by the tree of life. Interestingly, in the Upanishad reinterpretation of this bráhmañ the bird that does not eat the fruit is superior to the one that does, hence

not eating the earthly goods became a way of attaining enlightenment.

Drawing a parallel between the two parables, we could observe the similar function of the fig fruit, that of spirituality next to that of life and cosmic power. Comparing the interpretation of the Rig Veda bráhmaṇ with the parable of the barren tree could place Jesus in the position of the son looking over towards the father, as the fig tree is not ripe just yet, in anticipation of His Father's enlightenment.

If we look from the Upanishad's angle, Jesus is the superior entity in the parable: by the denial of His personal satisfaction, He is shown as the Teacher engaged in His role of elevating His people's spirituality.

The two parables use similar metaphorical context, that of the fig tree and its fruits symbolizing the sweetness of the spiritual life towards contemplating the divine cosmic power. How these values are conveyed to us display two ways of teaching, one showing the path, the other showing the power of prayer and faith.

The Tragic Sense of Life or We Are Left with *Self*: Theatrical Roots Re-Visited

Preliminary remarks

There is nothing new about the fact that the modern self tries to reread the past in terms of its present situation. This is unusual only in the intensity with which it is done. The impact of the 1989 revolution in Middle and Eastern Europe and the challenges of a worldwide globalization since then are, no doubt, current motivating factors. (“Porodice Price” (Familiengeschichten. Belgrad) by Biljana Srbljanovic is such an all-European theme after the fall of the wall.) But the phenomenon in general is still directly related to the horrors of the two World Wars and the *hybris* of communist and national socialist/fascist experimentations of the 20th century and their lasting impact on Western self-determination. Those events had the double function of separating man from time and eliminating most associations with ordinary reality. The strategy of adjustment to unrestrained violence took in the 1920th the form of making unintelligible generalizations by defending it as something vast, unreal, and unavailable to rational explanation or as the outcome of certain circumstances. The balance between life, death and universality seemed not longer maintainable. How could one know, “what constitutes me most fundamentally”,¹ Bernhard Reich asked in his 1927 Moscovite lectures about “Community in Classical Athens”. From the ecstatic cry of the expressionists to the martial joy of being among the cadres of party discipline appeared as a result of man’s free will, taken in the face of the “world’s absurdity”. It involved the most fundamental question of how man views and defines himself, and thus can assume the significance of modern myth.

Rejection of plots and dramatic situations in theatre became a characteristic means of representation of modern man in those years

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(as realized in the plays of Kaiser and Toller for example). “Great characters” became the focus of dramaturgy. A quest for disharmony, tension, the shocking, and the power of creating the fantastic were other traits of the expressionist mind (Artaud, Piscator). A wide-spread, quasi natural reaction to this movement was to trust nothing that is vague, abstract, and not associated with immediate experience. The evolution of Brecht’s dramatic theory from his early rejection of Stanislavskian realism and his demanding of emotional coolness from the spectator to his later acceptance of the power of theatre to emotionally involve the audience reflects, on the one hand, his vivid awareness of the social and political events, but at the same time, orients itself along the ancient Greeks (and the Elisabethans). Simultaneously, the new middle class had been looking for an inspiration in developing an art form that would celebrate the community rather than the individual. The virtues of Homeric heroes and the widespread post-war trauma were interlinked and had made the public vulnerable to any new interpretation of its social and historical interests. Fascism, for example, “tapped the rebellious rejection of the young outsiders of a generation that had come of age in the trenches of war or in the street demonstrations and unemployment lines of the immediate postwar days. Mussolini’s *squadristi* marched off singing *Giovinazza* (Youth). Captain Goemboes was thirty-three in 1920; Codreanu was twenty; Hitler thirty-one.”² Nazis and Communists alike considered the existing cultural system, the “Golden 20ies”, so corrupted by the ruling classes that it was beyond reform by even the most radical means; it could only be destroyed and replaced. However, it took until the “total capitulation” of the Third Reich and its allies in 1945 that the “theatre of character” was finally replaced by a “theatre of situation”. Most collaborators of the nazis re-wrote their biographies and turned themselves into resistance fighters or innocent bystanders. Protagonists, who understood the *zeitgeist*, stepped back into the chorus. To be a victim became the identity of the day, and the term “guilt” was unheard of. The famous Sartre/Camus controversy about the pendulum effect in history between societies based on religion and those based on man's challenges, up to this day still determines the ways of interpreting history and tragedy. The Greeks' portrayal of the heroic individual in conflict with the interests of the *polis* does not stand in sharp

contrast to the radiating power of the existentialists. Sartre, in his “Forger des mythes” (1946), for instance, persuades the survivors of the “national-socialist experiment” to return to tragedy “as the Greeks saw it” – a reaffirmation of the Hegelian right. This new approach shows “a man who is free within the circle of his own situations, who chooses, whether he wishes to do so or not, for everyone else when he chooses for himself.”³ Again, the “world’s absurdity” drives the discourse. Its context is the Cold War of the 1940th and 1950th between democracies and soviet imperialism. Albert Camus considered Sartre’s “Marxism an embracing of a tainted partial perspective, a betrayal of individual consciousness in favor of the collective.”⁴ Sartre, on the other hand, accuses Camus of unwillingness to give up his ideological interests. Camus prefers Hebbel instead of Hegel, looking to the Greek experience and its adaptability for his generation's needs. He observes that “the tragic age always seems to coincide with an evaluation in which man, consciously or not, frees himself from an older form of civilization and finds that he has broken away from it without having found a new form that satisfied him.”⁵ The author of *Le mythe de Sisyphe* (1943) describes how his contemporaries have turned human intellect, science and history into a new deity, which has now “assumed the mask of destiny”.⁶ The individual, seeking freedom from this new god, is once more “in the ambiguous and contradictory state that can give rise to tragic expression”.⁷ The veterans who fought the battles are left *Outside the Door*, to quote the title of Wolfgang Borchert’s 1946 anti-war play, which became the theme for the German post-war-generation.

Most of the poetry written about the Second World War considers the landscape of violence “as a space suspended between the past the soldier has left and the future to which he hopes to return.”⁸ It repeats what already had been said after the first war of the century. And it reflects the experience that suffering is not the result of a visitation from Heaven, as in Greek tragedy, but is inflicted by modern man himself.

The expressionist “cry” for the creation of a new human being, which both the extreme left and right had demanded, has not only led to concentration camps and gulags or graves of “unknown soldiers” and dehumanized protagonists, but also to the conscience of a self as an identifiable entity (with a name, a sex, and a set of

personal characteristics). Projected against the historical storms between 1905 and 1989 the human *self* appears lost in the desert and ridden by *angst*.

(Gerhard Hauptmann's adaptations of Homer's myths during the years of war replaced both, the Bible and Goethe's *Faust* - the prescribed readings in the German soldiers' knapsack during the war of 1914-1918, before the Russian winter would kill them.) Since ancient times the self existed in "partnership" either with God or with a philosophy that denied or accommodated Him. Within the judeo-christian culture, mankind's original sin was considered to be hybris, or man's belief to be godlike. It is this belief that Unamuno, for example, insists upon, against all arguments to the contrary by reason and logic (*The Tragic Sense of Life*). But "the shock of violence unaccounted for, unseen, unreal, and unreasonable, meant that the self was separated from most doctrines of sufficient reason; it had to make its 'separate peace'." All over the non-totalitarian, free world, from Vienna to Los Angeles, Freud's "couches" became the battlefields of the self. The community did not longer ask for a needed social therapy. "Commitment" became a term for a lost value system. And long before "political correctness" was prescribed by an alienated institutionalized democracy the self had already trained itself to avoid contradictions and conflicts of social nature.

The turmoil of the 20th century

Let us step back in time for a moment and focus on why the Greek tragic hero had become the unique type the "lost generation" of World War I could relate to. This had sprung from a double perspective: looking back toward the Ancient laws of the gods, and forward to a new community and nation. The tragic hero is not as an ideal character, but that functions as a warning addressed to the *demos*, the collective chorus, and not to an aristocratic audience. Those basic circumstances of Ancient Greek theatre returned into the minds of the Western theatre reformers in evaluating the theatrical conventions of their time. The military virtues of courage, resourcefulness, magnanimity and the old code of honor in general were again under investigation and finally rejected. German directors like Reinhardt and Jessner aligned their work along the

ancient Greek classics' portrayal of the antagonists and the chorus in order to enlighten the citizens of the newly formed Weimar Republic. Reinhardt's *Grosses Schauspielhaus* had a circus arena in a former market hall converted into a huge regular ancient Greek theatre space by the visionary young architect Hans Poelzig. He realized Reinhardt's dream of bridging the gap between actor and audience and making the spectator part of the action. The opening performance of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* was the 20th century first new interpretation of the play. Its success reflected the audience's recognition of their needs for the upcoming democratic society. Fritz Engels, the drama critique of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, wrote in November 1919: "For the first time we were shown the entire trilogy. What was distant beauty eight years ago has become a real experience. A war between the hemispheres is over; Europe has fought with Asia over a whore, a warrior returns home."¹⁰ This performance was the first representative action of a new republican consciousness, rendered for a people not yet aware of its importance for the preservation of the newly gained democracy. The appreciation of the theatre of the ancient Greek texts was able to bridge disparate political and aesthetic positions. From Benjamin to Lukasz they approved: "The essence of these great moments is the pure experience of the self."¹¹ For the performances of ancient Greek dramas during the 1920ies certain theatrical devices became rules of thumb for cutting through the jungle of the arising questions.

Piscator meant to present "plays of active protest, a deliberate *J'accuse*; a reportage and montage; a warning that history is marching on; political satire, morality plays and court trials, were meant to be shocking on purpose."¹² Piscator had Walter Gropius design a flexible theater-in-the-round, his new interpretation of the Ancient theatrical space for his concept of a total theatre, but he never managed to raise the money to actually build it.

The possibility of creating a new humanity through a cultural revolution seemed greatest in Russia, where a bolshevik *coup d'etat* had toppled the young democracy and replaced it with a bloody regime. Leon Trotzky predicted in 1932 that under these circumstances "man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser, and subtler; his body will become more harmonized, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to

the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this range new peaks will rise.”¹³ The poet Vladimir Mayakovski recited roughly hewn verses that praised the revolution: “Fall into step and prepare to march!/ No time now to talk or trifle./ Silence, you orators!/ the word is yours,/ Comrade Rifle!/ We have lived long enough by laws/ For which Adam and Eve had made the draft./ Stable history’s poor old horse!/ Left!/ Left!/ Left!”¹⁴ And Vsevolod Meyerhold initiated an “October revolution for the theater” with stylized sets and actors trained in mechanical gestures. He arranged seats freely in his theatre and issued tickets at random to soldiers and workers. But all the artists' and intellectuals' desire to assemble a mass audience and transform it into an integrated community (of followers of an ideology) was doomed to frustration. As so many times during the 20th century, their individual self-expression failed to live up to the goals of their professions. There is a pathetic note in Klee’s admission during his 1923 Bauhaus lectures. All that was lacking in the community begun at the Bauhaus, Klee said, was an audience: “We are seeking a people.”¹⁵

By reviving *The Oresteia*, *Oedipus*, and *Elektra* (in Hofmannsthal’s version), Reinhardt showed the viability of poetic drama on the modern stage. He also restored the possibility of portraying a generalized human struggle by depicting representative figures in conflict with cosmic forces in place of the petty domesticity of the naturalistic drama. Reinhardt’s 1919 production of *The Oresteia* in “The Theatre of the Five Thousand”, as his new building was called, used an open stage and every available contemporary mechanical device. This production stood for the hope that theatrical spaces would contain modern life as once the great *orchestra* had contained the Greek community. Reinhardt borrowed freely from the techniques of the circus and from Chinese and Japanese traditional theatre. It was his avowed intention to free the theatre from the shackles of literature.

The basic experience of the turmoil of the 20th century is that the self cannot be sustained without some viable ethical code, and thus there were many contrived readjustments. The search for a sustaining identity availed itself of archetypal resources. By returning to one's own “emotional memory,” the storage of “stories,” the conscience of the self discovered thinking as the capacity for intervention as embodied within the dramaturgy of the

ancient Greeks. This position wove together the following two elements: the discourse of the body and the discourse of the law. Their intersections occur within the performer, a body, so to speak “in recess”, since the performer's space (as well as the spectator's) is an “in-between”-space (between inside and outside), as well as their time is an “in-between” time (between past and future).

To de-naturalize “obtained truths”, to challenge what is perceived “natural” (war, for instance), to uncover the confusion and to detect abuses within the community appear to be only too familiar needs of actual society. In order to determine the twists of history and to survive the clashes of civilizations it is not enough to denounce cartoons and acts of violence.

Back to ancient Greek tragedy

Re-visiting ancient Greek tragedy gives form to raw material. Thus it works in a manner similar to that of nature itself. By observing partially realized forms in nature one may anticipate their completion. Access to this process is provided by current history not through the ancient myths, just as it was for the Athenians of the 5th century B.C., who had to resist the Homeric heroes for their community's needs. But the *orchestra* of the past shows things not as they were but as they “were supposed to be”; hence Aristotle's insistence that poetry work by “probability or necessity.” In this way “new interpretations” free themselves from accidental and individual elements. As Aristotle points out in the famous distinction between poetry and history in chapter 9 of the *Poetics*, “Poetry therefore is more philosophical and more significant than history, for poetry is more concerned with the universal, and history more with the individual.”¹⁶

By removing the copies of the myths from their truth ancient theatre achieved its creative social performance within the ancient Greek community. In providing a positive function for *mimesis* it taught the revelation of reality, aside from raising moral and ethical questions. In essence, it is the realization of the ideal member of democracy that is significant for any kind of re-visiting, or re-reading, or re-interpreting the dynamics between protagonist and chorus for the training of a modest law-abiding citizen through rejection of the reactionary nature of the inhumane Homeric hero.

“Unhappy the land where heroes are needed”, thus Brecht’s Galileo defends himself after recanting his doctrine of the motion of the earth. In order to deal with the forces of the inquisition, the KGB or the Gestapo your mind must be free of myths, otherwise there will never be an age of reason as Euripides, Calderon or Brecht imagined it for the future of their contemporaries.

