# THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION – *SEMPER, UBIQUE, AB OMNIBUS?*

The last few years have faced all of us who are working in the field of theology yet again with questions concerning the identity of the discipline: What is it that we teach at the universities? What is it that we want ministers and ideally also a number of lay people in the church congregations to be familiar with? What is it that we feel can make a specific contribution to our societies when we take all the other "…ologies" away?

As there is an inherent tension in theology concerning its conservative and at the same time innovative nature, some of our conversations have left a bitter aftertaste. Those for whom theology is primarily the continuation of an already begun academic study, divided into familiar disciplines and employing familiar methods, looked with disgust at the new challenges brought by the Bologna process, as if they were selling theology off. They asked whether their responsibility did not lie in opposing this process of degradation, this getting rid of the tools so necessary for a philologically and historically based study. They have been thinking of forming alliances for defending the old but decaying familiar world, of establishing a theological counter-culture. In doing so, theology could end up losing contact with other disciplines shaped by the new processes, and perhaps also with the church, or at least that part of it which strives to be present in today's world. Those who see theology primarily in terms of ongoing reflection of the journey of faith lived and expressed in many varied conditions, have despaired at seeing the formation of defensive camps and their desire to establish control mechanisms for excluding forms of teaching (and often also their proponents) that did not comply to the code of "how theology was always taught – if it was taught properly." When one sees the disappearance of Faculties of Theology in America and their substitution by Centres for Religious Studies, or even more, when confronted with courses like Theology of Entertainment or Theology through Massage, it has to be said that there is a point to the conservative camp's caution. But when the structures defended and forms of study valid once for all appear to be either Vatican I Catholicism or Germanic Protestant Faculties of the 19th or

the beginning of the 20th century, the point of the conservative camp reached its limit. For tradition to live it has to develop, to change, as John Henry Newman would say.[1] And the tradition of theological education is no exception here.

Our first article takes us to the heart of this debate. Johannes Wischmeyer in his article asks how a "conservative subject like Protestant Theology could time and again manage to adapt to shifts in intellectual standards as well as in the churches' demands." His thorough analysis dissolves a dream of a German Protestant Theology curriculum valid *semper, ubique, ab omnibus.* Continuity, according to him, is seen from within the changes, from the variety of Reformation models, through the conflicts between the Protestant Orthodox and Pietist concepts of theology curriculum, till the Humboldtian University scientific ideal, still dominant today. But now besides the Humboldtian philological-historical approach other forms are appearing or reappearing, including insights from different disciplines, such as art history, pedagogy, sociology, economics, and law, and responding differently to the needs of the churches and society of our time. We hope that this article will start an interesting debate, and encourage you, our readers, to write your responses to our editorial board or to submit other studies in this field.

This issue is not a thematic one, so the second article by Per-Arne Bodin takes us to a different realm, namely that of the martyrdom of the Orthodox Church during the Soviet times in Russia. He does not describe the atrocities of the regime, but rather concentrates on the church's dealing with her past after the fall of communism, on the processes of canonisation than have taken place and also on the typology of saints and their place in the liturgy and iconography of the church, that has emerged through them.

Hans Jorissen sketches a theology of the eucharist as a sacrament of unity. This, according to him, means unity of all the mystery of salvation, as well as of those who participate in it. As a Roman Catholic theologian he faces the problem of intercommunion and comes

[1] In a higher world it is otherwise; but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." John Henry Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Harmondsworth 1973, p. 40.

with a reading of the official documents that does not put into conflict the "sign" of the existing unity and the "means" for reaching a greater unity. He defends those forms of responsible intercommunion, where there is a shared faith concerning the eucharist as well as a shared effort to overcome the divisions of the churches.

Pavel Hejzlar traces how foundationalism and relativism were overcome in social theory and what influence this had on the debate over justice, virtues, and the public good. He has chosen three authors for his analysis, MacIntyre, Stout and Walzer. All of them, he says, contribute to the current American public debate and to the criticism of how difficult issues like cross-cultural criticisms are dealt with, even if from different positions.

Finally, there is a short article by Thomas K. Johnson on the status of human rights and their arbitrary – or necessary links to Christian ethics.

Enjoy your reading.

*Ivana Noble, Prague*

# CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: THE STUDY OF PROTESTANT THEOLOGY IN GERMANY BETWEEN REFORMATION AND THE HUMBOLDTIAN UNIVERSITY IDEAL

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## 1. Aims of this Paper

Unlike some other countries, the training of Protestant clergy in Germany has always had a firm place within the public universities. In this paper, I am going to ask how a conservative subject like Protestant Theology could time and again manage to adapt to shifts in intellectual standards as well as in the churches' demands.[1] Since the Wittenberg Reformation, we can recognize four distinctive steps in the development of the study of Protestant Theology in Germany. A first major change occurred in the wake of the 1520s university reforms. After a time of consolidation under the new paradigms of Reformation Theology, Lutheran Pietism discovered the dimension of personal piety as an overarching aim of the future church ministers' university education. The European Enlightenment added new issues as well as new ways of learning to the traditional course schemes of academic theology. The development reached its latest stage when after 1800, Humboldt's University Ideal transformed the German universities and, at the same time, the professionalization of the clergy took place gradually.

[1] This article is based on a paper held at the SOMEF congress (Südostmitteleuropäischer Fakultätentag) in Bratislava from June 30 to July 3, 2005. Further information on the congress, where the current state and future of the study of Theology in the light of the Bologna process were discussed, are available via the Internet: http://www.univie.ac.at/etf/somef/index.htm. A comprehensive article on the topic, presenting sources as well as including the historical backgrounds is being prepared. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Ms Susanne Luther, stud. theol. et phil. (University of Erlangen) who helped with the translation.

The questions I am going to ask have their special relevance for the history of education in Central Europe. It would be a great contribution to our knowledge of Protestant Church History to have an integrated account of the history of all South-East Central European Protestant centres of education and higher learning.[2] Then we could trace similarities and characteristic differences between these institutions and the German theological faculties which had an exemplary function in many ways. We could ask how Lutheran and Reformed congregations differed in the methods of theological study, and which ideas they adopted from which leading Protestant universities. While we wait for some such comprehensive account, however, we can, nonetheless, look at the German story from a Central European perspective with genuine interest: Since the time of the European Reformations studying at a German theological faculty has been a preferred aim for prospective students from Central Europe – 'Hungarians' and 'Bohemians' as the Germans would call them in the days of the Habsburg Empire. The importance of the Central European factor for the tradition of theological study in Germany may be illustrated by two examples: Between c. 1550 and 1750, there was always a section of Slav and Hungarian students in the 'Evangelisches Stift', the world-famous Tübingen theological college. And as late as 1868, at the small but important university of Jena, no less than 23 of the overall 131 Theology students enrolled at the time were 'Hungarians' – the figure does not include Slav and Austrian students from the cis-leithanian half of the Habsburg Empire, who also esteemed the German standard of theological education.

## 2. Protestant Concepts, Initial Reforms: The Protestant Study of Theology in the 16th century

Among the leaders of the Wittenberg Reformation, professors of Theology are the most prominent group. Reforming the course of theological studies was one of Luther's and Melanchthon's chief objectives, realised in close cooperation with their academic colleagues.

[2] See Gustav Frank, *Die k. k. evangelisch-theologische Facultät in Wien von ihrer Gründung bis zur Gegenwart. Zur Feier ihres fünfzigjährigen Jubiläums*, Wien 1871.

Without a thoroughgoing reform of the faculty of Theology, there was no hope for a future generation of pastors who could help to spread the gospel of the Reformation. Thus, Wittenberg was to become a template for university reforms all over the sphere of influence of the Lutheran Reformation and beyond. We can hardly overestimate the importance of the decision to maintain 'evangelical' Theology as a proper academic subject within the framework of university studies. This aimed at adding an element of institutional continuity to a subject whose content was altered in many ways by the new theological thinking of the reformers. The medieval institution of the university survived in Protestant regions without substantial changes; the corresponding social and scientific forms were carried on far into Early Modern times. At the same time, the role of the Theology faculties was emphasised in comparison with the medieval system. Before the Reformation, no one aspiring to ordination to the priesthood had to undergo an academic course in Theology. Even top positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy did not necessarily require proper theological studies. It was more important to know Canon law, and the complicated regulations of the *formulae missae* than the subtleness of the scholastic distinctions. Ecclesiastical authority did not in the first place depend on theological expertise but on the respective stages of consecration.

Quite a number among the first generation of evangelical pastors who received their ordination in Wittenberg had not gone through a complete course of theological studies. But now the requirements for being ordained were different, exclusively defined by standards of theological expertise. Interpretation of the biblical scriptures as a basis for the competent proclamation of the gospel was now regarded as a clergyman's chief duty and responsibility. In the early stages of the Reformation there was the idea that even less-educated men like elementary teachers, cantors, sextons, or craftsmen could be qualified for such an office. As a requirement, literacy seemed to suffice. But in time congregations learned that their demand for well-trained biblical and theological argumentation was higher and could only be met by pastors who had finished a regular course of theological studies. Quite early, Luther had postulated that 'the universities should render men highly competent in interpreting the scriptures who should be-

come bishops and pastors, standing at the top against heretics and devils and all the world'.[3] Luther thought that a good command of the biblical languages on an academic level was necessary for Protestant theologians in order to interpret the scriptures but also to take responsible theological decisions on the basis of their biblical interpretation and to discuss controversial biblical and theological issues with their adversaries.[4] Hence, Protestant church ministry underwent a process of professionalisation similar to the cognate professions of lawyer and medical doctor: Only those who had completed the specific university course were to be admitted to ecclesiastical office: preaching and leading a congregation became the privilege of the learned.

An academic training in Theology that could offer the said qualifications had to differ in some points from the medieval type. What concrete changes did the theological faculties undergo in order to meet the new requirements?

Let us have a look at the University of Wittenberg (on which, by the way, hitherto the most detailed research has been carried out). From 1512 onwards, Martin Luther – as a professor of biblical exegesis – advocated a programme of biblical interpretation based exclusively on the philology of Renaissance humanism. He saw the opportunity to educate young people first and foremost by a training in the classical languages: 'If we want to show our love of the gospel, we must work hard on the languages.'[5] In line with this aim, Luther demands the 'Reformation' of the German universities. A theologian who claims to be a 'doctor of the holy Scripture' (*doctor scripturae sacrae*, the classical definition of the decisive academic degree) must prove his claim by his actual academic work. The huge curriculum of the traditional theological course was to be reduced; the biblical books

[3] Cf. Martin Luther, An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung. 1520, in: *Luthers Werke in Auswahl* (Hg. Otto Clemen u. a.), Bd. 1, Berlin [6]1966, p. 417.

[4] Cf. Martin Luther, An die Ratsherren aller Städte deutsches Lands, daß sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen, in: *Luthers Werke in Auswahl* (Hg. Otto Clemen u. a.), Bd. 2, Berlin [6]1967, p. 453.

[5] Cf. Martin Luther, An die Ratsherren aller Städte deutsches Lands, daß sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen, in: *Luthers Werke in Auswahl* (Hg. Otto Clemen u. a.), Bd. 2, Berlin [6]1967, p. 451.

themselves were to regain their central position for the study of Theology. 'It is not many books which make a man learned but good ones, read many times. This is how to become learned in the scriptures and godly, even if there is only little reading.'[6] Luther recapitulated his idea of the study of Theology in a three-step formula: The theologian should work according to the scheme of *oratio-meditatio-tentatio*.[7] Using words of the monastic tradition, Luther delineates a vision of a spiritual way from personal preaching over close, meditative reading of the biblical texts to a final step when the freshly won theological insights are put on trial by personal experience. Certainly, Luther has never meant this sketch to be a blueprint for the organisation of academic study (although his words have been understood so by many interpreters till today). But the formula of *oratio-meditatio-tentatio* became the epitome of the reformers' new concept of Theology. The focus of the subject was now on an intensive, existential understanding of the study of the Bible.

As a precondition for an effective reform of the theological faculty, the philosophical faculty also had to undergo important changes. Here, it was Philipp Melanchthon, appointed professor in 1518, who made Wittenberg a model for humanistic studies. Not for nothing, he was called *Praeceptor Germaniae* – 'the teacher of Germany' – in his lifetime. His Wittenberg inauguration speech '*De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis*' ('On the correction of the studies of the young men') pleads for the rediscovery of the Greek language. All arts and sciences aim at the wellsprings of knowledge, i.e. the original, unadulterated knowledge contained in the original texts from Antiquity. Whoever aims for those wellsprings, Melanchthon adds in a poet's tone, is going to 'savour Jesus Christ'. His precepts will illuminate the reader and lavish the nectar of celestial wisdom on him.

Melanchthon introduced organisational reforms in this humanistic spirit. Greek and Hebrew were given the status of independent fields of academic study, compulsory subjects for all Theology students.

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[6] Martin Luther, An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung. 1520, in: *Luthers Werke in Auswahl* (Hg. Otto Clemen u. a.), Bd. 1, Berlin [6]1966, p. 416.

[7] Preface to the first volume of the Wittenberg edition of Luther's German writings (1529), in: WA 50, pp. 657,1–661,8.

Instead of wasting their time with lectures on Physics and Logic, the young theologians should listen to the interpretation of classical texts such as Ovid, Aristotle, Pliny and Quintilian. How successful the Wittenberg model proved to be can be seen from the number of students from all over Europe who came there to study mainly Theology. Between 1535 and 1545, the tiny town near the river Elbe hosted the largest university in Europe. Luther and Melanchthon sometimes held their lectures in front of an audience of more than 500.

But the success of a reformed study of Theology was not so clear from the outset. At first, it was an open question whether the traditional forms of studying would not cease to exist altogether. After 1522, the periodical disputations were suspended and no new doctoral degrees were conferred between 1522 and 1533. The radical Andreas Bodenstein, also called Karlstadt, deposed all his academic degrees referring to Matth 23:8.10 ('But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. …Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.')

The recommencement of regular academic business at the Wittenberg faculty of Theology is marked by the adoption of new statutes in 1536. The academic course that prepared for church ministry was to last five years – over time reduced to three years, a timespan that would persist till around 1900. As for degrees, the ordinary theologian required only a Bachelor (in the philosophical faculty, as the confirmation of his propaedeutic studies there). The Protestant churches developed examination models outside the university. In the beginning the students were examined not as much about scientific knowledge but about their orthodox faith and moral conduct.

The provisions of the Wittenberg statutes show clearly in what way the reformers imagine 'evangelical' Theology as a university subject. There are still four academic chairs in Theology, each tied to specific theological matters in the following way. The first professor had to read on Romans, Galatians, and the Gospel of John on a regular basis. The second professor's field was Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms, and he had to offer lectures on the works of St Augustine, too. The third chair taught the remaining Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine letters. The fourth professor took charge of the gospel of Matthew, Deuteronomy und the Minor Prophets. Although these exegeti-

cal lectures contained large amounts of dogmatic and practical questions, we can see a very close concentration on biblical exegesis – and especially on the interpretation of the most important biblical books – against the wide range of theological matters the medieval theologians had worked on.

Melanchthon especially favours two ways of Bible lecture concurrent with academic study. First, the student should run through the complete Bible, extracting as he went all theologically important sentences and putting them at the right place in the dogmatic scheme of his 'Loci communes'.[8] As a way of getting even more familiar with the biblical message, he recommends formulating a *methodus*, i. e. one's own systematic concept of theological issues, based on a close logical-rhetorical exegesis of the most important biblical texts (Romans, then Galatians and Colossians). The student should make use of Luther's and Melanchthon's new commentaries. Starting from an exact account of God's justification of the human sinner, the *methodus* should be enriched in dogmatic content step by step. The idea is that every theologian should become capable of building a complete Protestant theological system, directly derived from Bible exegesis.

This concentration on exegesis was partly revoked in the second half of the 16th century. Many theological faculties designated one chair explicitly for dogmatics, another for polemics. Meanwhile, the close connection between doctrine and piety was held in high esteem.

## 3. Theology and the Idea of Individual Piety: The Period of Lutheran Pietism

Regarding this, later Pietist claims for a reform of the Reformation Age concept of theological studies seem to be only in line with the concerns of the Wittenberg reformers. When Philipp Jakob Spener and August Hermann Francke, the leaders of early German Pietism, called for a spiritual reform of the Protestant orthodox Study of Theology from c.1675 onwards, they hoped to reawaken intensive per-

[8] See: Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci communes 1521*. Lateinisch-deutsch, Übersetzt und mit kommentierendem Anhang versehen (Hg. Horst Georg Pöhlmann), Gütersloh $^{2}$1997.

sonal identification of the theologians with their proper subject. The academic Theology of the 17th century, shaped by dogmatic controversies between orthodox schools, seemed to the pious like a new scholasticism: they thought it would kill all the church's spiritual life. The plan was to improve the situation by the work of a new generation of pastors. They should exemplify practical, productive Christianity through their own lives and train their spiritual gifts. According to Spener's (1635–1705) famous program '*Pia desideria*', universities should become again 'seedling nurseries of the church for all orders of men, workshops of the Holy Spirit, but not of the spirit of this world'.[9] In the eyes of early Pietism, Theology is a divine subject, the queen of all sciences, instrument of the Holy Spirit, and should educate scholars in the Spirit. Theology should become a *'habitus practicus*', a practical habit, in the life of each theologian. Although Spener did not mean to relativise intellectual standards, a large number of Pietists got the idea that the study of Theology was only a means of serving the purpose of quickly collecting all preconditions necessary for the fulfilment of one's spiritual vocation.

Spener's plans for a Pietist type of the study of Theology are both evolutionary and back-to-the-roots. The '*Studium exegeticum*', exegetical studies, was to be re-established as the main subject on the students' timetable. The professors had to see that students became humble and lost every kind of exaggerated ambition. Their function was to lead students to the realm of the Spirit who is the only competent '*doctor*'. God himself provides for the right education and only pastors taught by Him can impart real edification to their congregations. Accordingly, Spener holds that students should not read only academic works, but also religious and edificatory sermons and tracts. He invents new types of university courses: *'collegia pietatis'* and 'practical exegesis' where students are initiated into the pious interpretation of the scriptures. This is not so much about rhetorical or grammatical scrutiny of the text, rather a close personal reading is to be applied to it, in awareness of one's own sinfulness, which the student is meant to confess in the presence of his fellows. Spener combined his spiritual aims with an excellent capability to organise

[9] Philipp Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria* (1675) (Hg. Kurt Aland), Berlin 1940, p. 68.

academic life. He recruited lots of students for the early Pietist strongholds, the universities of Leipzig and Halle. He also classified his students into three groups, everyone should be able to attain a theological level that matched his intellectual and financial capabilities and prepared him for the position where he could serve his fellow-Christians ideally.

August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), Spener's most important disciple, sees it as the aim of the study of Theology to prepare students for a life totally devoted to their calling and their ministry. Academic study is a period of moral probation, the student should 'only learn as much as God thinks is necessary and useful for him in order to use him as a tool for the glorification of His name and for the salvation and the use of other people according to His will, and as far as God lends him capacity, means and opportunity'[10] – as Francke puts it in his long-winded baroque German syntax. Studying Theology is a way of applied Christianity. Quite consciously, Francke's pietism follows in the footsteps of the Reformation fathers. But the Pietists were creative in devising novel forms of theological education which were to prepare for all aspects of future ministry – not only exercises in preaching, but also quite demanding tutorials in pastoral care and catechetics start entering the timetables of the theological faculties. At the same time, students shall remain without any personal claims to career or remuneration, leaving everything to God and to their church superiors. The coincidence with the new Absolutist ideal of the all-obedient state official is not accidental. Theology was now utilised in order to educate competent, loyal, modest officials of the church who nonetheless were willing to undertake the reforms necessary for the reestablishment of a church in spiritual crisis. According to Francke, the governing bodies of the Protestant churches were responsible for the organisation of the study of Theology in the first point: in cases of doubt, academic interests could not be given priority.[11]

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[10] August Hermann Francke, Idea Studiosi Theologiae, oder Abbildung eines der Theologie beflissenen / wie derselbe sich zum Gebrauch und Dienst des Herrn und zu allem guten Werck gehöriger Maassen bereitet…, Halle 1712, § 26; cit.: August Hermann Francke, *Werke in Auswahl* (Hg. Erhard Peschke), Berlin 1959, pp. 172–201; 182.

[11] For Spener's idealistic account of a pastor's duties see his: *De impedimentis studii theologici* (Preface to Dannhauer's 'Tabulae hodosophicae', Frankfurt a. M.

We know too little about the concrete alterations introduced into everyday academic life by the Pietists. The process of change started outside the official institutions. The said *Collegia pietatis*, or *Collegia philobiblica*, were sometimes advertised among the official university courses, too. In 1694, Francke began to give an additional *Collegium paraeneticum*; a series of weekly exhortatory speeches – all Theology students were asked to attend – in which he admonished them: they were to attend to a pious way of life and the useful planning of their academic progress. Francke pushed his claim of a personal tutor for every student (as in the Anglo-Saxon university system), but in the event this idea did not meet with success.

Changes can be recognised comparatively clearly in the new regulations for church examinations after c. 1700. Here, for the first time precise qualifications are stated for anyone aspiring to ecclesiastical office. In some German states, it is made plain that especially pious students will be the first ones considered for promotion. The subject matters of the first theological examinations in Prussia (introduced in 1718) show the knowledge and skills required from candidates according to the church officials. The first requirement is that the students hand in a sermon on a given text. Then they have to catechise some school children in the presence of their examiners. In an oral exam, they must answer questions in 'thetical and polemical Theology, exegetical, moral, casuistic and pastoral Theology, Church history, and in the field of edifying pastoral care'. We see that practical skills and an edifying pastoral behaviour are favoured highly. The candidates have to answer questions regarding the practical circumstances of confession, and they have to interpret a text in a practical manner as they had learned in the *collegia pietatis*. The examination in dogmatics emphasises topics from the article of Salvation, the examinee must always know the matching quotations from Scripture. The religious personality of each candidate shall be closely examined: 'whether he lives in repentance and vivid faith, and what evidence he can show of that; how he has lead his life from his early

1690) – German translation: Von den Hindernissen des theologischen Studiums (Aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt), in: *Hauptschriften Philipp Jakob Speners* (Hg. Paul Grünberg) (Bibliothek theol. Klassiker, Bd. 21), Gotha 1889, pp. 188ff.

youth, how he converted to God, what *specimina providentiae* (signs of providence) he has experienced hitherto, and whether he experiences temptations because of his way of life'?