All interpretations of ancient Greek theatre have focused on questions like these: What is the moral effect of war on human beings? What virtues and vices does it encourage as contrasted with those encouraged by peace? In that manner the modern Western theatre learned not to cast moral judgment on their heroes but rather on the nature of their own existence. It is within this context where the definition of “gestus” becomes the clearest and fullest source of theatrical wisdom to be found within Brecht’s writings. For whom does it claim to be of use? What practical action corresponds to it? Ancient Greek theatre was not just about reinforcing the existing social structure and celebrating Athenian democracy. It was also a theatre for raising questions. Athenian society was full of contradictions and the community was aware of the fact, that the future could neither be predicted nor controlled. To check and to balance divergent interests and to find compromises for the whole was a need for progress. The plays call the community to account for its actions and charge individuals with taking responsibility for their decisions. As protagonists struggle toward self-knowledge, their view is frequently distorted by arrogance and passion. Wisdom is achieved only through catastrophic suffering as both tragedy and history has taught us.

Theatre as catharsis

Let us remember two other basic guidelines Aristotle gives for interpretations.

The *Poetics* chapter 6, sums up previous thoughts in the central definition of tragedy as “an imitation of a noble and complete action, having the proper magnitude; it employs language that has been artistically enhanced by each of the kinds of linguistic adornment, applied separately in the various parts of the play; it is presented in dramatic, not narrative form, and achieves, through the

representation of pitiable and fearful incidents, the catharsis of such pitiable and fearful incidents.”¹⁷

From theatre history we know that the calculated outcome from *catharsis* has proved most troublesome in this definition. Since hundred of years interpretations have grown from different views of tragedy as a whole, but all agree upon *catharsis* as a beneficial, uplifting experience, whether psychological, moral, intellectual, or some combination of these. Last but not least it is a refutation of Plato’s charge that art is morally harmful.

Another chapter of the *Poetics* too, the 13th, gives rise to much debate: the description of the preferred hero of tragedy. The *ethnos* (character) is defined as “a person who is neither perfect in virtue and justice nor one who fall into misfortune through vice and depravity: but rather, one who succumbs through some miscalculation.”¹⁸ But that is beyond any reality of theatre making. It reminds us of our fundamental being. We are man of the city of God and the city of man.

It is not so much that the *self* needs a God, but that it can not stand alone. “It is a comfort to know that patterns of behavior, actual or imagined, are repetitious, shared archetypically with the entire history of the race, are actually a part of a ‘collective unconscious’, to which each self may attend if the need occurs. This is not to defeat death but to gain a kind of immortality in the sharing of the undying patterns.”¹⁹ It reflects not just tragic, but common sense of life, asking in changing times for new interpretations.

Conclusions

In Chagall’s *Time is a River without Banks* the timeless clock, though referring to eternity, may not refer to death. On a broad river floats a tiny boat, apparently a symbol of human life carried on the back of the stream of time. Two lovers lie on the river’s border. They are outside of time’s stream, oblivious of the passing hours. “To the fortunate time stands still...” says Schiller in *Wallenstein*. This is symbolized by the large pendulum clock without hands which floats in the center of the painting. Above it flies a winged fish which plays the violin. He, like the lovers, has escaped from the confirming streams of time – his music endowing him with wings: the artist lives forever through his art. But his *self* is

only of interest, if he participates with his work in the community's competition for defining its narratives.

No doubt, the modern self tries to reread the past in terms of its present situation.

Revivals of Ancient Greek texts “emphasize the heroic struggle with evil, or seize upon dramatizations of force in the near or remote past”²⁰ as productions of Peter Stein and Andre Serban were famous for. The new role the chorus got assigned to was to show, how the modern *self* became successible////////// to harm and pain.²¹

The European mind these days is occupied by the process of European unification, based on the impact of the 1989 revolution in Middle and Eastern Europe and the challenges of the worldwide globalization. But it was the liberation of the *self* in the former soviet occupied nations that re-affirmed a value system, which rejects the former Western policy of appeasement, developed during the division of the continent, and its contempt to dismiss religion. A revived concern about “commitment and community” gives life to newly established democratic institutions and government policies.

What we can learn from re-visiting the Ancient Greek tragedies is that *ethos* is always directly connected to *mythos*. The emphasis is not upon particularizing the character, as in much modern theatre, but upon developing an agent appropriate to the action. It is after all the tragic sense of life we are left with as society.

NOTES:

¹ Bernhard Reich, *Community in Classical Athens*, manuscript, Reich-Lacis-Archiv, Berlin.

² Robert O. Paxton, *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, Harcourt, New York, 1975, p. 212.

³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sartre on Theatre*, trans. Frank Jellinck, New York, 1976, p. 36.

⁴ Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1993, p. 399.

⁵ Albert Camus, *Lyrical and Critical*, trans. Philip Thody, London, 1967, p. 179.

- ⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 185.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187.
- ⁸ Frederick J. Hoffman, "Mortality and Modern Literature," in: *The Meaning of Death*, ed. by Herman Feifel, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1959, p. 148.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- ¹⁰ Fritz Engels, "Buehnenrundschau," in *Berliner Tageblatt*, 17. November 1919, p. 5.
- ¹¹ Georg Lukacs, *Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock, Cambridge, Mass., 1970, p. 157.
- ¹² Quoted in Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s*, New York, 1972, p. 255.
- ¹³ Leon Trotzky, *Literature and Revolution*, New York, 1957, p. 256.
- ¹⁴ Vladimir Mayakowski, "Left March," trans. C.M. Bowra, in: C.M. Bowra, ed., *Second Book of Russian Verse*, London, 1948, p. 131.
- ¹⁵ Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, London, 1948, p. 55.
- ¹⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Leon Golden, commentary by O. B. Haridson, Engelwood Cliffs, N.J., 1968, p. 17.
- ¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 11.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- ¹⁹ Frederick J. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
- ²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 149.
- ²¹ Heinz-Uwe Haus, "Hubris and Blindness: How Much does Alan Greenspan Matter", in *Re-Reading Ancient Greek Theater Texts*, Cyclos Theater Books, Nicosia, 2005, pp. 19-30.



Clair McPherson during his presentation



Elvin Ramos speaking



GTS and MCNY students participate in the event

Mântuirea adusă de Hristos prin întreita Sa slujire de Învățător - Prooroc, Arhiereu (jertfă supremă) și Împărat, în teologia părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae

Abstract

The importance of the threefold ministry of Christ is outlined and analysed by Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae in many of his works. He made valuable contributions to the understanding of the topic in a holistic manner, placing it in the broader context of the soteriological work of Christ, more specifically indicating the direction that His threefold ministry takes.

The vast and varied literature that the author uses as a basis to debate his ideas, starting with the Scriptural and Patristic texts and culminating with the views of contemporary Christian theologians, the pleasant and relaxed discourse unlike the one a textbook may have, as well as the spontaneity with which the author analyses important issues with interdenominational echoes indicate that his approach on this subject is of highest interest for current theological research. This paper outlines several dimensions of this approach.

Introducere

Personalitatea complexă a părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae, cel pe bună dreptate considerat cel mai mare teolog român al secolului trecut și unul dintre cei mai mari teologi răsăriteni ai tuturor timpurilor¹ a suscitat, suscită și va suscita încă, asemenea operei lui, interesul teologilor mai vechi sau mai noi.

Ideile lui, răspândite în paginile prodigioasei sale opere², fac încă subiectul multor dezbateri și dau tonul multor cercetări, nefiind

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nici pe departe depășite sau epuizate. Ceea ce surprinde la teologul român este prospețimea abordării și a discursului și originalitatea creatoare, plasată însă, paradoxal, în cadrele doctrinare circumscrise de spiritualitatea ortodoxă, pe care a trăit-o și slujit-o cu devotament³.

Fascinant este, de exemplu, felul în care, reușește el să aducă contribuții personale chiar și în contextul abordării unor probleme cvasi-cunoscute până și “publicului larg”. Bunăoară, în cercetarea privitoare la modul în care Hristos a adus umanității mântuirea prin înțreita Lui slujire, asupra căreia ne vom opri în rândurile următoare, problemă abordată intens și în mediul apusean⁴, chiar și în cel protestant, și în mediile neoprotestante⁵, care se constituie încă într-o adevărată “piatră de poticneală” chiar și în dialogul ecumenic, având puternice rezonanțe în hristologia multor religii creștine, el se distinge atât prin abordarea holistică⁶ (prin care vede înțreita slujire atât în contextul soteriologiei în general, cât și în contextul chenozei, realizând corelații cu alte aspecte similare din cadrul operei de mântuire sau analizând aspecte dintre cele mai diverse precum cel liturgic⁷, de exemplu), cât și prin aspectele pluridirecționale⁸ pe care le dă acestor slujiri, sau prin dinamica abordării, fiind, datorită acestui fapt, cercetat chiar și de către reprezentanții altor culte⁹.

E interesantă, desigur, și diversitatea abordării acestei problematici, diferită atât în funcție de opera în care apare ea, cât și în funcție de segmentul de cititori cărora se adresează. Astfel, în manualele de *Teologie Dogmatică*, destinate studenților, abordarea sa este mai amplă¹⁰ și, în ciuda caracterului didactic, autorul reușește să depășească limbajul arid al teologiei de școală și să dea expunerii sale o vigoare ce-l determină pe cititor să pătrundă în profunzimile acestui proces *sine qua non* al teologiei, în vreme ce, în opere ce se adresează unui public cititor mai larg, fără a fi însă opere de popularizare, abordarea acestei problematici este sintetizată în fraze scurte, cu un limbaj nu foarte sofisticat, în care comprimă într-un mod plăcut și interesant deopotrivă, întreaga teologie a înțreitei slujiri:

Iisus Hristos este slujitorul desăvârșit pe care Îl anunță profeții Vechiului Testament, robul care suferă și iubește, robul infinit blând și blând și compătimitor, robul lui Dumnezeu devenit prin voința Sa rob al oamenilor. El este Dumnezeu care își slujește prin voința Sa propria Creatură. Dar El se face și om, slujind pe Creatorul Său

pentru binele oamenilor. Prin această slujire a oamenilor, el manifestă paternitatea¹¹ lui Dumnezeu. Prin slujirea lui Dumnezeu, îl inițiază pe om în demnitatea de fiu. Slujind ca un Părinte oamenilor și ca Fiul al lui Dumnezeu, așa ni se înfățișează Cuvântul Întrupat.¹²

Desigur, abordarea Părintelui surprinde, după cum am precizat și mai sus și prin modul amplu și holistic în care tratează problematica. Refuzând să cadă în capcana teologilor autori de manuale precum Hristu Andrutsos, pe care l-a tradus și care *expediază* subiectul în doar câteva pagini, neglijând anumite aspecte esențiale pentru înțelegerea lui¹³, folosindu-se de o literatură variată ce consistă în primul rând în pasaje scripturistice și patristice, dar și în autori mai recentți din mediile protestante sau catolice, care uneori îl și influențează¹⁴, părintele tranșează problematica doar în contextul mai amplu al soteriologiei, refuzând decuparea ei din acest context și deci oferirea unei perspective secționată și incomplete, și nu se sfiiește să abordeze aspectele interconfesionale ce stau la baza înțelegerii diferite a întregii slujiri, mergând în profunzimea lor, până la fundamentele ce generează anumite receptări diferite ale unor fundamente comune.

Sesizând complexitatea abordării părintelui și importanța tematicii prezentate pentru teologia contemporană, ne vom opri și noi, în rândurile următoare, asupra felului în care vede dânsul întreita slujire. Demersul nostru, urmând celui al părintelui, va încerca să vadă care sunt principalele aspecte pe care le reliefează el în paginile operelor sale, să evedențieze, dacă există, ideile reiterate cu redundanță în lucrarea lui, să vadă care sunt elementele ce țin de originalitatea autorului și să plaseze întregul său demers în contextul amplu al soteriologiei, pe de o parte, iar pe de altă parte, în contextul cercetărilor teologiei contemporane. Ca și în cadrul prezentării ce poartă semnătura lui din cadrul *Dogmaticii*, vom purcede la împărțirea materialului în trei secțiuni, fiecare dintre ele fiind, la rândul ei, dedicată uneia dintre slujiri. Vom încerca, de asemenea, să determinăm principalele diferențe interconfesionale și să analizăm modul în care le dezamorsează Părintele Stăniloae.

Sperăm ca prezentul demers să fie în primul rând un pios omagiu adus personalității celui care a fost marele teolog român, dar și o încercare de reiterare a unora dintre ideile sale teologice

importante și de reliefare a importanței lor în peisajul teologic contemporan.

Cele trei slujiri mântuitoare ale lui Iisus Hristos și importanța lor în teologia părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae

Înainte de a vorbi despre întreita slujire a Mântuitorului, pe care o plasează, asemenea altor teologi care s-au oprit asupra acestei teme¹⁵, în contextul mai amplu al soteriologiei și, în cel mai restrâns al chenozei¹⁶, părintele se oprește asupra legăturii dintre persoana lui Hristos și lucrarea lui mântuitoare, arătând cât de puternică este aceasta, căci:

Iisus Hristos mântuiește El însuși ca persoană de neînlocuit, întrucât calitatea Sa de persoană dumnezeiască devenită accesibilă ca om este unicul izvor de putere care ne eliberează de păcat și de urmările lui, printre care cea mai gravă este moartea.¹⁷

Apoi, el enunță elementele ce caracterizează, așa cum se exprimă teologul neoprotestant Emil Bartoș, contribuția personală la studierea problematicii, ce poate fi rezumată sub sintagma de “direcționalismul lucrării mântuitoare”¹⁸, vorbind despre cele trei direcții ale acesteia. Despre acestea, el spune:

Lucrarea mântuitoare a lui Hristos se îndreaptă spre firea Sa omenească, pe care o umple de dumnezeirea Lui și o eliberează de afectele, pătimirea și moartea de pe urma păcatului strămoșesc. Se îndreaptă, apoi, chiar prin ele spre noi toți, pentru ca prin participarea la dumnezeirea manifestată în puterea pe care ne-o transmite prin firea lui umană, să ne elibereze și pe noi în viața aceasta de păcat, iar în cea viitoare, de afecte, de coruptibilitate și de moarte. Dar tot prin aceasta, se îndreaptă și spre Dumnezeu, pentru a-L slăvi prin împăcarea noastră cu El... lucrarea însăși nu se împarte.¹⁹

Între cele trei, “direcția spre oameni a lucrării Sale mântuitoare nu e decât o prelungire a lucrării mântuitoare asupra firii Sale omenești”²⁰, ele fiind păstrate de Hristos totdeauna, pe scaunul măririi, de-a dreapta Tatălui²¹. Altfel spus, cele trei slujiri au fost permanentizate de către El și nu au încetat odată cu activitatea Lui mântuitoare de pe pământ. Ulterior, El va detalia acest aspect cu privire la slujirea arhierescă, arătând că:

Dacă n-ar fi Arhiereu în veac, Hristos n-ar rămâne om în eternitate și anume om înviat. Dar nici n-ar rămâne întrupat în veac și înviat cu trupul dacă n-ar fi Arhiereu în veac.