## 4. A More Professional Approach to Practical Ministry – the Age of Enlightenment

Although the two parties were, in many issues, strongly opposed to each other, the enlightened theologians shared the Pietists' preference for practice. However, their motives and their understanding of a theologian's task were completely different. The social thought of the Age of Enlightenment supposed churchmen to provide moral and intellectual education for their parishioners. Church ministers should encourage rational action by their own example. Thus also the academic study of Theology regained esteem. The new statutes given to the Tübingen theological college, the 'Evangelisches Stift', in 1793 show the new, and optimistic outlook on future theological education: 'The more the well-being of the congregations depends on the virtue of their teachers, and the more prominent the impact of the clergy on the people, the more important it must become to the whole country that they be educated well and usefully. Incompetent subjects cannot help in propagating the Enlightenment, religious knowledge, good thinking and human happiness.' Accordingly, a proper education for church ministry was of high importance. It was generally agreed that the men of the church must prove themselves exemplarily well-trained and diligent because of their social role as intellectual multiplicators. We can see another rise in examination standards (from the end of the 18th century candidates had to sit written examinations). Examination grades were introduced which could be decisive for a future career in the church hierarchy. University admission was now altogether dependent on a regular graduation from a public school ('Abitur').

This was the period of popular pedagogical guidebooks which offered detailed help to prospective theologians in order to plan their study reasonably as well as ambitiously. Neologists like Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1693–1755) and Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791) – who both were especially successful with their guide-

books – emphasised that church ministers need a 'scientific' ('wissenschaftliches') study of Theology in order to be accepted by an enlightened public. Semler claimed that a future theologian could only attain sure conviction of the contents of Christian Dogmatics if he examined the biblical *dicta probantia* by way of careful exegesis and the skilled application of the philological and historical tools.[12]

Still, the ordinary student's course of studies was predominantly orientated towards church ministry. But, contrary to the Pietist view, this was now more seen as a concession made because of scarce time and financial resources. Not everyone could become a highbrow academic theologian, but it was desirable that he become acquainted with all matters of knowledge within the field of theological studies and beyond, at least on a superficial level. By no means students should concentrate too early on Practical Theology. Instead of Hebrew, students should rather learn the languages of the intellectuals, English and French, in order to understand the latest scientific literature.

Mosheim distanced himself explicitely from Luther's three-step formula '*oratio-meditatio-tentatio*'. He acknowledges the vision that stands behind it: academic study with a spiritual self-conception. But facing contemporary challenges, he assumed 'that today, Theology must be carried on and studied in a way completely different from that of the past'.[13] In his guidebook, he states that the once all-important issue of personal piety has lost weight: 'It is self-evident that among the first duties of a theologian is the care for his piety; but it does not have any immediate influence on scientific studies, and therefore, this is not the place to deal with it.'[14] The paradigm of piety has been replaced by the paradigm of morality. Quite often, Mosheim underlines the importance of a high moral culture for the public credibility of the clergy.

The universities had to undergo substantial changes if they still wanted to meet the demands of a society that took the education of

[12] Johann Salomo Semler, *Versuch einer nähern Anleitung zu nützlichem Fleisse in der ganzen Gottesgelersamkeit für angehende Studiosos Theologiae,* Halle 1757.

[13] Lorenz von Mosheim, *Kurtze Anweisung, die Gottesgelahrtheit vernünftig zu erlernen, in akademischen Vorlesungen vorgetragen* ($^{2}$1763), pp. 20f.

[14] Lorenz von Mosheim, *Kurtze Anweisung, die Gottesgelahrtheit vernünftig zu erlernen, in akademischen Vorlesungen vorgetragen* ($^{2}$1763), p. 33.

their academics increasingly seriously. Gradually opening towards the practice of church life in the course of the 17th century, the German theological faculties developed a new standard in university education: the practical 'Seminar' where Theology students were trained as future preachers and catechisers in front of live audiences, or school classes. At a post-university level, seminaries ('Predigerseminare') continued the pastoral training (although these were introduced in many regions only as late as the 20th century). As for the so-called 'homiletic seminars', some professors made the students perform their sermons to a student audience: in other places, they had the possibility of preaching in a regular church service. In the catechetic seminar, the catechizer had to teach a small group of selected children who functioned as his test pupils. Before and after his performance, each student received a thoroughgoing criticism by the professor as well as by his fellow students. Especially in the 19th century, many seminars adopted the habit of keeping exact minutes of their seminar sessions. The minutes that survive in our archives are among the most fascinating sources for the history of Theology.

The concept of practical university seminars developed at the small University of Altdorf near Nürnberg. As early as the 17th century, students advanced in the study of Theology had supplied the children of the surrounding villages with catechetic instruction. The only requirement was that they had previously listened to a lecture on catechetics. We do not know in which form the members of the early catechetic seminars discussed their practical experiences together with their teacher. In 1691, an additional homiletic seminar was started whose members took over preaching rights and duties for most Sundays of the year in a small village in the vicinity. Contemporaries preferred this way of seminar work that was closely connected to church practice as against purely academic exercise in the seminar group. Johann Philipp Gabler (1753–1828), a late Neologist, underlines the achievement of the Altdorf seminar – which he had been leading for some time – in 1789: Its existence was an excellent counter-example against anyone who contended that contemporary universities 'are only interested in Dogmatics and learned exegesis and forget about preparing theologians for their actual and obvious future duties: being useful preachers and teachers of the people'.

The importance of practical Theology among the theological disciplines was enhanced by the Rationalist reforms. At the same time, the propaedeutic study of philosophy was being reduced since church officials did not see professional use in it any longer. But quite a lot of students preferred to study a wider range of philosophical and historical subjects, especially when Idealism and Romanticism displaced Rationalist thought. The one-sided education of the theologians met general criticism. Throughout the 19th century, church administrations tried to integrate a 'useful' general education into the theological course scheme; at some places, for example, theologians had to take courses in physics or economics.

## 5. A New Scientific Ideal and its Crises – The Study of Theology since the 19th Century

But these were ideas from a past concept of higher learning. At the beginning of the 19th century, a new pattern of academic study developed in Germany. In the course of the century, it would conquer large parts of the world – American institutions, in particular, adopted the model of the German university enthusiastically. Central to the new, neo-humanist concept was the idea of 'Wissenschaft', understood as the initiation of the young academic into a dynamic, personal process of insight generated by scientific method. Alexander von Humboldt, the great scientist, defined 'Wissenschaft' not as a set of fixed sentences, but as something 'that is not yet wholly found and can never be hoped to be wholly found'. With these words, he characterised what modern academia sees as its core function: participation in a continuous research process.

Even more than in the period of Rationalism, it is philosophical theory that sets the intellectual standards also for the study of Theology. It was a historic decision that Protestant Theology accepted the intellectual challenge. Long and deeply-felt controversies arose, mainly on the issue to what extent historical methods can be applied in Theology. They have not yet finished. But all Protestant faculties in the German-speaking countries adopted the structural innovations of Humboldt's reform and applied them autonomously and with huge success. 'Protestant Theology' was reinvented as a field of study

under the conditions of the modern university. Before 1848, many universities prescribed exact curricula. From those, we can see how the academic work concentrated on exegetical and historical matters. But the most important innovation was the establishment of seminars in the theoretical disciplines, first in Classical Philology, but soon also in Old and New Testament as well as in Church History: During the weekly seminar sessions, a selected student elite was trained by methodical exercise and demanding source-reading. They were instructed how to begin their own research work, and incited to produce papers or even monographs. Theology students learned to apply the historical-critical methods developed especially by the Tübingen School around Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), they read the patristic authors, and they discussed current problems of the church, of the society and in the scientific realm. The seminar circle was perfect for the establishment of close relationships and fruitful cooperation between professors and a young generation of scholars. The first Protestant theological university seminar was founded by Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834) in Berlin in 1812. Soon, most other German faculties followed. The seminars were the places where Protestant Theology developed to a 'Wissenschaft' in the modern sense of the word.

Since the beginning of the 19th century, the study of Theology has become gradually more scientific. The differentiation between the single theological subjects went on. But today, it is still on the track on which it was set by the university reforms around 1800.

The Tübingen school of historical criticism as well as the Göttingen-based '*religionsgeschichtliche Schule*' helped establish new subjects like 'History of Ancient Christianity'. The mass of new knowledge could only be integrated in the curricula by the abolition of all extracurricular matters. At the turn of the century, there was the general idea that students would be clobbered over the head by the abundance of theological subject-matter. The majority of Theology students clearly aimed for church ministry, and hoped to complete their study as fast as possible, concentrating right from the beginning on exam-relevant matters. The practical theologian, Paul Drews (1858–1912) showed self-criticism when he stated in 1911: 'In spite of all the rich fields of knowledge and intensified research work we did not manage

to convey a spirit of academic ["wissenschaftliche"] Theology on wider circles of our students. …They drown in subject-matter with which they do not come to grips, they do not comprehend the correlation between the single matters.'[15] Drews suggests reducing the number of Old Testament and historical lectures. In his eyes, students seem to 'be sick of history'. Theological teaching should 'aim at the present, at the demands, the needs, the interpretation of the present, especially of today's church'.[16] Drews thought that the cosmopolitan, university-based model of theological study could only be kept if the theological faculties opened up to the questions and problems of the world outside academia. Groups who openly critisized liberalism in the church as well as at university found different solutions. In 1905, a first Christian college was founded in Bethel as an act of opposition against the academic study of Theology. What would have seemed a normal step, e. g. in the US, was the cause of long and bitter controversies in the German churches. Only under the experience of the National Socialist usurpation of the universities, study at one of those colleges was officially recognised. Church colleges were granted full academic rights even later. Critics complained that here, the necessary tension between an independent, intellectually responsible Theology on the one hand and the church on the other hand was no longer guaranteed.

But there have always also been Theology students who kept their interest in many fields of knowledge. Since the turn of the century, not only classical '*Geisteswissenschaften*' like philology, history, and philosophy attracted the young theologians, but also the new '*Erfahrungswissenschaften*', or social sciences. It was a genuine question whether the study of Theology should not be readjusted, from a one-sided orientation to the historical paradigm to a more pluralistic one. Not only Drews supported this view but also Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976), the greatest New Testament scholar of the 20th century who was known for his high esteem of historical research standards.

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[15] Paul Drews, *Das Problem der Praktischen Theologie. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Reform des theologischen Studiums*, Tübingen 1910, p. 7 ('I. Einleitung: Die Reform des theologischen Studiums überhaupt, 1–16').

[16] Paul Drews, *Das Problem der Praktischen Theologie. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Reform des theologischen Studiums*, Tübingen 1910, p. 11.

In 1926, he proposed offering students a choice between two differently orientated ways of study. The first one should be the traditional way, emphasising historical and philological research. The second should be closer to the reality of church life, comprising issues from Art history, pedagogics, sociology, economy, and law.[17] A freedom of choice would improve many of the current shortcomings in everyday academic life.

These shortcomings were felt even more deeply, when between the 1960s and the 1990s, student numbers in Protestant Theology increased at a level hitherto unknown. All of a sudden, Theology was in the situation of a mass university subject. The only reaction of those in charge was to increase the number of academic chairs and theological faculties. The Dialectical theologians – who had attacked the liberal '*Wissenschaftlichkeit*' in their youth in a quite revolutionary way – had not managed to develop their own, convincing model of the study of Theology in the meantime. Now, they were the ones to become the champions of autonomous research. In 1968, student revolts took place all over the Western world. Professors who refused to open their courses for political discussion and agitation were attacked. And everyone had to decide for himself which part of the Reformation legacy he was willing to keep: the love of learning and piety, or zealous commitment and partisanship.

[17] Rudolf Bultmann, in: *Die christliche Welt* 40 (1926), 422–428; 426.

# TO DESCRIBE THE SOVIET AGONIES IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE MIDDLE AGES: THE RUSSIAN NEW MARTYRS

*Per-Arne Bodin, Stockholm*

The time after the revolution in 1917 implied a period of martyrdom for the Orthodox Church and for millions of people in the country that was a few years later named the Soviet Union. The transition to Christianity in the *Kievan Rus***,** the origin of today's Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, took place, on the contrary, through a fairly peaceful coexistence between the new faith and heathenism for a couple of generations. In 988, the country officially became a Christian state when the Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev adopted Christianity for himself and his people. Not so many people gave their lives for the new and possibly not for the old faith either. There are however exceptions; the first two saints in the Russian list of martyrs were a father and son pair of Christian Vikings that lived in Kiev. The father refused to give his son to a heathen human sacrifice and so was killed along with his son.[1]

## Martyrdom in the Russian church

With a few exceptions before Soviet times, there were thus no martyrs in the Russian church. During 70 years from 1917, however, the church was persecuted with the same strength and cruelty as the early Christians were subjected to in the Roman Empire. Suffering and the thoughts of suffering have, in the light of this experience, become a very important part of the modern Orthodox identity in today's Russia.[2] In this way, the church also gives its own interpretation of the

[1] For more details about the Viking martyrs see: Basile G Poutsko, "Les Martyrs Varègues de Kiev (983)", *Analecta Bollandiana. Revue crititique d'hagiographie*, tome 101, Fasc 1-2. 1983, pp. 363-385.

[2] My former postgraduate student Elena Namli brought this to my attention in a

Soviet experience as a time of persecution of the church, as a time of martyrdom.

Many bishops, priests, monks, nuns, other servants of the church and laymen were arrested and executed or died in prison camps, a destiny shared with the rest of the population. The Soviet authorities saw Christians as a particularly dangerous group, and there were several large waves of arrests specifically targeting people working in the church. The first wave began shortly after the revolution and lasted until the end of the civil war. The second began in the period called *the Cultural Revolution*, that is the beginning of the Stalin era at the end of 1920's. The third large wave of arrests occurred in 1937 and was the overall peak of the purges within the Stalin era. By the end of the 1930's, there were only a few hundred churches functioning within this vast nation and only four bishops were not incarcerated. It was only with the onset of the Second World War that things began to change for the better, as the church was needed both to boost morale within the nation and for the links with the allies, who had been worried by the reports of the situation of the Christians in the Soviet Union. The persecution of the church started once again during the Khrushchev era but without the same consistency and cruelty as during Stalin's time.[3] All the Soviet period was, however, if in different degrees, difficult for the church.

## Canonisation

1988 was the peak of Glasnost in the USSR; suddenly the Orthodox Church that had been marginalised and persecuted became an acknowledged force within Soviet society. The church gained the opportunity to open new places of worship, educate more priests and issue publications to a much larger extent and audience than before.

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paper. This has been the inspiration for this article. See Elena Namli, *Och på en enda kyrka. Ortodox etik i ekumenisk dialog*, Skellefteå 2003.

[3] For a survey of the history of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet period see for example: Trevor Beeson, *Discretion and Valour. Religious Conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe*, Glasgow 1975.

Possibly the most important step, apart from opening new churches, was the fact that it also began the process of canonising new saints.

The Orthodox Church has wanted in this fashion to establish the memory of all people who were martyred for their Christian faith during the Soviet time. The church has for this purpose organised a commission for canonisation under the leadership of Metropolitan Juvenalij. This commission is collecting material on martyrs over all of Russia. They have even set up some negative criteria for candidates for holiness; that is traits which are discrediting in the process, as, for example, belonging to groups hostile to the official church, giving information to the authorities or betraying their brothers and sisters during the interrogations.[4]

At the same time much of the hierarchy from the Soviet time still active in the church is accused of collaboration with the Soviet regime, a collaboration which increased even more the suffering of the faithful. The church has not started any parallel process of investigating and documenting that part of its Soviet past. The leader of the Russian Orthodox Church during the last 15 year Alexij II has, however, begged pardon of his flock for all the suffering which the compromises of the church leaders meant for many Christians.

The majority of the saints that have been canonised are new martyrs, men and women who suffered and died through torment inflicted on them by the Soviet power. All told, this is a large group, 1538 people to be precise – more than all the saints canonised up to that point in Russian church history. According to the church calendar for 1903 the number of saints of Russian and East Slavic origin of all categories and not only martyrs was then 381.[5] Most well known among the new list are the Tsar's family and the Tsaritsa's sister Elizaveta Fedorovna. The most solemn day of canonisation so far was 20th August 2000.[6] In memory of all Christians who suffered during Soviet time a large feast has been established at the end of January, known as *the gathering of new martyrs*. In addition, there are a number of days a year reserved for commemoration and dedi-

[4] Maksim Maksimov, *Novomučeniki Rossijskie – nebesnye zastupniki Otečestva.*
[5] Georgij Fedotov, *Svjatye drevnej Rusi*, Moskva 1990, p. 34.
[6] http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru, documents.

cated to the saints. The whole Russian church calendar has changed due to all these new martyr days.

The canonisations do not apply only to people with martyr status: a number of other people from different historical periods are also included. Canonising new saints has simply become 'fashionable' in the Russian Orthodox Church of post-Soviet Russia as indeed it has in the contemporary Catholic church. When the Soviet government was in place, it was essentially forbidden to perform canonisations of new saints, although there are some exceptions. Most notably, the great icon painter Andrei Rublev, who lived in the late 14th and the beginning of the 15th centuries was canonised during the Brezhnev era. Furthermore, during the 18th and 19th centuries (the so-called Synodal Period), canonisations were rare and included only about ten saints.[7]

The process of canonisations within the Orthodox Church has never been as formalised as in the Catholic Church, but it broadly follows the same procedure.[8] Typically, there are the following distinct stages in the process; firstly, a man or woman who has passed away is perceived to have lived a saint-like life; the person is remembered in people's prayers and some may even begin praying to the dead. Miracles are reported both from the life and afterlife of the candidate to holiness. A local cult begins to emerge around the person until finally, perhaps at the initiation of the local bishop, this leads to an application for a formal canonisation. The decision to accept the canonisation is made after a council of Bishops, chaired by the Patriarch, has made an investigation of the individual case. After this review is complete, both a *Vita* and an *Officium* are composed and an icon painted depicting the new saint, the last according to the rules of the second ecumenical council of *Nicaea* in the year 787. The council also decides on which day of the year the saint shall be celebrated and all Orthodox Churches are informed of the final decision. Once this procedure is complete, a special divine service of praise, the *proslavlenie*, is performed for the new saint.[9]

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[7] Georgij Fedotov, op.cit., Moskva 1990, pp. 27–38.

[8] For a discussion of canonisation in Russian church history see: V. O. Ključevskij, *Drevnerusskie žitija svjatych kak istoričeskij istočnik*, Moskva 1871.

[9] V.M. Živov, *Svjatost'. Kratkij slovar' agiografičeskich terminov*, Moskva 1994, pp. 35–41.

The newly canonised saints are bestowed titles reflecting the customary Orthodox nomenclature: *martyr, martyr priest, martyr monk* and *confessor*. Sometimes the name *martyr* is not ascribed, but the title *strastoterpcy*, meaning 'those who endure suffering'. *Strastoterpcy* traditionally has been used about saints in Russian history who were tortured to death their beliefs without resorting to violence against their persecutors.[10] The best examples of this are the sons of the Grand Prince Vladimir, Boris and Gleb, who would rather be killed by their evil brother Svjatopolk than take up arms against him. Sometimes different types of titles are used that do not refer to the saint's martyr status like *Prince* or *Fool in Christ*.

Another group of martyrs have no name, no other attributes and no one knows the days of their deaths or where they lie except for God himself. These anonymous saints have long existed in Orthodox tradition but they become especially important when suffering has been so great and inflicted upon so many.[11]

## My task

The Russian Orthodox Church still uses a medieval language, *Church Slavonic*, as a liturgical language, a medieval prose genre the *vita*, and a medieval form of art, the icon, to express its message. In this study I will show how the persecution and oppression of the Stalin and Soviet era in general are depicted in these medieval genres and forms of art. That is, how a contemporary experience of a totalitarian society is depicted in a medieval Christian language and also to what extent the modern world influences this depiction. As a theoretical and methodological inspiration I will use the newly published book by Elisabeth A Castelli *Martyrdom and Memory. Early Christian Culture Makin*g.[12] Castelli views the *vitae* of saints as a special part of cultural creation and collective memory. Her book is concentrated

[10] Ibid., p. 105 f.

[11] See *The Commentary to the Icon* at http://www.st-nikolas.orthodoxy.ru/newmartyres.html.

[12] Elisabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory. Early Christian Culture Making*, New York 2004.

on the Early Christian Period with one temporal excursion to USA in 1999 and the murder of two young girls. I will in the same vein study the Russian new martyrs mostly synchronically but with some diachronical aspects; that is, I will do some comparisons between the martyrs of the Early Church and the Soviet time. I will also broaden the field of study to include texts and the pictorial representations of martyrdom in icons. I will concentrate my study on the martyrdom of the royal family, the Grand Duchess Elizaveta and the collective memory in "the gathering of new martyrs" but I will also refer to other individual martyrs.

## Vitae

The adjustment to modern times is almost exclusively noticeable in the *vita* genre. The *Vita* texts for the new martyrs are, contrary to tradition, not written in Church Slavonic but in Russian. There are several reasons for this practice. The writings become more accessible if the text is written in a fully comprehensible language. Furthermore, there are not so many Russians capable of writing normal prose in Church Slavonic today as previously. In Russia, in recent centuries, Church Slavonic has been a language to read aloud rather than to write.

When it comes to the actual suffering the martyr endures, that is their arrest and execution or the hard life in a Soviet prison camp, politics is transposed to concepts of evil and details are often omitted. Words like violence, robbery, defilation (*oskvernenie*) are used. Words like Communist are seldom mentioned, the adversaries are more often called Bolsheviks. The name of the country, the USSR, and its leaders Lenin and Stalin, are almost never mentioned, the instigators of the suffering remain nameless – only the martyrs and those of good faith have names. It is no longer a question of nameless victims, but of nameless tormentors.

One important trait in most *vitae* is that the saint prays for his or her persecutors – they do not know what they are doing; they are led astray at the same time as they are the handymen of the devil. This is a way of trying to solve the dilemma that the tormentors came from

their own people; at the same time they are both responsible and innocent. In certain cases, there is also reference to a collective and penitent 'we,' responsible for the sufferings that the martyrs were subjected to.