Dar de aici urmează că precum faptul întrupării și al Învierii Sale are o eficiență veșnică asupra noastră, tot așa are o astfel de eficiență veșnică arhieria Sa. Întruparea, arhieria sau jertfa Sa și învierea Sa nu sunt niște fapte ce aparțin numai trecutului, ci sunt stări de permanentă iradiere mântuitoare asupra noastră.²²

Un alt aspect interesant pe care părintele îl sesizează este cu privire la interferența dintre cele trei slujiri și cele trei direcții spre care se îndreaptă ele, și acest aspect constituind o contribuție personală a sa la analiza amplei problematice abordate:

... aceste trei forme de slujire se combină cu cele trei direcții ale lucrării mântuitoare a lui Hristos. Slujirea arhierescă e îndreptată atât spre propriul trup, cât și spre Dumnezeu și spre oameni; faptele pilduitoare și viața de model sunt îndreptate atât spre oameni ca învățătură concretizată, cât și spre Dumnezeu și spre propria natură umană. Chiar învățătura pe care o dă, deși e îndreptată în mod special spre oameni, e și împlinirea unei ascultări aduse Tatălui și o punere în relief a vocii Tatălui și a slavei Lui, fiind o laudare adusă lui Dumnezeu, o slujire a Lui. În sfârșit, prin puterea exercitată asupra naturii, asupra morții și asupra oamenilor, Hristos slăvește totodată și puterea lui Dumnezeu cel în Treime, care este proprie și Lui, dar arată și puterea pe care a dat-o trupului Său.

În toată lucrarea Sa, Hristos manifestă întreita Sa relație cu natura Sa omenească, cu Tatăl și cu oamenii și prin toată lucrarea Sa manifestă întreita Sa slujire de Învățător - Prooroc, de Arhiereu și Împărat.²³

Acestea sunt așadar, elementele ce caracterizează definirea cadrului general al abordării teologului răsăritean. Ele sunt urmate de ample subunități dedicate fiecăreia dintre cele trei slujiri, segmentate și ele, la rândul lor, în alte subcapitole în care autorul ține să evidențieze puncte cheie în înțelegerea rolului lor.

Iisus Hristos ca Învățător - Prooroc

În cadrul acestei teme, părintele urmărește să reliefeze faptul că Mântuitorul Hristos este adevărul și proorocia în Persoană, în

care se împlinesc toate proorociile și toate dezideratele vetero-terstamentare și insistă asupra puterii Duhului Sfânt în învățătura Lui.

Încă dintru început, el insistă asupra totalei contopiri a Învățătorului și a Învățături Sale în persoana Lui:

Iisus Hristos este învățătorul și Proorocul suprem prin însăși Persoana Sa. Iisus Hristos nu e un învățător ca oricare alt om, ba nici chiar ca oricare alt întemeietor de religie. În același timp, el depășește orice prooroc dinaintea de El²⁴, înscriindu-se pe un alt plan. Întrucât El este unic, învățătura Lui este și ea unică. Unică nu din același plan cu alte învățături unice.²⁵

Apoi, el arată că, prin intermediul acestei slujiri, Iisus se folosește de cuvinte pentru a chema întreaga umanitate la iubirea și la părtășia cu El²⁶ și insistă asupra superiorității Sale în raport cu profeții ce L-au precedat și asupra continuității dintre El și Legea Veche. Puterea Cuvântului Mântuitor rezidă, în opinia teologului, în concordanța totală existentă întru totul între cuvintele și faptele Lui, dar și în aceea că toate se împlinesc în El, căci:

Hristos a venit sau a fost trimis ca “Apostolul” Său propriu, precum S-a făcut și “Proorocul” Său propriu, căci numai întrucât S-a făcut om rămânând și Dumnezeu, adică întrucât S-a umilit pe Sine, luând modul uman de a Se comunica, a putut deveni accesibil ca Dumnezeu și a putut intra cu oamenii în acest dialog direct. Așa cum Patriarhul Iacob descojește nuielele, așa Hristos descojește înțelesurile legii. El descojește legea de umbra ei și înlătură acoperământul de pe scrierile proorocilor, arătând “rațiunea” din ele albită și plină de farmecul duhovnicesc.²⁷

Adevărul propovăduit de Iisus Hristos și împlinit în chip plener în persoana Sa divino-umană (Ioan 14, 6) și în activitatea lui Mântuitoare, este unul dinamic²⁸, acest aspect al său putând fi dedus din felul în care se repercutează el asupra umanității:

Hristos e prin aceasta, adică prin faptul că e Însăși Persoana supremă din care iriază toată puterea și viața, un adevăr dinamic, în sensul că, în calitate de Dumnezeu dă putere umanității Sale să se umple de El ca Dumnezeu, sau de viața Lui, și în sensul că această umanitate e stimulată să crească în adevărul ei, prin efluviile ce iriază din Dumnezeu și răspund trebuințelor ei celor mai naturale. Aceasta datorită faptului că în El e obârșia ei. Acest adevăr ca viață

se comunică prin umanitatea lui Hristos și celorlalți oameni, iar aceștia sunt stimulați să crească în El, să se facă asemenea Lui. Calitatea dinamică a adevărului nu înseamnă că esența lui supremă se produce continuu. El este din veci și până în veci același în esență. Dar el promovează pe om, ca “chip” al lui în eternitate, configurându-l din infinitatea Lui tot mai mult după El ca model. Înaintarea în adevăr este înaintarea spre o tot mai adâncă imprimare a omului de umanitatea lui Hristos ca model al ui, care are puterea de a-l conduce pe el într-o desăvârșire infinită, pentru că umanitatea Lui însăși e imprimată și umplută de dumnezeirea Lui.²⁹

Prin întregul dialog al lui Hristos cu umanitatea, ce culminează în slujirea lui profetică, El comunică atât cuvântul Lui Dumnezeu către noi, cât și răspunsul umanității, ipostaziată în persoana Sa, către Dumnezeu, acest aspect având o conotație soteriologică importantă, după cum arată autorul când spune:

Am precizat că întrucât Hristos ne vorbește nu numai ca Dumnezeu, ci și ca om realizat³⁰, El ne comunică nu numai cuvântul lui Dumnezeu către noi, ci și răspunsul lui ca model de om către Dumnezeu. În mod special acest răspuns al Său ca om către Dumnezeu ni-l comunică Hristos, întrucât se roagă pentru noi și ne învață și pe noi să ne rugăm. Prin aceasta întărește, de asemenea, cuvântul nostru de răspuns către Dumnezeu. Propriu-zis, toată învățătura ce ne-o dă are ca scop să ne facă să răspundem la chemarea lui Dumnezeu. Astfel, chiar prin învățătura Sa, el nu ne folosește numai nouă, ci și slăvește pe Dumnezeu. Sau ne folosește nouă, întrucât ne face să slăvim pe Dumnezeu. Direcția către Dumnezeu e implicată și în învățătura Sa adresată nouă. El a slăvit pe Dumnezeu, pentru că le-a dat lor cuvintele pe care Tatăl I le-a dat (Ioan 18, 8, 14), și pentru că a făcut cunoscut oamenilor numele Tatălui și a făcut ca ei să păzească cuvintele Lui (Ioan 17, 6).³¹

Slujirea profetică nu trebuie înțeleasă însă doar unilateral, ci în contextul mai amplu al întregii slujiri și în legătură cu celelalte slujiri. Insistând asupra relației dintre aceasta și cea sacerdotală, părintele spune:

Pe cât de înaltă este chemarea de învățător-profet, ca una care-i luminează pe oameni în vederea mântuirii, în vederea asigurării fericite a destinului lor veșnic, tot pe atât de înaltă este misiunea de preot, care slujește aceluiași scop.³²

Ulterior, el arată într-o manieră plastică multidirecționalitatea acestei legături dintre cele două slujiri, insistând asupra faptului că: “profetul naște de sus în jos oameni în credință, iar preotul se îndreaptă spre ei de jos în sus, cu rugăciunea și cu jertfa”³³.

Acestea sunt așadar, principalele aspecte ce caracterizează, în viziunea părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae, slujirea de învățător sau prooroc a Mântuitorului Hristos. Analizându-le, nu putem decât să observăm împreună cu Sfântul Grigore de Nyssa, că: “bunătatea, înțelepciunea, dreptatea, puterea, nesticăciunea, se văd în iconomia mântuirii noastre”³⁴.

Iisus Hristos, Arhiereul și Jertfa Supremă

Întrucât, așa cum arată teologul român: “Biserica stă pe iubirea răstignită. Ea stă pe iubirea lui Dumnezeu, care se dăruie total, dăruire de Sine care suferă chiar și respingere”³⁵ (în sensul că omul poate chiar să refuze această iubire a lui Dumnezeu), această iubire fiind adesea “conștiința unei frâne puse în noi de o realitate superioară nouă”³⁶, iar slujirea lui Dumnezeu este temeiul Bisericii³⁷, slujirea sacerdotală a lui Hristos, înmănușată în calitatea Sa de Arhiereu și Jertfă supremă, ce are deopotrivă conotații soteriologice și hristologice, este foarte importantă. De altfel, prin aceasta Mântuitorul restaurează instituția preoției în ansamblul ei, căci: “Instituția preoției înainte de Iisus Hristos este numai un mijloc de a întreține în oameni conștiința păcatului și a așteptării unui mijlocitor efectiv între El și Dumnezeu”³⁸.

De asemenea, această slujire este totodată și cea prin care se dă un nou sens morții, ce a venit ca o consecință a căderii în păcat și a avut urmări drastice asupra umanității de la Adam și până la Hristos:

În Învierea lui Hristos vedem descoperit acest sens al morții (ca urmare a căderii, n. n.), dar și schimbarea direcției ei de la căderea reală într-un accentuat gol al existenței din pricina îndepărtării voluntare a omului de Dumnezeu, în acceptarea morții cu încrederea că aceasta poate fi o predare a voii proprii lui Dumnezeu, care nu o va lăsa să se prăbușească nici măcar în sărăcia în care cad oamenii obișnuiți, ci va primi El însuși darul ei, reînnoindu-o.³⁹

Altfel spus, jertfa lui Hristos este “antidotul păcatului”⁴⁰, ea fiind de asemenea restaurată într-un mod de-a dreptul *ontologic*, în calitatea ei de modalitate de comunicare între om și Dumnezeu, căci:

După cădere, păcatul nu altera numai unitatea jertfei, ci și ființa însăși a jertfei, încât jertfa va trece și ea prin unele evaluări calitative. Persoana nu se va mai jertfi direct printr-o dăruire, ci printr-un înlocuitor, un obiect, un lucru sau ființă, care va reprezenta pe om. Jertfa va pierde prin aceasta și din adâncimea și generalitatea ei și se va reduce adesea la o practică rituală și formală.⁴¹

Sesizând plurivalența și polisemia acestei slujiri, părintele arată că această slujire are și ea trei direcții, ce sunt foarte implicate una în cealaltă, fiind imposibil de separat. Această adevărată compenetrare a direcțiilor slujirii reliefează deopotrivă dimensiunea complexă a ei, dar și grija pe care Hristos o poartă ca opera Sa soteriologică să fie una deplină și să nu scape din vedere nici un aspect:

Dacă în slujirea de Învățător-Prooroc Iisus Hristos e îndreptat în mod direct spre noi, dar implică în ea voința de a ne lega de Tatăl întrucât prin împlinirea acestei învățături noi împlinim voia Tatălui, deci cuprinde în ea și o direcție îndreptată înspre Dumnezeu, slujirea de Arhiereu prin care se aduce ca jertfă pe Sine însuși e îndreptată în mod direct spre Tatăl. Totuși, ea implică în ea și o direcție îndreptată spre oameni, întrucât vrea să încadreze și pe oameni în ea, deci cuprinde în ea și o direcție îndreptată spre aceștia. Iar întrucât în acest scop Hristos aduce ca jertfă firea umană asumată de El, slujirea aceasta are o direcție și un efect îndreptat spre aceasta. Aceste trei direcții sunt atât de implicate una în cealaltă, încât e cu neputință să fie separate; ba chiar nici măcar nu se poate cugeta una fără alta.⁴²

În sprijinul acestei afirmații, părintele aduce deopotrivă textul biblic, cât și cel patristic, punând în fața cititorului pasajul din capitolul 5 al Epistolei Sfântului Apostol Pavel către Evrei, pentru a accentua sensul antropologic al întregii slujiri⁴³. Apoi, el merge pe linia Sfântului Nicolae Cabasila și a lui Ioan Romanides, la rândul lui influențat și el de Sfânt, insistând asupra aspectelor ortodoxe ce țin de îndreptarea pe care o aduce slujirea arhierească a Mântuitorului⁴⁴.