## Fools in Christ

However, many of the *vitae* come closer to the more traditional, and in these cases the confrontation between the Soviet reality and the *vitae topoi* can become quite fascinating.[13] This is especially the case with the fools in Christ. This is a type of saintliness traditionally very popular in the Russian tradition called *salos* in Greek and in Slavonic *jurodivyj*. The *jurodivyj* did not make the usual monastic vows but decided instead to act as if mad. According to the tradition this meant the monk or nun acted in such a way because they wanted to change the worst sinners. Their behaviour was shocking, they were almost naked, they never washed and they offended people with strange and provocative talk. Their appearance and behaviour as well as their utterances had to be interpreted to understand their deeply holy character. Many of these fools in Christ were canonised in Russia up to the 17th century and the church standing on the Red Square in Moscow is dedicated to one of these fools: Vasilij. Now this form of Orthodox saintliness has been broadly renewed in the new martyrs.

Here I should like to dwell on one of these new martyr fools "Alexej the Blessed" coming from a little village in the Kostroma region. He became a *Fool* in 1928, the year the Stalin era began.[14] One of his first acts as a *Fool* was to walk around the fields measuring them with a stick. The farmers laughed at him or became annoyed at such nonsense. The act later turned out to be an omen of collectivisation. Another time he came to the home of a person and again he started measuring, he stated a number that had nothing to do with the

[13] For a comprehensive study of the phenomenon, see: D. S. Lichačev, A. M. Pančenko, N. V. Ponyrko, *Smech v drevnej Rusi*, Leningrad 1984.

[14] Damaskin (Orlovskij), Ieromonach, *Mučeniki, ispovedniki i podvižniki blagočestija Russkoj pravoslavnoj Cerkvi XX stoletija. Žizneopisanija i materialy k nim*, kniga 1–2, Tver' 1996, pp. 329–340.

real-life measures he was making. Later, this person was arrested and sentenced to prison camp for a number of years corresponding to the measure the *Fool* had mentioned. Alexej is here mocking the land-surveyor coming to the peasants to measure the land as a preparation for collectivisation and the Russian police making a protocol during a search. This sort of mocking behaviour is an important part in the ideology of the fools in Christ. When the *Fool* was being questioned, he told the interrogator that there had been an accident at his home – it turned out that the interrogator's wife had hung herself. The predictions always made by *Fools in Christ*, according to the *vitae*, are here concerned with the persecution and terrible reality of the Stalin era.

## The Royal Family and Elizaveta Fedorovna

The royal family with Nicolas II at its head has been canonised, which has aroused much discussion and criticism, because their Christian way of life and especially the righteousness of the rule of the tsar himself has been called into question. The commission for canonisation discussed this at length and the Metropolitan Juvenalij has explained that the tsar did not have any responsibility for the massacre on Bloody Sunday in January 1905 when hundreds of workers were killed in a peaceful demonstration. He has also tried to diminish the tsar's and his consort's guilt for giving Rasputin such an influence in Russia and so on. He has issued something like a certificate of the tsar's and his family's Christian life.[15]

The canonisation of Grand Duchess Elizaveta Fedorovna has not aroused the same criticism and the majority of Orthodox people seem to have supported the decision.[16] Elizaveta is in fact seen as a model for all later new woman martyrs. Elizaveta Fedorovna was a German princess and sister to the Tsaritsa; she was very beautiful and married the Tsar's uncle, Prince Sergej, who was governor of Moscow. Ter-

[15] Doklad mitropolita Krutickogo i Kolomenskogo Juvenalija, predsedatelja sinodal'noj komissii po kanonizacii svjatych na archirejskom jubilejnom sobore, Moskva 13–16 avgusta 2000 goda.

[16] About the Grand Duchess in different sorts of texts see: Elina Kahla, *"Revisons of Life: Grand Duchess, Saintly Elisaveta Fedorovna"* 2004, pp. 47–74.

rorists murdered the Prince in 1905 and the Grand Duchess herself came to the prison cell of the perpetrator to seek reconciliation with him. Later, Elizaveta founded a nunnery in Moscow. After the revolution she was executed in a mining-shaft outside of Perm together with other members of the Tsar's family. Her piety is emphasised in her *vita* and also the poverty ideal.[17] In the text, the Russian people are perceived as innocent children being misled; once again a way to overcome the fact that it is the people themselves who are the tormentors. Her last words in front of her executors were "Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

What directly links her *vita* to the typical Russian *vita* genre is the description of how her coffin was transported from Perm though China and how she is finally laid to rest in a Russian nunnery in Jerusalem. During transportation, the coffin leaks and lets out a sweet-scented oil and when her coffin is opened, it is apparent that the body has not decomposed at all; these are two signs of holiness in Russian tradition, which recur in older *vitae* – the sweet-scent of the dead and the absence of decomposition of the body:

> Когда поезд останавливался, сопровождавшие собирали траву и вытирали ею гробы. Жидкость, вытекавшая из гроба Великой Княгини, как вспоминает о. Серафим, благоухала, и они бережно собирали ее как святыню в бутылочку.
> Когда состав прибыл в Харбин, тела всех алапаевских страдальцев были в состоянии полного разложения, кроме тел Великой Княгини и инокини Варвары. Князь Н. А. Кудашев, вызванный в Харбин для опознания убитых и составления протокола, вспоминает: "Великая Княгиня лежала, как живая, и совсем не изменилась с того дня, как я перед отъездом в Пекин прощался с нею в Москве, только на одной стороне лица был большой кровоподтек от удара при падении в шахту."[18]

The *vitae* maintain a link with the older texts through this kind of *topoi* more than specifically following the pattern of the old *vitae*.

[17] *Svjataja Prepodobomučenica Velikaja Knjaginja Elizaveta Fedorovna. Žitie*.
[18] Ibid.

Prince Sergej was a homosexual and lived with the Grand Duchess in a chaste marriage. In the *Vita*, this fact is turned into the Grand Duchesses' voluntary chastity for the honour of God. The one explanation does not have to exclude the other – after all, she did choose to marry the Grand Duke. What we can notice, however, is how reality is made holy through re-interpretation in sacred categories.

## The differences between the Old *Vitae* and the New

Both the old and the new texts are in their character biographies.[19] The new Russian texts have not, however, yet wholly been transformed to the *vitae* genre. They partly resemble other forms of embellished biographies, such as necrologies or celebration texts on anniversaries. They are too close in time to the life of the described saint. The new *vitae* are sometimes still too detailed for the genre, that is for example particulars of their career are enumerated. The importance for eternity is not always clear and biography has not yet always turned into hagiography. There is always a clear time boundary in all texts between normal life up to 1917 and suffering and martyrdom after 1917, between normal time and the Apocalypse.

The texts often contain extracts from the inquest in the same way as in the acts of the martyrs.[20] A striking difference is that the new martyrs are very defensive, they deny the accusation of counter-revolutionary activities but they seldom challenge the interrogators in the way their predecessors did. There are exceptions, however. For example, the *vita* of the priest martyr Prokopij, the archbishop of Cherson,[21] who openly professes his sympathy with the old regime. The question: "Are You a Christian?" is seldom formulated by the inter-

[19] For the form and contents of Byzantine *vitae* in general, see S. Hackel, (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint* (University of Birmingham. Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies), London and Brussels 1957; for the Slavonic *vitae,* see Jostein Bŕrtnes, *Visions of Glory. Studies in Early Russian Hagiography*, Oslo 1988 and for Latin *vitae,* see Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago 1981.

[20] Elisabeth A. Castelli, op. cit., pp. 39–49.

[21] Nikoaj Donenko , *Žitie svjascennomučenika Prokopija, archiepiskopa Chersonskogo*, Ljubercy 2000.

rogator as an accusation, since formally there existed freedom of religious belief in the Soviet Union. The accusations put forward are of counter-revolutionary activities or the attempt to spread Christianity, which was formally against the law.

The interrogators are seen as lawless and they are not open to any argumentation: their only way to express themselves is through violence of different kinds. That is in full accordance with the early texts.[22] A significant difference is the gloomy atmosphere in the new *vitae* in comparison with the triumphalist mood in the old texts. Reading their vitae, it is difficult to understand if the new martyrs had any hope for the future of Christianity. Everything is boiled down to suffering in different shapes and very often without any hope expressed by the new martyrs themselves.

The publicity or theatrality of the old *martyria* is almost absent. The old martyrs were interrogated publicly and martyred on the arena in front of a public both of heathens and fellow-Christians.[23] The new martyrs were questioned secretly in front of a *troika* and executed in loneliness. Sometimes mostly anonymous fellow-prisoners watch what is happening to them. The public martyrdom so important in the early texts is made enclosed in the Soviet system of non-glasnost. There are some exceptions here too, especially from the years directly after the revolution, when the Bolsheviks organized some show trials, for example against the metropolitan of Petrograd, Veniamin.

One other difference is the number. The new martyrs seem to exceed the martyrs of the early church many times over. Very often no local cult has managed to develop and sometimes the canonization is based on lists of persons executed and known sent in by dioceses.

The *vitae* are almost exclusively concentrated on the suffering of the saints. The theme of miracles committed before or after death does not play an important part in the new *vitae*. Some of the words are common, such as the "lawlessness" or "impiety" of the oppressors or "ministers of the devil."[24] The situation is seen as a battle or a war where the Christians suffer a temporal defeat but gain victory in the perspective of eternity.

[22] Elisabeth A. Castelli, op. cit., p. 49.
[23] Ibid., pp. 104–133.
[24] Ibid., p. 49.

Yet another important difference is that the body and the place ("topos") which is important in the old *vitae* are often not present. In the old *vitae* the place of burial of the martyr was crucial and soon there developed a special geographic landscape of different churches or monasteries where the remains of martyrs and other saints were buried, and the special journeys called pilgrimages developed. Soon parts of the body of especially venerated saints were distributed to different churches which could be famous for owning an arm or a foot of the saint.[25] Some time the body of a new martyr has been found and the *vitae* can conclude according to the tradition as in this text to the metropolitan of Kiev, Vladimir:

> Честные мощи священномученика Владимира, митрополита Киевского и Галицкого, были обретены летом 1992 года и положены в Ближних пещерах Киево-Печерской Лавры. Память священномученика Владимира празднуется 25 января старого стиля и в день Собора новомучеников и исповедников Российских.[26]

In Russian practice the non-composition of a body was one of the tokens of holiness as was the fragrance emanating from the dead body of the saint. This old practice we have noted in the case of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. In most cases, however, no one knows where the body is situated. It was buried in a mass grave somewhere in the vicinity of the prison or the camp and without any signs whatever. This problem has been present in the process of the canonisation of the royal family. Doubts have been raised as to whether the remains which were buried in Petersburg some years ago really belonged to the members of the royal family. Sometimes the body has been found and as a principle the old tradition is still at hand. Still there existed also in Old Russia the idea that you could have a saint without having any relics, what is called in Russian "pod spudom" (literally "under the bushel"). This is alluded to often in relation to the new saints where the whereabouts of the bodies is unknown.

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[25] op.cit., pp. 86–105.
[26] http://www.st-nikolas.orthodoxy.ru/newmartyres.html, 2005-08-15.

In the cult of a martyr there is a special importance of the day when he or she is celebrated, a day with a large pilgrimage to the site of the burial and the performance of a special solemn divine service at this day. Another important event in the cult of a martyr is when or if the body is moved, what is called *translation*, or in Russian *perenesenie*. The day of translation is then made into an annual celebration. After the total change from the part of the state in its relation to the church in 1988 the state has returned relics and the return of these has been celebrated widely as a *translation* and there is developing in the new Russia a rich cult of saints, both old and new.