Abordarea privitoare la aspectul nostru din volumul al doilea al *Dogmaticii* cuprinde atât prezentarea unei perspective interconfesionale, în care autorul combate ideea de împăcare văzută în sens juridic de către teologii apuseni, fără să scape însă din vedere abordarea eronată și ea a unor teologi răsăriteni care vorbesc despre împăcarea lui Dumnezeu cu omul și trădează și ei, prin aceasta o abordare formalistă, cu tentă juridică, omițând din vedere bi-direcționalitatea acestui raport:

Din tendința de a înțelege starea de păcat a omului aproape numai ca dușmănie față de Dumnezeu, nu și ca o supărare a lui Dumnezeu față de acesta, unii teologi bazându-se pe locul din epistolele 2 Cor. 5, 18 și Rom. 5, 1, deduc că Sfântul Apostol Pavel nicăieri nu spune că Dumnezeu se împacă cu omul, ci totdeauna Dumnezeu împacă pe om cu Sine. Dar împotriva acestei concluzii s-a invocat textul din Epistola către Romani 10, 3, unde se spune că omul se luptă să-și întărească “dreptatea lui”. Iar acesta este un lucru de care se scârbește Dumnezeu.⁴⁵

Vorbind despre importanța centrală a trupului lui Hristos în cadrul acestei slujiri, părintele aduce în discuție conceptul de “auto-jertfire”. Ce-i drept, el nu este nou în teologie, însă meritul teologului român este acela de a articula concepția aceasta și de a arăta că relația dintre jertfă și jertfitor, ce se întâlnește în chip plener în persoana Mântuitorului, nu este una deloc întâmplătoare:

Importanța centrală permanentă a trupului lui Hristos depinde de identificarea lui ca Arhiereu cu calitatea Sa de jertfă. Așa cum Cuvântul Întrupat e Cuvântul în Persoană sau vorbitor, așa este și Jertfa în Persoană, Jertfa care se jertfește, “Jertfa vie”, cum se spune într-un tropar bisericesc. Calitatea simultană de arhiereu și de jertfă nu sunt asociate accidental cu persoana Sa, ci sunt experiența Persoanei Sale înseși ca Fiu al lui Dumnezeu întrupat pentru noi.⁴⁶

Acestea sunt așadar principalele idei ce caracterizează concepția părintelui profesor Dumitru Stăniloae cu privire la modalitatea în care se realizează opera mântuitoare prin slujirea arhierească. Analizându-le, nu putem decât să observăm complexitatea problemei și seriozitatea cu care eruditul teolog pătrunde în profunzimile ei, analizându-o din multiple perspective și comparând, în cadrul prezentărilor sale privitoare la această temă, textul scripturistic, opere patristice și opinii teologice mai vechi sau

mai noi din mediul răsăritean și cel apusean, fie el catolic sau protestant.

Iisus Hristos ca Împărat

Despre această slujire și despre relevanța ei, părintele vorbește atât în tratate mai ample, cât și în unele dintre studiile publicate de dânsul de-a lungul timpului⁴⁷. Încă dintru începutul analizei dedicate acestei teme, el arată că este vorba despre o slujire complexă și cu multiple valențe:

Demnitatea aceasta nu e numai cea pe care o are El ca Dumnezeu de la crearea lumii, și pe care a exercitat-o și în timpul vieții Sale în trup, ci e demnitatea împărătească pe care a primit-o și ca om. Domnul Însuși recunoaște în fața lui Pilat că e împărat (In 18, 36; Mt. 27, 11; Mc. 15, 2; Lc. 23, 3). Propriu zis, ea nu e despărțită de slujirea de Învățător și de cea de Arhiereu.⁴⁸

În manifestarea acesteia, părintele distinge, spre deosebire de alți teologi, precum părintele Dumitru Popescu⁴⁹, două etape, respectiv una de dinainte de înviere și una după Înviere. Despre formele de manifestare pre-pascale ale celei dintâi el spune:

Puterea Lui s-a manifestat înainte de Înviere nu numai ca o putere simțită în suflete de cei care s-au apropiat de El și în poruncile ce le dădea referitor la întemeierea Bisericii și la viața ce trebuie să o ducă cei ce vor crede în El, ci ca o putere asupra naturii prin fapte de vindecare a unor bolnavi și de înviere a unor morți.⁵⁰

După Înviere, Hristos este, conform spuselor Sfinților Părinți, ridicat la puterea împărătească deplină, ea urmând a se manifesta și în înălțarea și șederea de-a dreapta Tatălui și în conducerea operei de mântuire și în ajutorul pe care îl dă umanității în a lupta cu păcatul⁵¹, făcându-l pe om să fie “împărat peste patimi”⁵².

Învierea, Înălțarea la ceruri și șederea la dreapta Tatălui, sunt actele principale prin care, în viziunea părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae, Hristos își exercită întreita slujire. Fiecărui dintre acestea, el le dedică câte un subcapitol amplu în cel de-al doilea volum al *Dogmaticii* sale.

Cel dintâi dintre episoade este important căci, după cum remarcă pontiful emerit Benedict al XVI-lea: “Dacă Iisus a existat numai în trecut sau există și în prezent - asta depinde de Înviere”⁵³.

În conturarea concepției privitoare la realitatea Învierii, el se bazează, așa cum remarcă și Emil Bartoș, pe viziunea protestantului Berthold Klappert⁵⁴, urmând schema logică propusă de acesta, care are în centru cu precădere demonstrarea realității aparițiilor lui Hristos cel înviat și corporalitatea Lui, iradierea pnevmatică și eficiența transformatoare a Învierii lui Hristos în lume, și alte elemente similare⁵⁵. Legătura lui Hristos cel Înviat cu planul istoriei se constituie de asemenea într-o problemă abordată de părintele Stăniloae⁵⁶. De această dată, el se aliază opiniei lui W. Pannenberg, conform căruia faptul Învierii nu este accesibil numai credinței, ci oricui are ochi să îl vadă⁵⁷.

În opinia Lui, Învierea este de asemenea cea care face posibilă iradierea transparenței trupului lui Hristos în oameni, oferind omului posibilitatea de a se deschide prin credință și de a birui moartea, prin faptul de a răspunde iubirii Lui cu iubirea noastră.

Prin Înviere, prin faptul că trupul Lui transparent, iradiant de iubire, ne penetrează, Însuși El ne-a devenit propriu împreună cu sufletul și cu dumnezeirea din El. Iar noi, înduhovnicindu-ne, am devenit proprii lui Hristos, întrucât ne-am deschis Lui prin credință. Hristos se sălășluiește deplin în noi prin împărtășirea Duhului, și nu s-a împărțit, cum spune Pavel (1 Cor, 1, 13). Punându-și sângele pentru noi, a desființat moartea și a nimicuit stricăciunea. Și așa ne face ai Săi, ca unii ce nu mai trăim viața noastră, ci mai degrabă viața Lui. La iubirea Lui, noi răspundem cu iubirea noastră, prin care renunțăm la noi, cum a renunțat El la Sine.⁵⁸

Evenimentul Înălțării la cer și cel al șederii de-a dreapta Tatălui sunt tratate apoi de autor într-o perspectivă strict ortodoxă, autorul combătând opinia unor teologi protestanți conform căreia Învierea și Înălțarea coincid⁵⁹. De asemenea, el arată că cele două evenimente duc la maxima eficacitate a lui Hristos asupra celor ce cred:

Astfel, Înălțarea lui Hristos cu trupul la cer și șederea Lui de-a dreapta Tatălui înseamnă ridicarea Lui ca om la treapta de supremă eficacitate asupra celor ce cred. În aceasta stă puterea și slava supremă la care S-a urcat Hristos prin Înălțarea la cer.⁶⁰

Acestea sunt așadar, principalele elemente care caracterizează gândirea părintelui profesor Dumitru Stăniloae cu privire la acest aspect. După cum se poate vedea, în centrul slujirii împărătești a Mântuitorului se regăsesc deopotrivă faptele prin care El își exercită

această demnitate în timpul activității sale pământești, respectiv minunile, cât și Învierea și Înălțarea la ceruri și șederea de-a dreapta Tatălui, prin care El *recalibrează* sensul existenței omenești.

Concluzii

Analizând modul în care Mântuitorul Hristos realizează opera Sa soteriologică prin intermediul întreitei slujiri, nu putem decât să constatăm împreună cu părintele profesor Dumitru Stăniloae că:

Prin Întruparea Sa, Fiul lui Dumnezeu realizează unirea între Dumnezeu și oameni nu numai prin aducerea voci umane la acordul cu firea umană și cu voia lui Dumnezeu, dar și prin faptul că, în calitate de Cuvânt ipostatic, în care își au originea toate cuvintele care întrețin unitatea între ipostasurile umane, restabilește această unitate prin cuvinte.⁶¹

Importanța întreitei slujiri este, după cum am văzut, reliefată și analizată de dânsul în paginile mai multora dintre operele sale, autorul aducând contribuții prețioase în înțelegerea problemei într-o manieră holistică, respectiv în contextul mai amplu al operei soteriologice în general și al chenozei, dar și din perspectiva direcțiilor pe care le are această slujire a Lui.

Literatura vastă și variată pe care autorul o folosește ca fundament în argumentarea ideilor sale, începând cu textele scripturistice și cu cele patristice și culminând cu opinii ale teologilor contemporani din toate mediile creștine, discursul plăcut și degajat ce depășește ariditatea unui text de manual, la fel ca și naturalețea cu care autorul tranșează problematici importante cu răsunet interconfesional, combătând opinii ale unor teologi mari ai vremii sale, raliindu-se opiniilor altora sau dezvoltând propriile sale idei pe baza logicii și a fundamentelor biblice, fac din abordarea lui privitoare la această temă, ca și din alte abordări similare, o cercetare de răsunet și de actualitate până astăzi, reliefându-l și din această perspectivă, pe părintele profesor, drept unul dintre marii teologi ai secolului trecut și, apodictic, drept cel mai mare teolog român al tuturor timpurilor⁶².

NOTES:

- ¹ „Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae este cu siguranță cel mai mare teolog contemporan”. Olivier Clement, „Prefață”, în Dumitru Stăniloae, *Rugăciunea lui Iisus și experiența Duhului Sfânt*, col. „Mistica”, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 1995, p. 11. Cf. Teodor Baconsky, „Dumitru Stăniloae și capcana clasicizării”, în Teodor Baconsky, Bogdan Tătaru Cazaban, (coord.), *Dumitru Stăniloae sau paradoxul Teologiei*, Editura Anastasia, București, 2003, pp. 7-19; Andrei Scrima, „Renașterea filocalică în ortodoxia românească”, în Teodor Baconsky, Bogdan Tătaru Cazaban, (coord.), *Dumitru Stăniloae sau paradoxul Teologiei*, Editura Anastasia, București, 2003, pp. 51-76.
- ² Pentru mai multe detalii cu privire la bio-bibliografia sa a se vedea: Gheorghe F. Anghelescu, *Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae, un urmaș vrednic al patristicii clasice (bio-bibliografie)*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2013; Virginia Popa, *Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae: biobibliografie*, Ediția a II-a, Editura Trinitas, București, 2013; Joachim Giosanu, *La deification de l'homme d'après la pensée du père Dumitru Stăniloae*, Editions du Trinitas, Iassy, 2003, pp. 211-270.
- ³ Cf. Cf. Teodor Baconsky, *art. cit.*, p. 9.
- ⁴ A se vedea, de exemplu: Joseph Ratzinger, *Iisus din Nazaret. Partea a II-a - De la Intrarea în Ierusalim la Înviere*, trad. Cristian Langa, Cristina Palici, Mihai Pătrașcu, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu Lăpuș, 2012, pp. 217-226. Cf. Leo Sheffczyk, Anton Ziegenaus, *Fundamentele dogmei. Introducere în dogmatică*, trad. Wilhelm Tauwinkl, Editura Sapienția, Iași, 2010, pp. 47-49; Ioan Paul II - Karol Wojtyła, *În mâinile Domnului. Însemnări personale (1962-2003)*, col. „Memorii- Jurnale”, trad. Constantin Geambașu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2015, pp. 34-35.
- ⁵ Cf. Ellen Gould White, *Suferințele lui Hristos pentru răscumpărarea omenirii*, fără trad., Ediția a III-a, Editura „Păzitorul Adevărului”, Făgăraș, 1993.
- ⁶ Autorul conștientizează, asemenea lui Lossky, faptul că: „Momentul central al iconomiei Fiului nu trebuie separat de planul divin luat ca întreg”. Cf. Vladimir Lossky, *Introducere în Teologia Ortodoxă*, col. „Orizonturi spirituale”, trad. Lidia și Remus Rus, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1993, p. 156. Cf. Ștefan Buchiu, *Cunoașterea apofatică în gândirea Părintelui Stăniloae*, Editura Basilica, București, 2013, p. 123.
- ⁷ Iată ce spune de exemplu, despre felul în care se reflectă aspectul de jertfă ce concurge din slujirea arhierescă a Mântuitorului în Sfânta Liturghie: „Prin aceasta (Sfânta Împărtășanie, n. n.), Fiul cel Întrupat ne comunică prin starea Sa de jertfă iubirea Sa față de Tatăl, ca să ne-o însușim și

- noi”. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Spiritualitate și comuniune în Liturgia Ortodoxă*, Ediția a II-a, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2004, p. 416. Cf. Idem, „Jertfa lui Hristos și spiritualitatea noastră prin împărtășirea ei în Sfânta Liturghie”, în rev. *Ortodoxia*, anul XXXV, nr. 1, București, 1983, pp. 104-118.
- ⁸ Emil Bartoș, *Conceptul de îndumnezeire în teologia lui Dumitru Stăniloae*, Editura Institutului Biblic „Emanuel” din Oradea, Oradea, 1999, p. 298 (în continuare se va cita Emil Bartoș, 1999, *op. cit.*). Cf. Maximos Aghiroussis, „Orthodox soteriology”, în John Meyendorff, Robert Tobies (eds.), *Salvation in Christ. A Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue*, Augsburg Fortress, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1992, pp. 35-37.
- ⁹ Cum este de exemplu, Emil Bartoș, teolog baptist, care a scris o teză de doctorat în care analizează concepțiile părintelui. De asemenea, datorită importanței concepției lui, avem de-a face și cu analize comparative ale ideilor lui cu ale altor teologi de seamă, aparținând altor culte și confesiuni. A se vedea, de exemplu: Vasile Cristescu, *Antropologia și fundamentarea ei hristologică la Wolfhart Pannenberg și Dumitru Stăniloae*, Ediția a II-a, Editura Trinitas, Iași, 2006.
- ¹⁰ Această abordare este extinsă pe cuprinsul a aproape 80 de pagini. Cf. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, Ediția a IV-a, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2010, pp. 112-200.
- ¹¹ Cf. Irene Hausherr, *Paternitatea și îndrumarea duhovnicească în răsăritul creștin*, trad. Mihai Vladimirescu, col. „Mistica”, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 1999; Teofan Mada, *Paternitatea duhovnicească după Șfinții Părinți*, Editura Agnos, Sibiu, 2007, pentru a vedea mai multe informații cu privire la semnificațiile acestui concept de paternitate și la modul în care a fost el însușit în cadrul spiritualității răsăritene.
- ¹² Dumitru Stăniloae, Marc-Antoine Costa de Beuregard, *Mică dogmatică vorbită. Dialoguri la Cernica*, Ediția a III-a, trad. Maria-Cornelia Ică jr. Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2008, p. 97.
- ¹³ A se vedea: Hristu Andrutsos, *Dogmatica Bisericii Ortodoxe Răsăritene*, trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, Editura și Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, Sibiu, 1930, pp. 209-234. Cf. Dumitru Popescu, Doru Costache, *Introducere în Dogmatica Ortodoxă. Teme ale credinței creștine din perspectivă comparată*, col. „Geneze”, Editura Libra, București, 1997, pp. 80-81; Isidor Todoran, Ioan Zăgorean, *Dogmatica ortodoxă. Manual pentru seminariile teologice*, Ediția a V-a, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, pp. 218-228; George Remete, *Dogmatica ortodoxă. Manual pentru seminariile teologice*, Editura Episcopiei Ortodoxe, Alba-

- Iulia, 1996, pp. 237-239 (autorul folosește însă sintagma de „demnități” ale Mântuitorului, și nu de „slujiri”).
- ¹⁴ De exemplu, după cum remarcă Emil Bartoș, părintele este influențat de ideile teologului protestant Berthold Klappert, pe care le folosește atunci când vorbește despre slujirea împărătească, o parte dintre ele fiind chiar asumate de către autor. Cf. Emil Bartoș, *Conceptul de îndumnezeire în teologia lui Dumitru Stăniloae*, Seria „Teze”, vol. 2, Editura „Cartea Creștină”, Oradea, 2002, p. 301, nota 81 (în continuare se va cita: Emil Bartoș, 2002, *op. cit.*).
- ¹⁵ Cf. Panayotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ. The Nature of the Human Person*, SVS Press, Crestwood, New York, 1987, p. 111.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Christos Yannaras, *Abecedar al credinței. Introducere în Teologia Ortodoxă*, trad. Constantin Coman, Editura Bizantină, București, 1996, pp. 118-119.
- ¹⁷ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 112. Cf. Idem, *Studii de Teologie Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei, Craiova, 1991, p. 13, unde el spune: „Fără Hristos sau fără Fiul lui Dumnezeu făcut om, istoria nu L-ar avea pe Dumnezeu prezent în ea. Dumnezeu ar fi o existență cu totul separată de ea, neinteresat de ea sau de omenire. Și nici omenirea n-ar avea perspectiva de a ajunge, în viața viitoare, la El”. Gheorghe Kapsanis, *Îndumnezeirea - scopul vieții omului*, trad. Ștefan Nuțescu, Editura Evenghelismos, București, 2006, p. 30.
- ¹⁸ Emil Bartoș, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
- ¹⁹ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 116.
- ²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 116.
- ²¹ Cf. Vartolomeu (Valeriu) Androni, *Învățătura despre întreita slujire a Mântuitorului Hristos în teologia apuseană contemporană* (ms., teză de doctorat), Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p. 7.
- ²² Dumitru Stăniloae, „Iisus Hristos, Arhiereu în veac”, în rev. *Ortodoxia*, anul XXXI, nr. 2, Aprilie - Iunie, București, 1979, p. 217.
- ²³ Idem, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., pp. 117-118.
- ²⁴ Cu privire la acest aspect, părintele profesor Dumitru Popescu spune: „Hristos este Proorocul prin excelență pentru că învățătura Lui arată adevăratul drum de desăvârșire a umanității. Orice progres a făcut omenirea în direcția adevăratei ei desăvârșiri spirituale, l-a făcut pe drumul și spre ținta indicată de El. Învățătura Lui este cu adevărat profetică, pentru că Persoana lui este profetică, arătând în sine omul la capătul lui eshatologic”. Dumitru Popescu, *Iisus Hristos Pantocrator*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2005, p. 226.

- ²⁵ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 119.
- ²⁶ „Cuvântul dumnezeiesc întrupat folosește ca om cuvintele omului, nu pentru a exprima opinii unilaterale, care nu pot uni în ele acordul tuturor, ci adevărul atotcuprinzător, în care fiecare om află ceea ce răspunde la întrebările tuturor despre toate, și-i îndeamnă la iubirea dintre ei”. Idem, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, col. „Opere complete”, vol. 5, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2012, p. 670.
- ²⁷ Idem, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 124.
- ²⁸ Cf. Dumitru Popescu, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
- ²⁹ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 127. Cf. Irineu Pop Bistrițeanul, *Chipul lui Hristos în viața morală a creștinului*, Ediția a II-a, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, pentru o prezentare mai amplă a felului cum se amprentează slujirea profetică a lui Hristos în viața morală a omului aflat pe calea Mântuirii.
- ³⁰ Cf. Adrian Opre, *Introducere în teoriile personalității*, Ediția a II-a, Editura ASCR, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p. 77; Idem, *Noi tendințe în psihologia personalității. Modele teoretice*, vol. 1, Editura ASCR, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 10, pentru o analiză interdisciplinară asupra semnificației termenului de „persoană realizată” sau „autorealizată”.
- ³¹ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 132. Cf. Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua*, trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, col. „Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești”, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2006, p. 145.
- ³² Dumitru Stăniloae, *Trăirea lui Dumnezeu în Ortodoxie*, ed. Sandu Frunză, col. „Ieșirea din labirint”, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p. 53.
- ³³ *Ibidem*, p. 53.
- ³⁴ Sfântul Grigore de Nyssa, *Marele cuvânt catehetic*, trad. Grigore Teodorescu, Editura Sophia, București, 1998, p. 86. Cf. Romani 1, 20.
- ³⁵ Dumitru Stăniloae, Marc-Antoine Costa de Beuregard, *op. cit.*, p. 101. Cf. Idem, „Fiul și Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, prin care toate s-au făcut și se refac”, în rev. *Ortodoxia*, anul XXXV, nr. 2, Aprilie-Iunie, București, 1983, p. 169.
- ³⁶ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Ascetică și mistică creștină sau Teologia vieții spirituale*, Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 1993, p. 119.
- ³⁷ Dumitru Stăniloae, Marc-Antoine Costa de Beuregard, *op. cit.*, p. 98. Cf. Antonie Plămădeală, *Biserica slujitoare*, Tipografia Arhidiecezană, Sibiu, 1986, pentru a înțelege cum și-a însușit Biserica această calitate de instituție slujitoare în multiplele sale aspecte.
- ³⁸ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Trăirea lui Dumnezeu în Ortodoxie*, ..., p. 54.
- ³⁹ Idem, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, ..., p. 712.

- ⁴⁰ Ioan Mihălțan, *Preoția Mântuitorului Hristos și preoția bisericească*, Editura Episcopiei, Oradea, 1993, p. 17. Cf. Constantin Galeriu, *Jertfă și Răscumpărare*, Editura Harisma, București, 1991, p. 32. Referindu-se la acest aspect, și la contribuția lui Hristos la restaurarea statutului jertfei, Papa Benedict al XVI-lea spunea: „Așteptarea ce se manifestase în criticile profetilor, care se exprimase îndeosebi și în Psalmi, își găsisse împlinirea: Dumnezeu nu voia să fie preamărit prin jertfe de tauri și de țapi, al căror sânge nu poate să-l purifice pe om, nici să ispășească pentru el. Cultul cel nou, așteptat, dar până atunci încă nedefinit, devenise realitate. Prin Crucea lui Iisus se petrecuse ceea ce fusese căutat în zadar prin jertfele de animale: lumea a dobândit ispășirea. 'Mielul lui Dumnezeu' luase asupra Sa păcatul lumii și îl îndepărtase. Relația lui Dumnezeu cu lumea, tulburată prin păcatul oamenilor, fusese reînnoită. Se realizase împăcarea”. Joseph Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
- ⁴¹ Ioan Mihălțan, *op. cit.*, p. 18. Cf. Constantin Galeriu, *op. cit.*, p. 61; Jean Colson, *Ministère de Jesus Christ ou le sacerdoce de l'Évangile*, Editions Beauchesne, Paris, 1966, p. 253.
- ⁴² Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 133. Cf. Emil Bartoș (1999), *op. cit.*, p. 303.
- ⁴³ „Într-adevăr, orice arhieru, fiind luat dintre oameni, este pus pentru oameni, spre cele ce sunt ale lui Dumnezeu, ca să aduca daruri și jertfă pentru păcate” (Evr. 5, 1). Cf. Stelian Tofană, *Iisus Hristos Arhieru veșnic după Epistola către Evrei*, Ediția a II-a, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2000; și Vasile Mihoc, „Iisus Hristos Arhieru, după Epistola către Evrei”, în rev. *Ortodoxia*, anul XXXV, nr. 2, Aprilie-Iunie, București, 1893, pp. 176-199, pentru o analiză amplă asupra teologiei acestei epistole în care este analizată într-o manieră amplă problematica noastră. Din motive ce țin de necesitatea de a fi brevilocvenți, nu vom insista aici asupra ei.
- ⁴⁴ „Hristos s-a făcut dreptate de la Dumnezeu și răscumpărare; și desființează dușmănia din trupul Său și împacă pe Dumnezeu cu noi”. Sfântul Nicolae Cabasila, *Despre viața în Hristos*, trad. Teodor Bodogae, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2009, p. 134. Cf. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 135.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 135. Opinia pe care o combate autorul aici îi aparține lui Ioan Romanides și se pare că l-a influențat și pe P. Nellas.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 139. Cf. Valer Bel, *Misiunea Bisericii în lumea contemporană*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, pp. 404-405.
- ⁴⁷ Cum este, de exemplu, cel intitulat *Legătura interioară dintre moartea și Învierea Domnului*. Cf. Dumitru Stăniloae, „Legătura interioară între

moartea și Învierea Domnului”, în rev. *Studii Teologice*, anul VIII, nr. 5-6, Mai-Iunie, București, 1956, pp. 275-287.

⁴⁸ Idem, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 159.

⁴⁹ „Puterea împărătească a lui Hristos se manifestă prin Învierea Sa. După Înviere, Iisus spune: 'Datu-Mi-s-a toată puterea, în cer și pe pământ.' ” (Matei 28, 18), cf. Dumitru Popescu, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

⁵⁰ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 160.

⁵¹ „Dar la puterea împărătească deplină e ridicat Hristos prin învierea Lui, ca ea să se manifeste și în înălțarea, în șederea de-a dreapta Tatălui, în conducerea operei de mântuire, în venirea întru slavă și la judecata de obște. După înviere, Iisus spune: 'Datu-Mi-s-a toată puterea în cer și pe pământ' (Matei 28, 18), iar Sfântul Apostol Pavel spune: 'Pentru aceea și Dumnezeu L-a preînălțat și I-a dăruit Lui un nume care este mai presus decât tot numele' (Filip. 2, 9). Dar și slava la care e ridicat nu o ține numai pentru El, ci o răspândește peste noi, căci pentru noi a primit-o. Puterea pe care o dă celorlalți constă în primul rând în a învinge păcatul, așa cum puterea Lui pe pământ a constatat în primul rând în a ține în frâu afectele ireproșabile, ca să nu devină păcate, fapt ce l-a făcut și prin primirea morții”. *Ibidem*, p. 161. Cf. Dumitru Popescu, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

⁵² Cf. Valer Bel, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

⁵³ Joseph Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁵⁴ Emil Bartoș, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 301, nota subsidiară 81.

⁵⁵ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., pp. 162-171.

⁵⁶ După cum se poate vedea însă, ea constituie o preocupare constantă și a teologiei apusene. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-244.

⁵⁷ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 169. Cf. Vasile Cristescu, *op. cit.*, pentru o prezentare mai amplă a felului în care se interferează cele două modalități de gândire, cea a părintelui Stăniloae și cea a teologului german.

⁵⁸ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 184. Cf. Dumitru Popescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-235.

⁵⁹ „Diferiți teologi catolici și protestanți opinează că Învierea și Înălțarea coincid, căci aparițiile pot fi ale lui Hristos cel înălțat după Înviere. Numai Luca a pus, după acești teologi, o distanță între Înviere și Înălțare. Dar e de întrebat: de ce aparițiile încetează după un număr de 40 de zile? De ce nu continuă cel puțin cât trăiesc Apostolii? Nu vedem un alt răspuns decât în faptul că, în timpul aparițiilor, Hristos era cu trupul într-un mod mai puțin pnevmatizat. Unii socotesc că nu trebuie vorbit deloc despre o înălțare la cer, cum nu trebuie vorbit nici despre o coborâre la iad, pentru a se lua putința de a se învinui creștinismul de viziunea

mitologică a unei lumi în trei etape, cum face Bultmann. Dar lumea aceasta, iadul și cerul nu sunt trei etaje spațiale, ci trei moduri diferite de existență”. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. II, ..., p. 190.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 196.

⁶¹ Idem, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu...*, p. 660.

⁶² Fapt dovedit și de diversitatea operelor care analizează ideile lui, dar și de orientarea confesională diferită a celor care doresc să aprofundeze opera lui, un exemplu în acest sens putând fi considerat teologul baptist Emil Bartoș.

Metoda tipologică de interpretare, ca viziune cíclică a mersului anagogic al tradiției credale

Abstract

This paper discusses the relation between the Old and the New Testament from the perspective of the divine Logos incarnated in history as the unifying factor and as the one that makes each Testament relevant to the other.

The pedagogical role of the Old Testament as it leads to and is fulfilled in the New Testament is discussed on the basis of the writings of the Gospel, of Paul's epistles and of Patristic texts, without ignoring contemporary theological contributions to the topic.