Yet another difference between the new martyrs and the martyrs of the Early Christianity is the abundance of "sobory," gatherings of martyrs pertaining to one event or one place celebrated together on the same day. That sort of collective recollection of martyrdom is also a part of the traditional celebration of martyrs but rarely. The phenomenon depends on the great number of new martyrs and in general many phenomena pertaining to the new celebrations of martyrs have their explanation in their great number and relative anonymity. We simply do not know that much about the majority of them, except that they were killed for their faith.[27]

## Service texts

The new martyrs are also depicted both as a group, groups and individually in liturgical texts, *sluzhba*, something like *officium*, that is a special liturgical meta-genre in Orthodox tradition.[28] It consists of hymns and prayers for evening and morning worship and the eucharistic celebration as well as a closing prayer, specifically for the object of celebration. The *sluzhba* also states which Bible texts are to be read at the celebration. All told, it is some ten pages with a text for each saint or for each holiday. Complete service texts have been written for the new martyrs as a group and also for individual saints or groups of martyrs such as the Tsar's family, or again Elizaveta Fe-

[27] V. M. Živov op. cit., 103 f.
[28] *Služba novomučenikom i ispovednikom rossijskim* 2000.

dorovna. As opposed to the *vitae*, these texts are always written in Church Slavonic. The melodies used are the traditional ones used in Russian Orthodox Hymnography.

The hymn genre appears to be stricter than the *vita* and there are further distinct rules that must be followed, and the new *officium* texts do not show any more significant differences from the service book with *officium* texts for the feast days in the annual cycle, *Menaia.* The wording seem sometimes to come from that book, but there does not seem to be any borrowing of whole hymns.

The hymns are very non-specific and general in their contents: this is an important trait for the hymn genre in particular and especially so in Orthodox tradition. In hymns, the suffering and injustices the saints have been subjected to are translated into common Christian and medieval categories. Communists are for example referred to as 'the godless grandchildren of Cain,' *'grechom Kainova bratoubijstva.'*

> Безбо́жнии вну́цы Ка́иновы святы́ни церко́вныя поруга́нию и огню́ преда́ша, оби́тели разори́ша, хра́мы, яко ово́щныя храни́лища, соде́яша, христолюби́выя лю́ди в темни́цы заключи́ша и уму́чиша. | Вы же, страстоте́рпцы, с любо́вию учи́ли есте́: | сие́ бысть по грехо́м на́шим, лю́дие, пока́йтеся.[29]

Another wording used about the communism stresses the utopian element: "the temptation of the false worldly paradise."

Marx becomes one of the old-testaments idols, Baal, as in this hymn to the gathering of new martyrs.

> Не отве́ржи Русь издре́вле Святу́ю, | ны́не же грехо́в на́ших ра́ди лю́те стра́ждующую. | Не пре́зри сле́зы ве́рных сыно́в, | коле́н свои́х пред Ваа́лом не преклоня́вших, | и и́хже не порази́л еси́, согреша́ющих. | Приими́ нас, ка́ющихся, Бо́же, | святы́х Твои́х мольба́ми.[30]

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

The guilt is placed on the Russians themselves in almost all cases. Here, as in the *vitae,* there is no place for xenophobia, and it is clear that the Russians are guilty of all atrocities mentioned, although in one text the foreign extraction of Marx and Engels is noted as in this hymn to the Russian new martyrs:

> Плачу ослепший род наш, не оставите нас в лютем бесновании страстей и грехов, и поклонения ваалом иноплеменным.[31]

The country where all of this happened is not called the Soviet Union, most often not even Russia, but the martyrs died defending *Holy Russia*. More neutrally, it is referred to as "the Russian country." In one of the hymns there is an allusion to a hymn from the Easter service, "may God arise," but God is here interchanged with Holy Russia:

> Да воскреснет Русь Святая молитвами Царственных страстотерпец и новомученик Твоих, Господи, и да расточатся вси врази ея вскоре, и от лица ея да бежат вси ненавидящии ю отныне и до века.[32]

What is most specific both for the *vitae* and for the service texts is that the country is often personified and the people is seen as an entity. Personal guilt is often substituted by collective:

> Господи, благодать подажь прощения прегрешившей стране Россистей.[33]

All the millions of people who were a part of the Soviet apparatus are called apostates from the holy faith:

> О, Благодатная и Пречи́стая Де́во Мари́е, | Ходатаице и Засту́пнице всех ве́рных, | предстательством новому́чеников

[31] *Akafist vsem novomučenikom i ispovednikom rossijskim.*
[32] *Služba svjatych carstvennych strastoterpec*, Minsk 2002, p. 20.
[33] *Kanon carstvennym mučenicam.*

> и испове́дников Росси́йских | расточе́нныя собери́, малоду́шныя возстави, | отпадшыя же от святы́я ве́ры обрати́.[34]

The need for penitence for all the guilty people is expressed also in the texts of the hymns to four martyred nuns:

> Житием праведным к достойному приятию мученичества себе уготовившия без боязни тридневная избиения и смерть претерпели есте Невесты Христовы предивныя блаженныя Евдокие, Дарие, Дарие и Марие, ныне многими чудесы и исцелении просиявшия, не оставите землю Русскую без покаяния погибнути[35]

The time is not the 1930's, but the 'last hours' or the 'cruel time.' The latter is a composition of words from the Slavic book of Psalms. There is an apocalyptic trait throughout all of the texts as in the *vitae*.

Prison guards are called 'the demonic host' and life in prison camp is described in this biblical way:

> Егда́ земля́ Росси́йская тьмо́ю безбо́жия и ка́иновым озлобле́нием объя́та бысть, | тогда́ мно́зи христолюби́вии лю́дие на го́рькия рабо́ты изгна́ни бы́ша | и глад, мраз, зной и смерть лю́тую му́жественно претерпе́ша, | ве́рою же, наде́ждею и любо́вию совоку́плени, | досто́йную воспева́ху песнь: – да благослави́т Го́спода Русь Свята́я и превозно́сит Его́ во ве́ки.[36]

There is a contrast between the righteous martyrs and the unrighteous judges having both a bearing on the total lack of lawfulness in Soviet time and alluding to the situation for the first martyrs in the Roman empire, as in this hymn to the Grand Duchess Elizaveta:

> Вся любовию к Богу пламенеющи, святая Елисавето, не убоялася еси, егда приидоша во обитель тобою созданную

[34] *Služba novomučenikom i ispovednikom rossijskim.*
[35] *Akafist svjatym mučenicam Evdokii, Darii, Darii i Marii.*
[36] *Služba novomučenikom i ispovednikom rossijskim.*

> безумнии людие, хотящии суд неправеден над тобою совершити. Ты же, Господом сохраняема, смерти тогда убегла еси, о вразумлении и просвещении неразумных и заблуждших молящися, Богу же во благодарении воспевающи: Аллилуиа![37]

The camps are the martyr's Babylonian imprisonment and at the same time it is worse than the Egyptian yoke – two parallels to the Old Testament.

The comparison to the world of the Old Testament is central to an important old hymn genre that is part of the morning service. This is called *Canon*, where the depicted event is compared to an always reoccurring set of biblical events. In the first ode of this genre, the depicted event is compared to the Jews' crossing of the Red Sea.[38] This is also so in the canon to the new martyrs:

> Кро́вьми ва́шими священному́ченицы, я́ко в Чермне́м мо́ри, потопи́ли есте́ безбо́жныя учи́тели, – Це́рковь же Ру́сская, ва́ми крася́щися, – похвалы́ побе́дныя, я́ко земля́ обетова́нная мед и мле́ко, вам источа́ет.[39]

The theme of blood is very common in all these hymnographic texts. The multitude of victims are expressed in the comparison between blood and water used to extinguish a fire:

> Все́м конце́м земли́ яви́ся чу́до смотре́ния Твоего́, Влады́ко, | кро́вию бо новому́ченик, я́ко водо́ю, угаси́л еси́ в Росси́йстей земли́ пла́мень нече́стия и развраще́ния, | и спасл еси́ лю́ди Твоя́.[40]

The martyrs are often compared to Job in the Old Testament. This

[37] *Akafist Svjatej Prepodobomučenice Velikoj Knjagine Rossistej Elisavete Fedorovne*.

[38] For a discussion of the genre of canon see: Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Second edition, Oxford 1999, pp. 123–245.

[39] *Služba novomučenikom i ispovednikom rossijskim*.

[40] Ibid.

is especially important for the texts dedicated to the Tsar, who was born on the day of Job and who saw a special similarity between his fate and the destiny of the Old Testament hero:

> Радуйся, Царю Николае, / Богом от рождества на мучение вольное посвященный / и, якоже Иов многострадальный, / праведность во страдании явивый, / ныне же с Небесным Царем царствуяй, / молися о державе российстей / и спасении душ наших.[41]

As we can see, there is a constant comparison between the Old Testament and the suffering of the martyrs. In the Orthodox tradition, there is an obsession with this typological way of describing, which we can see also characterises this kind of new composition.

There are also comparisons between the New Testament and the new martyrs, but those comparisons are not as numerous except for the most important one that often is only alluded to indirectly, that is the parallel between the suffering of the martyrs and the suffering of Christ. In some cases this connections is made evident as in the hymn from the Akathistos to the Grand Duchess Elizaveta:

> Спасительнаго подвига ищущи, святая Елисавето, с радостию благодарила еси Бога, яко сподоби тя понести крест Его. Темже просия победою вера твоя, егда к Голгофе своей восходящи, непрестанно возглашала еси: "Слава Богу за все!" Умоли, о мати наша, да дарует нам Господь стяжати мудрость и силу за веру правую даже до смерти стояти и воспевати Ему единеми усты и единем сердцем: Аллилуиа![42]

According to the demands of the *sluzhba* genre, Bible texts should also be included. In the evening service of the gathering of new martyrs the gospel according to Matthew is read, specifically 10:16–22

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[41] *Služba svjatych carstvennych strastoterpec,* Minsk 2002.

[42] *Akafist Svjatej Prepodobomučenice Velikoj Knjagine Rossistej Elisavete Fedorovne.*

and during liturgy, the gospel according to Luke 21:8–19. These are texts about unrighteous courts of justice and persecution. The included prayer is dedicated to the strengthening of the church in a world of many uprisings and evil, and for brotherly love and peace to be born anew in the country.

The martyrs are called "the most sweet-scented flowers in the Orthodox kingdom" and "those in God, beautiful stars of the entire universe," metaphors having their origin in Biblical and Byzantine poetics.

A very popular hymn genre in Russia with Byzantine origin is known as *akathistos.* Through its simple form with constant repetition of the word '*radujsja*' (rejoice) followed by epithets of the saint or saints it is easy to use for new composition in Church Slavonic. This is the genre that was most popular in the 19th century, and its popularity has been revived today. Such a phrase works as a refrain, for the Grand Duchess Elizaveta for example, it is said "rejoice holy martyr nun, Elizaveta, beauty of the Russian church, worthy to become the bride of Christ."

> Радуйся, святая преподобномученице Елисавето, красото Церкве Российския, невестою Христовою быти удостоенная![43]

A beauty theme is reiterated here, the link between holiness and beauty that also existed in her *vita* and which is very important in Russian Orthodox piety overall. In this case it is also linked with society descriptions of the Grand Duchess in popular literature, both of her own time and up till now.[44]

In the hymn text of the royal family, there are more details than in the other texts written to the new martyrs, as for example in this hymn:

> Егда мнози от сродник наших отступиша от Бога, отвратишася Божиих заповедей и восташа на Господа и пома-

[43] Ibid.
[44] Elina Kahla, op.cit.