Încă de la început a fost evidentă convingerea că există o singură credință adevărată, convingere ce era în legătură cu mărturisirea unui singur Hristos, care, Dumnezeu fiind, S-a făcut cunoscut oamenilor. Sfântul Apostol Pavel le spune corintenilor că Evanghelia pe care a primit-o și pe care a binevestit-o este “după Scripturi” (I Corinteni 15, 3-4), adică în conformitate cu Legea, Psalmii și Profetii¹. Trebuie menționat faptul că Evanghelia transmisă de Hristos nu este localizată numai într-un anumit text (ceea ce numim noi astăzi evanghelii “canonice”, ca “Evanghelia după Matei”, „Evanghelia după Marcu”, etc.), ci Evanghelia trebuie înțeleasă într-o relație interpretativă cu Scripturile, adică cu Legea, Psalmii și Profetii². În vederea acestei înțelegeri, s-a recurs la metoda tipologică de interpretare a Vechiului Testament în lumina celui Nou, tocmai pentru că aceasta ridică vâlul neînțelegerilor,

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aducând o viziune cíclică a mersului anagogic al evenimentelor³.

De-a lungul istoriei poporului lui Israel, unii scriitori au folosit imagini extrase din evenimente prealabile pentru a înțelege, a explica și a descrie evenimentele contemporane lor⁴. Părintele John Behr dă câteva exemple: asemenea lui Adam (Facere 1, 28), Noe este binecuvântat cu aceleași cuvinte (Facere 9, 1), care îl fac un nou Adam, stabilindu-se, astfel, o relație tipologică între aceștia. Apoi, evenimentele întâmplare cu Noe devin paradigma de înțelegere a evenimentelor următoare, în sensul că descrierea mâniei divine de la potop, urmată de legământul stabilit cu Noe, este folosită pentru a explica mânia divină în perioada exilului poporului evreu, care deschide un legământ veșnic (Isaia 54, 9-10)⁵.

Procesul de re-folosire a unor imagini pentru a înțelege și explica prezentul în termenii trecutului este foarte folosit atât în Vechiul Testament⁶, cât și în Noul Testament. Procesul de re-folosire a unor imagini trecute este folosit și de Hristos Însuși. Astfel, pornind de la sensul istorico-gramatical și de la cel spiritual al evenimentelor, Hristos face uz și de sensul istorico-profetic: “Și precum a fost în zilele lui Noe, așa va fi și venirea Fiului Omului” (Matei 24, 37); “Că precum a fost Iona în pântecul chitului trei zile și trei nopți, așa va fi și Fiul Omului în inima pământului trei zile și trei nopți” (Matei 12, 40); “Și după cum Moise a înălțat șarpele în pustie, așa trebuie să se înalțe Fiul Omului” (Ioan 3, 14). Teologul Georges Barrois afirmă că tipurile Vechiului Testament pregătesc revelația Noului Testament, iar cărțile Noului Testament explică evenimentele minunate din Vechiul Testament. Acest lucru l-a determinat să afirme că tipologia face parte din iconomia divină, fiind legată de mersul istoriei sfinte spre telos-ul ei ultim, adică spre Împărăția ce va să vină⁷.

Întâmplările din trecut ajung la împlinire prin realitățile viitoare, dar desăvârșirea viitoare este deja prezentă sau vădită în întâmplarea însăși. Părintele John Breck⁸ spune că relațiile tipologice prezintă o dublă mișcare: din trecut spre viitor, dar și din viitor spre trecut. Tipul nu e doar un semn profetic, ce indică o realitate viitoare, ci este și o localizare istorică, în care acea realitate viitoare este realizată proleptic. Mai exact, realitatea viitoare sau eshatologică pătrunde în ordinea istorică pentru a fi sesizată. Antitipul și arhetipul sunt deja în mod prevestitor, prezente, prin anticipare, în tip⁹. Un exemplu de relație tipologică cu dublu sens

sunt cuvintele Sfântului Apostol Pavel, pe care le redăm în întregime:

Căci nu voiesc, fraților, ca voi să nu știți că părinții noștri au fost toți sub nor și că toți au trecut prin mare. Și toți, întru Moise, au fost botezați în nor și în mare. Și toți au mâncat aceeași mâncare duhovnicească; și toți, aceeași băutură duhovnicească au băut, pentru că beau din piatra duhovnicească ce îi urma. Iar piatra era Hristos (I Corinteni 10, 1-4).

Din aceste cuvinte reiese că, pentru Apostolul Pavel, Hristos, chiar dacă nevăzut, era totuși prezent, într-o formă pre-întrupată, în mijlocul poporului lui Israel. De asemenea, este evidențiată și legătura sau identificarea între piatră și Hristos, între prototip și antitipul său. Astfel, antitipul eshatologic este prezent în prototipul istoric. Dar, este evidențiat și celălalt sens, anume că: prototipul istoric participă la antitipul eshatologic, servind ca loc (topos) în care antitipul eshatologic se revelează. Așadar, piatra este un “tip” în sens dublu:

pe de o parte, ea atrage atenția asupra vieții în trup și a slujirii istorice a lui Iisus Hristos, din a cărei coastă a curs apă-de viață-dătătoare și sânge, la rândul lor, imagini tipologice ale tainelor Botezului și Euharistiei. Pe de altă parte, ca prototip, piatra slujește ca locus în care viitoarea lucrare mântuitoare a lui Hristos este realizată proleptic în istoria lui Israel: setea poporului este stinsă în mod real de apa vie care curge din piatră. Aceasta se întâmplă nu datorită unei calități magice inerente pietrei, ci deoarece piatra – necunoscută poporului – a fost aleasă prin voința divină ca să fie locus-ul istoric în care Fiul lui Dumnezeu să se manifeste către ei¹⁰.

În altă ordine de idei, tipologia relevă, pe de-o parte, prezența și lucrarea lui Dumnezeu în istoria mântuirii, iar pe de altă parte, continuarea planului lui Dumnezeu în orice context spre realizarea lui deplină¹¹.

Dacă Hristos folosea anumite imagini din trecut pentru a prevesti cele ce urmează și pentru a arăta legătura dintre Vechiul și Noul Testament, așa vor face și apostolii, dar și urmașii acestora. Urmând linia trasată de Hristos, Sfinții Apostoli și-au concretizat atitudinea lor față de Vechiul Testament în deplină armonie cu precizarea dată de El. Ei fac apel la metoda utilizată de Hristos, care evoca anumite imagini din scripturile ebraice (Vechiul Testament) pentru a dezvălui semnificația lucrării Sale mântuitoare. Activitatea

teologică a Apostolilor și a Sfinților Părinți nu a avut scopul doar de a face înțeles sensul originar al unui text, ci și de a-L înțelege pe Hristos, ca împlinitor al făgăduințelor lui Dumnezeu, ca fiind tălmăcit „după Scripturi”; ca fiind singurul subiect al Scripturii în întregime¹². Afirmăția lui Filip către fratele său Natanael este o mărturie importantă, întrucât Îl arată pe Hristos ca fiind împlinirea profețiilor Vechiului Testament: “Am aflat pe Acela despre care au scris Moise în Lege și proorocii, pe Iisus, fiul lui Iosif din Nazaret” (Ioan 1, 45). Conformitatea dintre Lege și Evanghelie este afirmată și de Sfântul Apostol Pavel, care spune: “Pavel, rob al lui Iisus Hristos, chemat de El apostol, rânduit pentru vestirea Evangheliei lui Dumnezeu, pe care a făgăduit-o mai înainte, prin proorocii Săi, în Sfintele Scripturi” (Romani 1, 1-2)¹³. De asemenea, vorbind despre Adam, ca fiind chipul Celui ce avea să vină (Romani 5, 14), Apostolul Pavel Îl prezintă pe Hristos atât ca noul Adam, care corectează greșeala primului Adam, cât și ca ultimul Adam, în care toți vor învia (I Corinteni 15, 20-22, 45). Așa cum Adam reprezenta omenirea, conducându-o prin viață la moarte, tot așa Hristos restaurează omenirea, conducându-o prin moarte la viață¹⁴. Apostolul Pavel este, de fapt, cel care stabilește cel mai bine continuitatea dintre legământul lui Israel și cel cu Biserica, prin faptul că venirea lui Iisus, ca Mesia, nu înseamnă că poporul Israel este chemat să abandoneze legământul, ci că neamurile sunt chemate să participe și ele, și, astfel, să se continue acest legământ al lui Dumnezeu cu noul Israel (Romani Cap. 9 - 11)¹⁵.

Totodată, Apostolul Pavel este și cel care stabilește legătura dintre Scripturi și Evanghelie. De exemplu, în Epistola a doua către Corinteni (3, 12-18; 4, 1-6), Pavel arată atât legătura dintre Moise și Hristos, cât și faptul că Hristos este împlinirea celor prevestite. În opinia sa, vălul pus de Moise pe fața sa rămâne până astăzi peste cei ce citesc din cărțile Vechiului Testament. Acesta se ridică numai prin Hristos, care este slava lui Dumnezeu și cheia înțelegerii scripturilor. Toate imaginile sau însușirile atribuite lui Hristos în Noul Testament, ca: înțelepciune a lui Dumnezeu, în care sunt ascunse toate vistieriile înțelepciunii și ale cunoștinței (Coloseni 2, 3), Calea, Adevărul și Viața (Ioan 14, 6), Chipul Dumnezeului Celui nevăzut (Coloseni 1, 15), plinătatea dumnezeirii (Coloseni 2, 9), Păstorul (I Petru 2, 25), Mai-Marele Păstorilor (I Petru 5, 4), toate Îl arată ca fiind Cel prezis, ca Cel venit de la Dumnezeu, deci Îl arată

ca împlinitor al profețiilor mesianice. Expresive sunt și cuvintele Apostolului Petru, care spune: “Dumnezeu a împlinit astfel cele ce vestise dinainte prin gura tuturor proorocilor, că Hristosul Său va pătimi” (Faptele Apostolilor 3, 18). Însuși răspunsul dat de Petru: “Tu ești Hristosul, Fiul lui Dumnezeu Celui viu” (Matei 16, 16) îl leagă pe Hristos de Lege, Psalmi și Profeti (adică de vechile scripturi). Evanghelistul Matei consideră că în Hristos se împlinesc foarte multe profeții. Astfel, de la nașterea Sa din Fecioară și până la patimile Sale, Matei vede împlinirea făgăduințelor lui Dumnezeu către poporul lui Israel. Însuși numele de Iisus, care înseamnă Cel uns, Mesia Cel așteptat, Cel care conduce poporul la mântuire, arată continuitatea planului lui Dumnezeu de descoperire și de concretizare. Unii teologi afirmă că Iisus nu este descoperit numai prin faptele Sale, luate în mod izolat, ci prin plasarea acestora în contextul împlinirii profețiilor (după Scripturi). În acest sens, părintele Behr spune:

Citite în lumina lucrării lui Dumnezeu în Hristos, Scripturile vechi furnizează termenii și imaginile, contextul în care apostolii au captat un sens în tot ceea ce s-a întâmplat, și prin care l-au explicat și l-au predicat, îndreptând astfel proclamația potrivit căreia Hristos a murit și a înviat „după Scripturi”¹⁶.

Însuși Hristos confirmă existența unor colecții ale cărților Vechiului Testament, din care citează sau face amintire (Matei 4, 4, 10; 21, 13; 22, 29; Marcu 7, 6, 10; 12, 10, 24; Luca 24, 27, 44). De asemenea, recunoaște valabilitatea tradițiilor de origine mozaică (Marcu 1, 44), fiind, în același timp, critic cu tradiția bătrânilor (Marcu 7, 1-23) care se substituie Legii. Hristos Însuși folosește anumite imagini din prooroci, familiare contemporanilor Săi, pentru a-și dezvălui identitatea și sensul vieții Sale (ex. Fiul Omului Ioan 1, 51 – Daniel 7, 13). Chiar Hristos este Cel care își așează activitatea Sa mântuitoare în legătură cu proorociile biblice: “Că dacă l-ai crede pe Moise, M-ai crede și pe Mine, fiindcă el despre Mine a scris. Iar dacă celor scrise de el nu le dai crezare, cum veți crede în cuvintele Mele?” (Ioan 5, 46-47; 5, 39; 24, 46, 47). El Însuși face o legătură între persoana Sa și cele scrise de Lege, prooroci și psalmi: “că trebuie să se îplinească toate cele scrise despre Mine în Legea lui Moise, în prooroci și în psalmi” (Luca 24, 44). El chiar îi îndeamnă pe cei care Îl ascultă să cerceteze Scripturile, căci acelea sunt cele care mărturisesc despre El (Cf. Ioan 5, 39). Tot Hristos este

și Cel care dă autoritate Scripturilor: “Căci adevărat zic vouă: Înainte de a trece cerul și pământul, o iotă sau o cirtă din Lege nu va trece, până ce se vor face toate” (Matei 5, 18). De aceea Hristos nu a venit să strice Legea, ci să o desăvârșească (Matei 5, 17).

Vechiul Testament a constituit pentru Apostoli o mărturie inspirată a revelației lui Dumnezeu. Ei erau conștienți că prin gura proorocilor lucra Însuși Dumnezeu. Apostolul Petru evidențiază inspirația Vechiului Testament: “Aceasta știind mai dinainte că nicio proorocie a Scripturii nu se tâlcuiește după socotința fiecăruia; pentru că niciodată proorocia nu s-a făcut din voia omului, ci oamenii cei sfinți ai lui Dumnezeu au grăit, purtați fiind de Duhul Sfânt” (II Petru 1, 20-21). Și Apostolul Pavel spune: “Toată Scriptura este insuflată de Dumnezeu și de folos spre învățură, spre mustrare, spre îndreptare, spre înțeleptirea cea întru dreptate” (II Timotei 3, 16; Faptele Apostolilor 3, 18; 4, 25; 28, 25). De aceea, în propovăduirea Evangheliei, ei făceau trimiteri la scrierile Vechiului Testament (Faptele Apostolilor 2, 16; 3, 22; 13, 40), Vechiul Testament devenind cartea Bisericii creștine (Faptele Apostolilor 17, 2, 11; 18, 28). Astfel, Biserica, încă de la începuturile ei, a preluat Vechiul Testament ca pe o parte integrală din propriul său mesaj revelat (Ioan 2, 22; I Timotei 5, 18; I Corinteni 9, 9).¹⁷

Este cert faptul că Mântuitorul Hristos este interpretat prin Scriptură (Lege, Psalmi, Profeti), iar Scriptura (cărțile Noului Testament) este interpretarea și mărturisirea lui Hristos, ca Dumnezeu adevărat. Nu se poate tăgădui valoarea profetică și pedagogică a Vechiului Testament, pe care Însuși Hristos o recunoaște (Cf. Luca 24, 44). Vechiul Testament este chiar interpretat de Hristos în sens mesianic: “Și începând de la Moise și de la toți proorocii, le-a tâlcuit lor, din toate Scripturile cele despre El” (Luca 24, 27). Dumnezeu a orânduit “istoria mântuirii” în termeni de făgăduință și împlinire, adică și-a revelat voia mântuitoare și iconomia divină prin mijlocirea legământului cu Israel, iconomie ce continuă de-a lungul vieții Bisericii. Este interesantă afirmația teologului Charles Harold Dodd care spune că fără revelarea corespondenței dintre profetie și împlinire, teologia devine ne semnificativă, nemaiaivând nimic de spus lumii.¹⁸ Astfel, între cele două Testamente există o relație tipologică, în sensul că promisiunile de mântuire, manifestate prin întâmplări din istoria

poporului lui Israel și prin profețiile proorocilor, vor fi desăvârșite în persoana lui Hristos și în viața Bisericii.¹⁹ De fapt, persoana lui Hristos se află în centrul ambelor Testamente.²⁰ Tot ce s-a întâmplat cu Hristos, a fost prezis de către prooroci.²¹ De aceea Hristos este manifestarea deplină a revelației lui Dumnezeu, lucrând în continuu până la sfârșitul veacurilor în viața Bisericii.

Această conformitate dintre vechile Scripturi și Evanghelie, exprimată de Apostoli, a constituit în veacul al doilea baza dezbaterilor împotriva mai multor erezii, precum cea a lui Marcion și a lui Valentin. De exemplu, Marcion, prin opoziția dintre Lege și Evanghelie,²² mărturisea existența a două zeități diferite: una a Vechiului Testament și alta a Noului Testament; iar Valentin, prin interpretarea unor texte din Scriptură, și-a alcătuit propria operă, intitulată Evanghelia adevărului, prin care respingea ideea unor texte autoritare, spunând că întâlnirea omului cu Dumnezeu are loc în inimă și, prin urmare, oricine are acces la Adevărul însuși. Prin ideea că experiența omului este singura sursă a Adevărului, Valentin nu mai făcea diferență între Scriptură și comentariu, între sursă și interpretare. Pentru el nu mai exista un canon de credință adevărată; nu mai exista un angajament interpretativ cu Scriptura, întrucât aceasta era depășită de experiența personală vizionară.²³

Contra acestor erezii, în sec. al II-lea există mărturii ce au confirmat legătura între Hristos, Evanghelie și Lege, semn că predica apostolică și exegeza tipologică au fost continuate și de către succesorii Apostolilor. Sfântul Ignatie Teoforul, Iustin Martirul, Irineu al Lyonului, Meliton de Sardes au adoptat și au transformat metodele de interpretare rabinice, citind Vechiul Testament în lumina persoanei și a lucrării lui Hristos. Astfel, ei mărturisesc că Hristos a fost propovăduit de Apostoli ca Cel răstignit și înviat “după Scripturi”.

Sfântul Ignatie, episcopul Antiohiei, evidențiază evenimentele importante cu privire la Hristos, pe care le prezintă ca elemente esențiale ale credinței creștine. În acest sens, el spune că Hristos

cu adevărat este din neamul lui David după trup (Ioan 7, 42), dar Fiul al lui Dumnezeu după voința și puterea lui Dumnezeu, născut cu adevărat din Fecioară, botezat de Ioan, ca să se îplinească de El toată dreptatea (Matei 3, 15). Pe timpul lui Pilat din Pont și al lui Irod a fost pironit cu adevărat pentru noi cu trupul ... ca să ridice semn” (Isaia 5, 26; 11, 12; 49, 22; 62, 10)²⁴.

Părintele John Behr consideră că acest fragment, alături de cel din Epistola către Traliani (IX-X), constituie mărturisirea de credință a Sfântului Ignatie, pe care o folosește nu numai pentru a expune conținutul Evangheliei într-o manieră kerigmatică, ci și ca test sau criteriu al adevăratei credințe²⁵. În propovăduirea și expunerea învățaturii creștine, Ignatie face trimiteri la Evanghelie, la Apostoli și la profeți, la toți care L-au vestit pe Hristos²⁶. Prin faptul că dumnezeieștii profeți au fost insuflați de harul lui Hristos să vestească un Dumnezeu, care S-a arătat prin Iisus Hristos, Fiul Lui²⁷, Ignatie vrea să arate existența un singur Dumnezeu atât în perioada de dinainte de venirea lui Hristos, cât și după venirea Sa, dar și să arate că întreaga Scriptură vorbește despre Hristos sau, mai bine zis, Hristos este întruparea Scripturii. Astfel, episcopul antiohian îl arată pe Hristos ca fiind “ușa Tatălui, prin care intră Avraam, Isaac, Iacov, profeții, Apostolii și Biserica”²⁸, “gura nemincinoasă prin care Tatăl a vorbit cu adevărat”²⁹. În altă ordine de idei, pentru el, “arhivele (Scripturile) sunt Iisus Hristos”³⁰.

La fel, afirmă și Sfântul Iustin Martirul și Filosoful:

în cărțile profeților noi găsim propovăduit de mai înainte că Iisus, Hristosul nostru, va veni, născându-se dintr-o fecioară, că va ajunge la vârsta bărbăției și va vindeca toată boala și toată slăbiciunea, că va învia morții și că, prigonit, desconsiderat și răstignit, va muri, că va învia și se va înălța la ceruri, că va fi și Se va numi Fiul al lui Dumnezeu, că unii vor fi trimiși de El să propovăduiască acestea la tot neamul omenesc...”³¹.

Sfântul Iustin are convingerea că Hristos a fost prezent în Legământul Vechiului Testament, manifestându-se și descoperindu-se lui Moise, Avraam (Facere 18, 1), Isaac (Facere 26, 2-5; 26, 24) și Iacov (Facere 31, 11-13; 32, 22-30)³². Prin cuvintele proorocului Isaia: “În timpul potopului lui Noe, te-am mântuit”, Iustin dezvoltă atât paralelismul dintre botez și potop, spunând că taina oamenilor care aveau să fie mântuiți s-a întâmplat în timpul potopului, căci toți cei care erau cu Noe erau în număr de opt, deci un simbol al zilei celei de-a opta, în care Hristos a înviat din morți, cât și paralelismul dintre Noe și Hristos, atunci când spune:

Hristos fiind întâiul-născut al întregii zidiri, El S-a făcut, iarăși, început al unui alt neam, adică al celui renăscut de El, prin apă, credință și lemnul care a avut în el taina Crucii, tot așa cum și Noe a

găsit mântuirea în lemn [n.r. corabia], dimpreună cu cei ai lui, fiind purtat de acesta pe deasupra apelor.³³

Sfântul Iustin arată că evenimentul istoric al potopului constituie un tip ce conține deja și manifestă antitipul. Sensul istoric este asociat cu sensul său spiritual, prin aceea că realitățile istorice conțin semințele propriei lor împliniri eshatologice. Prin aceasta, Iustin arată că istoria este mai mult decât o succesiune cronologică de cauze și efecte. Perfectul profetic este foarte bine reliefat, în sensul că evenimentele viitoare, anticipate în viziune, apar ca trecute, ca împlinite: “taine oamenilor care aveau să fie mântuiți s-a întâmplat în timpul potopului”³⁴.

Sfântul Irineu al Lyonului, dorind să afirme împotriva ereziilor și mai ales a valentinienilor, care nu acceptau coerența Scripturilor și care nu credeau în veridicitatea propovăduirii apostolice, preferând o readaptare, după propria lor ipoteză, într-un mod fantezist, dar cu plauzibilitate convingătoare³⁵, spune că “toate lucrurile scrise în Scripturi au una și aceeași origine, adică pe Dumnezeu”³⁶. El vedea Vechiul și Noul Testament ca o unitate cronologică sau ca parte integrantă a desfășurării istorico-spațiale a lucrării revelatoare a lui Dumnezeu în istorie³⁷. El a încercat să arate că există o unică linie continuă de la crearea lui Adam și până când omul va ajunge, în întregime, după chipul și asemănarea lui Dumnezeu. Sfântul Irineu arată că, cu toate că Hristos nu era încă prezent trupește, totuși El era subiectul proorociilor și vedeniilor proorocești, întrucât “Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu S-a îngrijit mereu să prevestească lucrurile care vor veni, grăindu-le oamenilor în multe feluri”³⁸. Pentru Irineu, Acest Cuvânt al lui Dumnezeu, Hristos, a fost cel care a vorbit cu Avraam și cu Moise³⁹, și cu toți proorocii, fiind, în chip nevăzut, prezent pretutindeni⁴⁰. Sfântul Irineu vorbește și despre prooroci, care, prin Duhul lui Dumnezeu, “într-un mod nevăzut au văzut pe Dumnezeu” (Isaia 6, 5), vestind de mai înainte lucrurile care vor veni⁴¹. Tot cu privire la prooroci, el spune:

Referitor la cele pe care avea să le facă Acesta [n.r. Hristos], pe unele dintre ele ei le-au văzut prin vedenii, pe altele le-au vestit prin cuvânt, pe altele le-au indicat prin acțiuni tipice/prefigurative, ei văzând ca petrecute/întâmplare deja, pe acela care vor fi văzute [în viitor]. Ei au vestit prin cuvântul gurii lor pe cele care vor fi vestite [cândva] și au făcut prin anumite gesturi cele care se vor face [pe viitor].⁴²

Într-un mod asemănător, spune și în altă lucrare: “există pasaje în care Duhul lui Dumnezeu relatează prin profeți cele ce vor avea loc în viitor ca fiind deja împlinite. Căci ceea ce a fost deja hotărât de Dumnezeu și decis cum să fie, este socotit ca și cum a avut loc deja”⁴³. Întrucât întâmplările patriarhilor și proorocilor prefigurau ce urma să se petreacă cu și prin Hristos, Legea veche trimitea la Evanghelia lui Hristos sau la Hristos, care este adevăratul sens al Scripturii sau comoara Scripturii⁴⁴. De asemenea, datorită faptului că Hristos era prezent în cei care au proorocit și în cei care au pregătit venirea Lui, Sfântul Irineu Îl arată pe Hristos ca fiind atât autorul, cât și subiectul Scripturii⁴⁵.

În tratatul său despre *Demonstrația propovăduirii apostolice*, Sfântul Irineu arată coerența Scripturii în propovăduirea apostolică. Prin faptul că propovăduirea apostolică a Evangheliei este ancorată în Scripturile vechi, el scoate în evidență importanța apelului la canonul adevărului și la tradiție:

asa cum profeții au prevestit că Fiul lui Dumnezeu trebuia să se arate pe pământ și unde anume pe pământ și în ce fel și formă trebuia să se arate – toate aceste profeții au fost luate de Domnul asupra Sa. Prin aceasta s-a adevărat credința noastră în El și faptul că miezul propovăduirii este adevărat, adică mărturia Apostolilor, care au fost trimiși de către Domnul să vestească în întreaga lume..⁴⁶.

Corelația dintre Scripturi (Lege, Psalmi, Profeți) și propovăduirea apostolică exprimată de Hristos, de Apostoli și de Sfinții Părinți arată atât unitatea lucrării lui Dumnezeu de-a lungul veacurilor, cât și centralitatea lui Hristos în Scripturi. Părintele John Behr spune că Sfântul Irineu se concentrează nu asupra unei istorii continue a Cuvântului lui Dumnezeu, dinspre Vechiul spre Noul Testament, acționând diferit în decursul vremii și revelându-L pe Dumnezeu prin diverse forme, ci Irineu accentuează identitatea neschimbată și veșnică a Cuvântului lui Dumnezeu, ca Iisus Hristos⁴⁷. Mergând mai departe, părintele John Behr spune că, în loc să descrie o biografie a Cuvântului, pornind de la istoria Cuvântului înregistrată în Scripturi spre istoria Cuvântului înregistrată în Evanghelii, Irineu accentuează identitatea dintre Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu în și prin Scriptură și Cuvântul propovăduit de Apostoli. Cu alte cuvinte, subiectul Scripturii vechi este Evanghelia lui Hristos și Hristos Însuși, întrucât despre unul și același Cuvânt al lui Dumnezeu au vorbit proorocii și Apostolii⁴⁸.

Unul dintre apologeții Bisericii din veacul al doilea, care i-a apărat pe creștini de persecuțiile păgânilor⁴⁹ și care a încercat să evidențieze principalele învățături creștine în contrast cu cele iudaice⁵⁰, a fost și Meliton de Sardes, de la care ni s-a păstrat textul primei omilii creștine, scrisă în jurul anului 160 d. Hr., intitulată *Despre Paște*. Lucrarea acestui “stâlp al Bisericii și al Tradiției ei”⁵¹ este foarte importantă datorită folosirii metodei exegetice a tipologiei⁵². Meliton, adâncește foarte bine legătura dintre vechi și nou, Lege și Cuvânt, prefigurare și adevăr, om și Dumnezeu, și evidențiază unitatea operei de mântuire⁵³ de la crearea lumii, spunând că toate, care urmau să se facă cu Hristos, au fost de mai înainte rânduite, ca, atunci când urmau a se face, să dobândească crezare ca unele prefigurate de demult⁵⁴.