> занника Его, тогда гнев Божий на землю русскую прииде, изсяче любы многих. Пролияся кровь братий наших, расточишася людие российстии по всему лицу земли, храми наши поруганию предашася, глади, нашествия, иноплеменник постигоша ны, и быхом в посмеяние языков. Мы же, разумеюще сие, с сокрушением сердца в покаянии зовем: прости и помилуй нас, Господи, по велицей Милости Твоей, очисти беззакония наша и подаждь страждущей стране российстей предстательством Царственных страстотерпец прощение грехов, мир и велию милость[45].

In this hymn an important part of the 20th century history of Russia and the Soviet Union is expressed in the form of the medieval Orthodox hymn: revolution, civil war. emigration, persecution of the church, collectivisation, foreign occupation.

## The Icon

The medieval rules have also been followed in the painting of new martyrs in the form of icons. The most important of these and the one which will be discussed here is *The Gathering of New Martyrs,* an icon in which the church wants to summarize all the tantalizing experience of the Soviet era. The Moscow patriarchate has also published a lengthy commentary on this icon, being on the same time a sort of *ekphrasis* and an interpretation of the icon made by the very same people who painted it. This combination makes this comment a unique document and I will dwell on it in my analysis here.

This icon was exposed and venerated at the large solemn divine service on 20th August 2000 that can be seen as an apogee of the canonisation process. In the comment it is clear that the pattern used is based on a pre-existing kind of "gathering icons" of saints with a church in the middle. The church chosen to be depicted on this icon is not as one might have expected one of the Kremlin cathedrals, but the Christ Saviour Church in the southern part of central Moscow that

[45] *Služba svjatych carstvennych strastoterpec*, Minsk 2002, p. 15.

has a special significance in this context because it was torn down during the Stalin era and rebuilt again as an important symbolic act to show the rebirth of the church.

The church wanted in this icon to picture a collected holiness and a collected martyrdom, which can explain the multitude of characters on the icon. The upper row of martyr bishops in the centre of the icon is followed by haloes without any faces, just to show the multitudes of victims, according to the church's commentary on the icon. Stylistically, one has to turn to the 16th century icons, especially the Moscow school, under Dionisi. *Klejma*, the small pictures along the sides of the icons, are new compositions but influenced, as pointed out, by an older tradition.[46] The icon should show the perspective of eternity while time in another way can penetrate *klejma*. On the other hand, it is impossible not to use the medieval style of painting icons which the commentary from the church on the icon expresses thus:

> Показать сияние подвига святых в вечности невозможно средствами иллюзорной живописи, которая показывает лишь временное бытие. Поэтому была избрана древняя каноническая система живописи, выработанная полтура тысячелетним опытом церковного искусства и основанная на знаково-символическим понимании образов, являющих мир в эсхатологическом измерении, как преображенный и освященный космос, как новое небо и новую землю, где праведники пребывают в равноангельском состоянии, «идеже несть болезнь и печаль, ни воздыхание, но жизнь безконечная».[47]

By 'illusion painting' is meant Western art from the Renaissance onwards. The Tsar is pictured as a Byzantine emperor, which shows a longing back to the Byzantine relationship between church and state. The Grand Duchess Elizaveta is dressed in white, her favourite colour, here yet another interpretation of eternity, alongside the innocence motif already mentioned.

[46] *Commentary to the icon.*
[47] Ibid.

In the upper part of the icon there is depicted a traditional, *deesis* composition with Christ in the centre on the throne surrounded by the Theotokos and John the Baptist, archangels, Peter and Paul and supplemented by many Russian saints of earlier times, such as the Grand Prince Vladimir, Boris and Gleb, the Metropolitans Petr and Alexej, Sergij and Serafim and so on. This creates a connection between the New Testament and Russian ecclesiastical history and a connection between Old Russia and the new time. As the commentary states:

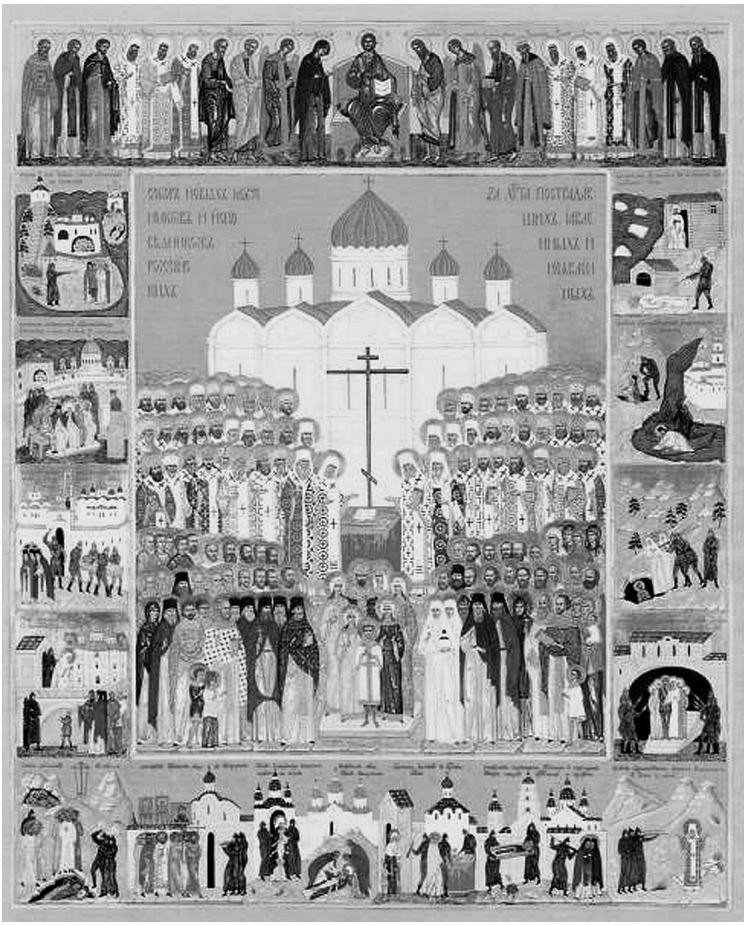
> Так свидетельствуетсяа неразрывная преемственная связь святых новейшего времени с иц предшественниками.[48]

## Klejma

In the small pictures along the sides of the icons, *klejma*, the specific martyrdoms are depicted. The model has been earlier *klejma* picturing Zosima and Savatij, the founders of the Solovetskij monastery in the 15th century. The *klejma* show martyrdom in different parts of the country and in different times but mainly from the first years after the revolution. These small pictures form a sort of mapping of the Soviet Christian Martyrdom or a special Orthodox version of the description of GULAG: the murder of the royal family, the murder of the Grand Duchess Elizaveta Fedorovna, the closing and destruction of the Trinity monastery, the holiest place in Russia, the execution of hierarchs in different places, the mass execution of Christians in Butovo, near Moscow, the show trial of the Metropolitan Veniamin and so on. It is the same artistic principles as the old icon paintings but here used to picture a new reality.

Let us take as an example one *klejmo*, depicting the Solovetskij monastery, one of the innumerable prison camps in the Soviet time. In the 1920's this entire monastery was transformed into a concentration camp and *The Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Christ* was used as a prison. In a vault in the lowest part of the church we can see the prisoners suffering. To the left we can see a famous staircase that led to the Ascension Church, which was used as a special isolation

[48] Ibid.



prison. The staircase was built long ago in the monastery to show the passing of time and consists of 365 steps. During the Stalin-era it came to be used as a instrument of execution – prisoners were tied up and thrown down the stairs.

In front of the cathedral, we can see an execution of churchmen. The executioners have caps, *budjonovki*, worn in the Red Army. According to the church's interpretation, the colour of the uniforms are the colours of the earth and marsh. These soldiers resemble the small devils on the Last Judgement icons and their rifles look more like spears. As one can see, all the time old motifs and forms are used to show the persecutions of their own people by the Soviet power.

Also the church on the right, the *Golgotha-Crucifixion-Hermit abode*, operated as a prison. One who died here was bishop Petr of Voronezh, who is one of the new martyrs. He is shown buried under the church. Next to the church is a birch tree that grew up in this place during the Soviet era and which is shaped like a cross. This is considered a wonder because otherwise there are no such high trees on Solovki.

There is in the *klejma* an irony of the Soviet martyrdom. So many of the bishops, monks and priests were tortured to death on holy ground in one of the most famous and holy monasteries in all of Russia, *the Solovetskij monastery*, that after it was closed, as we already mentioned, was used as a prison camp for the clergy and intellectuals. What was supposed to be the protection and comfort of the believers became a torture chamber. The fact that monasteries were transformed into prison camps, as for example Solovki, is also mentioned in the service texts to the new martyrs:

> Увы́ нам, увы́, вопия́ху испове́дницы Росси́йстии, | ви́дяще, яко безу́мнии богобо́рцы святы́ни земли́ на́шея разори́ша, | оби́тели, я́ко узи́лища темни́чная, соде́яша, | хра́мы Бо́жии в скве́рная и позо́рищная места́ обрати́ша | и кровь христиа́нскую в них пролия́ша.[49]

[49] *Služba novomučenikom i ispovednikom rossijskim.*

The majority of the new martyrs are men but there is also a big group of women, I have already mentioned the Grand Duchess Elizaveta. There are also many other nuns among the new martyrs, the woman in another *klejmo* of the icon is anonymous and is showing all ordinary women suffering during the Soviet era. The *klejmo* depicts how she and her little child are threatened by a soldier, yet another outrage of the Soviet power, pictured in this beautiful and old-fashioned way.

The highest power, the Russian/Soviet state from which the torments/sufferings emanated, is missing. In the *vita* texts, in the *officium* and in the icons, it seems to appear that it is the devil himself who led these persecutions.

The small pictures refer constantly to the lives and martyrdom of other saints. It is clear that these small pictures with their depictions of different kinds of suffering are modelled on the repertoire of torment that the martyrs of the ancient church were subjected to. Sometimes it looks like the Soviet tormenters too had studied the old martyrdoms, so cunningly cruel are the torments the saints suffered.

In the commentary to the *klejma* in the official text about the icon two things can be noted. The text very often operates with the categories harmony – chaos, where the church stands for order and the Soviet reality for chaos. Much is also achieved and very consciously with colour symbolism where the holiness of the martyrs and the demonic characters of their opponents is stressed with the aid of a contrast between different colours, as for example:

> Но цветовым центром является группа расстреливаемых. Они написаны в широком гамме красного, светло- и темно-зеленого и других цветов. Их одежды отчасти напоминают народные костюмы и верховные облачения, но более всего являются свидетелством их прославленного состояния. Их расстеливают палачи-охранники в болотисто-землистых шинелях.[50]

[50] *Commentary to the icon.*

> Розовый цвет позема (земли) применен и целью использовать эмоциональное значене радости победы вечного над временным. Разбеленные, слегка зеленовеатые одежды святого напоминают одежды святых в раннецристианцских памятниках, где белы цевет одежд является символом победной причастности мученика к вечной жизни. Эмоциональный контраст к этрой светлой, радостной гамме создает зеленовато-болотистоый цвет одежд палача, обозначающим силы зла.[51]

The commentary once states that a photograph has been used, showing still the existence of modernity. The comment also notes the use of simultaneous succession, that is motifs from different times are juxtaposed in one composition.