Ca apologet, el merge pe o teologie biblică, superioară Legii Vechi, asemenea Apostolilor (Faptele Apostolilor 2, 22-36; 3, 18, 22-26; Evrei 7, 11; 10, 1; Coloseni 2, 17), spunând că

nicic din cele spuse și făcute (în Vechiul și Noul Testament) nu este fără înțeles de parabolă și fără un model prealabil. Fiindcă toate câte se fac și se spun sunt o parabolă: cele spuse sunt o parabolă, iar cele făcute sunt prefigurare, ca așa cum cele făcute se arată prin prefigurare, așa cele spuse să se lumineze prin parabolă.⁵⁵

Adeseori, el vorbește despre caracterul unic și continuu al tainei Domnului, care a fost prefigurată de Abel, Isaac, Iosif, Moise, David, vestită de glasul profeților (Deuteronom 28, 66; Ieremia 11, 19; Isaia 53, 7) și actualizată (împlinită) de Hristos, Fiul lui Dumnezeu⁵⁶. Așadar, același Hristos Cel care odinioară

a spânzurat pământul, se spânzură; Cel ce a înfipt cerurile e înfipt pe lemn; (...) Stăpânul și-a schimbat înfățișarea ajungând gol cu trupul și nu s-a învrednicit nici de o haină ca să nu fie văzut. De aceea luminătorii și-au întors fața și ziua s-a întunecat, ca să ascundă pe Cel ce a fost dezgolit pe lemn, pentru a întuneca nu trupul Domnului, ci ochii acestor oameni. Căci dacă n-a tremurat poporul, a tremurat pământul. Dacă nu s-a temut poporul, s-au temut cerurile.⁵⁷

Epistola către Diognet dă mărturie că, în primele secole, exista această certitudine că Hristos, Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, a fost dintru început; Cuvântul “s-a arătat nou, deși era vechi; dar se naște

totdeauna nou în inimile sfinților (credincioșilor). Cuvântul Cel veșnic este astăzi știut Fiul; prin El se îmbogățește Biserica...”⁵⁸.

Prin faptul că Apostolii și urmașii lor mărturiseau că Iisus Hristos este Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu, care a vorbit prin prooroci și care S-a făcut trup, se arată nu atât partea istorică a acestui “interval de timp”, cât relația dintre Scriptură și Evanghelie⁵⁹, continuitatea lui Hristos cu revelația dată lui Moise și proorocilor. Acest fapt a fost consemnat și în Crezul Niceo-Constantinopolitan, care, prin formula “după Scripturi” relevă preocuparea nu atât pentru istoricitatea evenimentelor din spatele cronicilor, cât pentru continuitatea acestor cronici cu Scripturile⁶⁰. Același Cuvânt al lui Dumnezeu, obscur în Scriptura Vechiului Testament este propovăduit clar și concis de Apostoli și de urmașii acestora, prezentându-L ca fiind “după Scripturi” sau “conform Scripturilor”. Întotdeauna, Noul Testament a fost considerat a fi împlinirea Vechiului Testament. Însuși Hristos reacționează la ajutorul dat de Apostoli în grădina Getsimani pentru a-L salva, spunând că așa trebuie să fie, pentru ca să se îplinească Scripturile (Matei 26, 54).

NOTES:

¹ Paul M. Van Buren, *According to the Scriptures. The Origins of the Gospel and of the Church's Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans, Gd. Rapids, MI, 1998.

² John Behr, *Formarea Teologiei creștine*, vol. I, *Drumul spre Niceea*, traducere din limba engleză de Mihail G. Neamțu, Editura Sophia, București, 2004, p. 29.

³ Paul Evdokimov, *Ortodoxia*, traducere din limba franceză de Dr. Irineu Ioan Popa, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1996, p. 210.

⁴ Trebuie amintit aici de exegeza iudaică ce s-a născut după exilul babilonic, când iudeii, nemaștiind ebraica biblică, încep să recurgă la serviciile scribilor. Cu timpul s-a ajuns ca, datorită diverselor metode de interpretare, Scriptura să fie abandonată de alte tradiții și practici omenești fără nicio legătură cu revelația divină a Vechiului Testament. Exegeza biblică s-a transformat încetul cu încetul în exegeza cabalistică; aceasta, prin cele trei metode: Gematria, Notarikon și Temurah a dat naștere la apariția literaturii apocrife cu caracter apocaliptic – Diac. Prof.

- N. Nicolaescu “Biserica Ortodoxă, păstrătoarea celor mai bune tradiții și metode de exegeză biblică”, în *Studii Teologice*, IV (1952), nr. 3-4, pp. 113-115.
- ⁵ Pr. Prof. Boris Bobrinsky, *Împărtășirea Sfântului Duh*, traducere de Măriuca și Adrian Alexandrescu, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1999, p. 121.
- ⁶ Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, p. 350 și urm.
- ⁷ Georges Barrois, *The face of Christ in the Old Testament*, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1974, p. 40 și urm.
- ⁸ Pr. John Breck, *Puterea Cuvântului în Biserica dreptmăritoare*, traducere de Monica E. Herghelegiu, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1999, pp. 38-39.
- ⁹ *Idem*, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, traducere de Ioana Tămăian, Editura Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 42.
- ¹⁰ *Idem*, *Puterea Cuvântului în Biserica dreptmăritoare*, p. 40.
- ¹¹ Georges Barrois, *op. cit.*, p. 40 și urm.
- ¹² John Behr, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-46. Sfântul Chiril al Ierusalimului spune: “Există un singur Dumnezeu, Tatăl, Stăpânul Vechiului și Noului Testament; și un singur Domn, Iisus Hristos, Cel profețit în Vechiul Testament și venit pe pământ în Noul Testament; și un Duh Sfânt, care a predicat prin prooroci despre Hristos, iar când a venit Hristos, S-a pogorât și L-a arătat”, *Cateheze*, XVI, 3, traducere din limba greacă și note de Pr. Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2003, p. 272.
- ¹³ Evenimentele din Vechiul Testament au contribuit la formarea gândirii Sfântului Apostol Pavel, constituind o constantă a cuvântărilor și scrierilor sale, mai ales a aceleia către Evrei; cf. Pr. Dr. Nicolae Neaga, “Atitudinea Sf. Apostol Pavel față de Vechiul Testament”, în *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XII (1967), nr. 8-9, pp. 633-638.
- ¹⁴ James, D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1998, pp. 241-242.
- ¹⁵ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo. Ghid istoric și teologic al crezurilor și mărturisirilor de credință în tradiția creștină*, traducere de Mihai-Silviu Chirilă, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2010, p. 50.
- ¹⁶ John Behr, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.
- ¹⁷ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, “Scriptură și Tradiție”, în *Studii Teologice*, XXII (1970), nr. 5-6, p. 387.
- ¹⁸ Charles Harold Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, Fontana Books, London, 1965, pp. 137-138.
- ¹⁹ Pr. John Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, pp. 39-40, 54.

- ²⁰ Pr. Ion Bria, "Cuvinte pentru Ortodoxie. Viziunea biblică a Bisericii", în *Credința străbună*, nr. 6, 2002, p. 3.
- ²¹ Alfred Loisy, *Jésus et la Tradition Evangélique*, Emile Nourry Editeur, Paris, 1910, pp. 212-216.
- ²² J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmes dans L'Antiquité Chrétienne, I. La Théologie Anténicéenne*, dixième édition, Libraire Victor Lecoffre, Paris, 1924, p. 207.
- ²³ John Behr, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-39.
- ²⁴ Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Smirneni*, I, 1, în *Scrierea Părinților Apostolici*, traducere, note și indici de Pr. Dr. Dumitru Fecioru, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1995, p. 219.
- ²⁵ John Behr, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
- ²⁶ Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Filadelfieni*, V, 1, p. 215.
- ²⁷ Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Magnezieni*, VIII, 2, p. 201.
- ²⁸ Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Filadelfieni*, IX, 1, p. 217.
- ²⁹ Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Romani*, VIII, 1, p. 213.
- ³⁰ Sf. Ignatie Teoforul, *Epistola către Filadelfieni*, VIII, 2, p. 217.
- ³¹ Iustin Martirul, *Apologia I*, XXXI, în *Apologeți de limbă greacă*, traducere, introducere, note și indici de Pr. Prof. Dr. T. Bodogae, Pr. Prof. Dr. Olimp Căciulă, Pr. Prof. Dr. D. Fecioru, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1997, p. 61.
- ³² Iustin Martirul, *Dialog cu iudeul Trifon*, LVIII-LX, în *Apologeți de limbă greacă*, traducere, introducere, note și indici de Pr. Prof. Dr. T. Bodogae, Pr. Prof. Dr. Olimp Căciulă, Pr. Prof. Dr. D. Fecioru, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1997, pp. 208-212.
- ³³ Iustin Martirul, *Dialog cu iudeul Trifon*, CXXXVIII, pp. 335-336.
- ³⁴ Pr. John Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, pp. 73-75.
- ³⁵ Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre I, VIII, 1; IX, 4. Édition critique d'après les versions arménienne et latine sous la direction de Adelin Rousseau avec la collaboration de Bertrand Hemmerdinger, Louis Doutreleau et Charles Mercier, Sources chrétiennes, nr. 100, Les Édition du Cerf, Paris, 1965.
- ³⁶ Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre IV, IX, 1, p. 477.
- ³⁷ Prof. Dr. Remus Rus, *Introducere la Sf. Irineu de Lugdunum, Demonstrația propovăduirii apostolice*, traducere, introducere și note de Prof. Dr. Remus Rus, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2001, p. 47.
- ³⁸ Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre IV, XX, 11, pp. 661-669.

- ³⁹ Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre IV, IX, 1, p. 481; Idem, *Demonstrația propovăduirii apostolice*, 46, pp. 108, 133-140.
- ⁴⁰ Sf. Irineu de Lugdunum, *Demonstrația propovăduirii apostolice*, 34, p. 97.
- ⁴¹ Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre IV, XX, 8, pp. 649-650; Idem, *Demonstrația propovăduirii apostolice*, 30, p. 94; 42, p. 105.
- ⁴² Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre IV, XX, 8, p. 653.
- ⁴³ Sf. Irineu de Lugdunum, *Demonstrația propovăduirii apostolice*, 67, p. 127.
- ⁴⁴ Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre IV, XXVI, 1, p. 713.
- ⁴⁵ Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre IV, IX, 1, p. 481.
- ⁴⁶ Sf. Irineu de Lugdunum, *Demonstrația propovăduirii apostolice*, 86, p. 140.
- ⁴⁷ John Behr, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 177.
- ⁴⁹ Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “Melito’s Anti-Judaism”, in *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 5, nr. 2, 1997, pp. 271-283. Eusebiu de Cezareea prezintă câteva fragmente dintr-o lucrare de-a lui Meliton în care îi cere lui Marc Aureliu prudență în cercetarea acuzațiilor la adresa creștinilor; *Istoria bisericească*, IV, 26, în *Scrieri* partea întâi, “Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești” (PSB) 13, traducere, studiu, note și comentariu de Pr. Teodor Bodogae, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1987, pp. 175-176.
- ⁵⁰ Adrian Agachi, “Imagini despre Botez la Meliton de Sardes”, în *Ziarul Lumina*, 4 octombrie 2011.
- ⁵¹ Prof. Dr. Stylianos G. Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, Vol. I, traducere de Lect. Dr. Adrian Marinescu, Editura Bizantină, București, 2006, p. 248.
- ⁵² Othmar Perler, “Introduction”, la Méliiton de Sardes, *Sur la Pâque*, în *Sources chrétiennes*, nr. 123, Les Édition du Cerf, Paris, 1966, pp. 29-32.
- ⁵³ În acest sens, Prof. Dr. Stylianos G. Papadopoulos spune că omilia pascală a lui Meliton devine o subliniere a rolului lui Hristos în istorie pentru mântuirea omului. De asemenea, consideră că Sf. Meliton își dezvoltă teologia sa pornind “de la considerarea Vechiului Testament ca tip și a Noului Testament ca plinire și preaslăvire. Taina lui Hristos și a mântuirii și-a vădit prototipicitatea sa în Vechiul Testament, care este înțeles numai prin intermediul Noului Testament”; cf. *Patrologie*, vol. I, pp. 249-250.
- ⁵⁴ Meliton de Sardes, *Despre Paște*, 57-58, în Diac. Dr. Ioan I. Ică jr, *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. I, *Canonul apostolic al primelor secole*, Deisis/Stavropoleos, București, 2008, p. 859.
- ⁵⁵ Meliton de Sardes, *Despre Paște*, 35-36, p. 856.

⁵⁶ Meliton de Sardes, *Despre Paște*, 59-86, pp. 859-861.

⁵⁷ Meliton de Sardes, *Despre Paște*, 96-98, p. 863.

⁵⁸ *Epistola către Diognet*, XI, 4, în *Scrierile Părinților Apostolici*, traducere, note și indici de Pr. Dr. Dumitru Fecioru, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1995, p. 419.

⁵⁹ John Behr, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 32.



Theodor
Damian (left)
and Richard
Grallo



Alina Feld and Doru Tsaganea



Juliana Udvardy and Șerban Chelariu presenting their art (next to works by Garabet Salgian, Viorica Colpacci and Liviu Șoptelea) as part of the „Spiritus” Art Gallery exhibition at the event.

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PROGRAM

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**Remembering Peace:
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Saturday, December 6th, 2014
10:00 AM

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Seabury Building

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Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York; President of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality:

Errare Humanum Est. Absolvere Divinum

Clair McPherson, PhD

Professor of Ascetical Theology, General Theological Seminary; Priest Associate, Church of the Transfiguration, Manhattan (Episcopal)

The Agnus Dei Penny: Artifact of Christian Peace

Richard Grallo, PhD

Professor of Applied Psychology, Metropolitan College of New York:

Four Functions of Experience in Human Learning

Louis Tietje, PhD

Professor of Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York, and

Steven Cresap, PhD

Associate Professor of Modern European Intellectual History, Metropolitan College of New York:

Rival Norms of Social Justice: Is There a Winner?

Doru Tsaganea, PhD

Professor of Mathematics, Metropolitan College of New York

The Ukrainian Conflict and Christian Moral Values

Alina Feld, PhD

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Long Island University Global

Welcoming the Stranger: Richard Kearney's Anatheism

Elvin T. Ramos, PhD

Founder and President, Global Tassels, Inc.

Adjunct Assistant Professor, St. John's University:

The Practice of Peace and the Engagement of Social Justice through education during the Never Ending Global War on Poverty

Ana Chelariu, PhD

Independent Scholar, New Jersey

Jesus' Curse of the Fig Tree (New Testament) and The Bráhman of Two Birds in a Fig Tree (Rig Veda), Parables of Teaching

MODERATOR:

Humphrey Crookendale, JD

Dean, School of Management, Metropolitan College of New York

GUESTS OF HONOR:

His Eminence Nicolae Condrea, PhD Archbishop, The Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

Daniel Katz, PhD

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chief Academic Officer, Metropolitan College of New York, Visiting Professor of History, University of Maryland

Hosts:

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Clair McPherson, PhD

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Discussants:

Bert Breiner, PhD

Associate Professor of Religion, Hunter College, City University of New York

David Rosner, PhD

Associate Professor of Values and Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York

“Spiritus” Art Gallery (Director **Viorica Colpacci**)

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