## Time and Eternity

The Russian church keeps the medieval form, even when it is depicting the incredible hardships it suffered during the Soviet era. It is only in the *vitae* that new forms and particulars penetrate in earnest. Russian priest and philosopher of religion Pavel Florenskij, has on one occasion said that the Orthodox Church does not wish to live in time but in eternity. The canonisation of Russian saints shows how the church also transforms events so close to us in time into a mode of eternity. The same comparisons that we find in old *officium* texts between the Old Testament and depicted events are used as well as the comparisons with the suffering Christ. There is a pride and awareness from the church that the old traditions are followed. The settlement of accounts with the past also means a preservation of tradition.

We are witnessing how a new literature and iconography of martyrs comes into existence and we can join in examining it. At the same time, one must feel a great respect for all the suffering these people were subjected to.

[51] Ibid.

# EUCHARISTIE – SAKRAMENT DER EINHEIT

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Der verstorbene Papst Johannes Paul II. hat das Jahr 2005 unter die Leitlinie der Eucharistie gestellt. Das provoziert im Blick auf die Ökumene die Frage, ob die Eucharistie auch einen Beitrag zur Einheit der Kichen erbringen kann und welcher Art dieser Beitrag sein könnte: Ist sie nur ein drängender Impuls, der die getrennten Kirchen zur Einheit antreibt und verpflichtet oder vermag sie darüber hinaus auch selbst Weg und Mittel zur Einheit zu sein bzw. in der Begegnung der Kirchen zu werden? Zur Klärung dieser Frage müssen wir uns auf den Wesensgehalt der Eucharistie besinnen.

## 1. Die Eucharistie als Feier des ganzen Heilsmysteriums

Thomas v. Aquin umschreibt das Wesen der Eucharistie mit dem Satz: „Im Sakrament der Eucharistie ist das ganze Mysterium unseres Heiles zusammengefasst" (Sth III,83,4). Dasselbe meint Martin Luther, wenn er sagt: Das Abendmahl sei „die Summe und das Kompendium des Evangeliums" (WA 8, 524, 33) oder „ein kurzer Inbegriff des Evangeliums" (WA 6, 525, 36).

„*Mysterium*" meint hier nicht ein intellektuelles Geheimnis, sondern ist hier in dem umfassenden Sinn verstanden, in dem die Hl. Schrift und die kirchliche Tradition von „Mysterium" (Geheimnis) spricht:

- *Mysterium* (lat. Äquivalent ist: *sacramentum*) ist der ewige Schöpfungs-und Heilsplan Gottes, den Gott
- unüberbietbar und endgültig in Christus geoffenbart und verwirklicht hat, der (= Christus) deshalb
- das Mysterium (*sacramentum*) Gottes schlechthin ist (Christus als „Ursakrament"). In Christus, dem einen Mysterium, sind alle einzelnen Mysterien zusammengefasst:

• Das Mysterium der Schöpfung (Schöpfung als Heilsgeschehen auf Christus hin (Kol 1,15–17),

• das Mysterium der Erlösung und Heiligung durch Jesus Christus im Hl. Geist

• und dessen Zuwendung und Aneignung durch Wort und Sakrament,

• das Mysterium der angebrochenen Gottesherrschaft,

• das Mysterium der kommenden Vollendung.

• Zum Christus – Mysterium gehört wesentlich auch die Kirche als das neue Volk Gottes und als „Leib Christi", als die im Hl. Geist zusammengeführte Gemeinschaft der Christus-Gläubigen, die in der Teilhabe an Christus berufen ist, das in Christus geschenkte Heil Gottes als Heil für die Welt zu bezeugen.

• Grund und Ursprung des Christus-Mysteriums ist der Dreieinige Gott. Das Christus-Mysterium ist der Dreieinige Gott selbst, insofern er sich selbst den Menschen (und damit der Schöpfung) zur Gemeinschaft (zum Bund, und d. h. zum Heil) mitteilt. Darum verbindet das Christus-Mysterium (und die Eucharistie) mit dem Ur-Geheimnis: der Trinität.

• Zugang zu diesem Mysterium eröffnet allein der Glaube (sola fide). Darum: rufen wir auch nach der eucharistischen Konsekration: „*Mysterium fidei*" („Geheimnis des Glaubens").

Die Eucharistie ist also ihrem Wesen nach die sakramentale Vergegenwärtigung (die sakramentale Gegenwart) des einen und ganzen Christus-Mysteriums, das seinen Kern- und Integrationspunkt (seinen Mittelpunkt) in dem einmaligen, unwiederholbaren und voll genügsamen Kreuzesopfer Jesu Christi und seiner Auferstehung hat.

Darum gilt, was Thomas von Aquin in vielfacher Variation vom erlösenden Kreuzesopfer Jesu Christi im Hinblick auf die Eucharistie sagt: Die ganze Wirkung des erlösenden Kreuzesopfers Jesu Christi ist auch ganz die Wirkung der Eucharistie, d. h. des in der Eucharistie sakramental gegenwärtigen Opfers Jesu Christi!

Da nun das Kreuzesopfer Jesu Christi die Stiftung des „Neuen und Ewigen Bundes" und damit auch der Kirche als des neuen Bundesvolkes ist und dieser Stiftungsakt in der Eucharistie bleibend aufgehoben (aufbewahrt) ist und in jeder Eucharistiefeier für die Eucharistie feiernden Gemeinde neu aktualisiert wird, hat die Eucharistie

notwendigerweise eine Wirkung für den Aufbau und die Einheit der Kirche. Das ist sogar ihr erster und eigentlicher Sinn: Sie ist von ihrem Wesen her das „Sakrament der kirchlichen Einheit“ oder, wie Augustinus sagt: „Das Sakrament, wordurch in dieser Weltzeit die Kirche zusammengefügt wird“ (*sacramentum*, quo in hoc tempore consociatur ecclesia).

Wir wollen uns in einer zweiten Überlegung den Zusammenhang von Eucharistie und Kirche in einigen Thesen etwas näher verdeutlichen.

## 2. Eucharistie und Kirche

### 2.1 In der Eucharistiefeier realisiert die Kirche ihr Wesen als das Gottesvolk des Neuen Bundes.

Nach den synoptischen Evangelien ist die Stiftung der Eucharistie beim Letzten Abendmahl die Umstiftung und Erfüllung des alttestamentlichen Paschamahles. Das bedeutet: Sie hat für die Gemeinde Jesu Christi den Stellenwert, den für das Gottesvolk des Alten Bundes die Feier des Paschamahles hatte. Inhalt der Paschamahlfeier war für Israel die Befreiung aus der ägyptischen Knechtschaft und der Bundesschluss am Sinai. Deshalb erlebte Israel in dieser Feier am intensivsten seine Einheit als Volk Gottes. – Die Gemeinde Jesu feiert hier ihre Erlösung und ihre Einheit als Volk des Neuen Bundes.

### 2.2 Die Eucharistiefeier konkretisiert das Volk-Gottes-Sein der Kirche als Gemeinschaft des Leibes Christi.

Paulus schreibt 1Kor 10,16f.: „Der Kelch, den wir segnen, ist er nicht Gemeinschaft (koinonia, communio) mit dem Blute Christi? Das Brot, das wir brechen, ist es nicht Gemeinschaft mit dem Leibe Christi? So sind wir, die Vielen, ein Leib, denn wir haben teil an dem einen Brot.“ Wir haben in diesem Pauluswort die Grundlage für eine eucharistische Ekklesiologie. Die reale Teilnahme am Sakrament des Leibes Christi verbindet die Vielen zum kirchlichen Leib Christi. Sakramentaler Leib Christi und kirchlicher Leib Christi gehören aufs engste zusammen. Das Sakrament des Leibes Christi erbaut die Kirche zum „mystischen“ Leib Christi. (Die eucharistische Ekklesiologie

ist besonders in der orthodoxen Kirche stark ausgeprägt.) Den sachlichen Gehalt können wir auch mit einem anderen Pauluswort umschreiben: „Ihr alle seid *einer* in Christus“ (Gal 3,28).

**2.3 Die Kirche verwirklicht ihr Wesen als „Volk Gottes, das vom Leibe Christi her lebt“ (J. Ratzinger) dort am intensivsten, wo der in Jesu Kreuzesopfer gestiftete Neue Bund vergegenwärtigt und zugeeignet wird, wo die „Vielen“ im Essen des einen Brotes und im Trinken des einen Kelches zum Leibe Christi auferbaut werden.**

„Die Feier der Eucharistie ist deshalb das intensivste Ereignis von Kirche“ (K. Rahner), deren tiefstes Wesen darin besteht, mit Christus ein Leib zu sein. Die Eucharistiefeier ist Kirche im Vollzug.

**2.4 Die (notwendig orthafte) Feier der Eucharistie strukturiert die Kirche als „Netz von Kommuniongemeinschaften“ (J. Ratzinger), die im Wort und Sakrament des Leibes Christi kommunizieren.**

Folgerung für die Kirchenstruktur: Die Kirche hat demnach eine horizontale (nicht: pyramidale!) Grundstruktur als ein Netz von eigenberechtigten Ortskirchen, die (nach katholischen Verständnis) im Bischof von Rom (Papst) ihren verbindlichen Orientierungspunkt (Mittelpunkt) haben. Das päpstliche Amt ist „Dienst an der Einheit“. Als solches kommt ihm eine wahre Autorität zu, hat aber zugleich von dieser seiner Einheitsfunktion her seine innere Grenze. (Der Papst ist nicht „Universalbischof“, erst recht kein „absoluter Monarch“).

Die bisherigen thesenhaften Erwägungen können wir in die *Grundthese* zusammenfassen:

**2.5 Die Eucharistie ist nicht nur ein Geschehen in der Kirche, sondern das Geschehen, das Ereignis der Kirche selbst.**

Damit stellt sich aber eine für das Zusammenwachsen der getrennten Kirchen zur erstrebten Kircheneinheit und zur vollen Gottesdienstgemeinschaft bedrängende Frage, nämlich die Frage nach der Eucharistie als Zeichen, Mittel und Weg zur Einheit.

## 3. Eucharistie als Zeichen, Mittel und Weg zur Einheit

Kann die Eucharistie in Bezug auf die getrennten Christen und Kirchen auch Mittel und Weg zur Einheit sein – oder ist sie *nur* Zeichen der *vollendeten* Einheit?

Es steht außer Zweifel: Entgegen einem neuzeitlichen, stark individualistischen Verständnis der Eucharistie ist das biblisch-paulinische Verständnis, das sich durch die ganze Patristik bis in die Hochscholasik durchgehalten hat, von vorneherein auf die Kirche und ihre Einheit ausgerichtet. Nach Paulus dient die Eucharistie der Sammlung der Vielen in die Einheit des Leibes Christi, der die Kirche ist. Ähnlich sagt Augustinus seinen Gläubigen: „Ihr seid der Leib Christi. Euer Geheimnis liegt auf dem Altar. Seid, was ihr seht, und empfanget, was ihr seid." Das Sakrament des Leibes Christi, so will Augustinus sagen, bezeichnet und bewirkt den Leib Christi, der die Kirche, die Gemeinschaft der Glaubenden ist. Deshalb kann Augustinus sogar die Kirche, die Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen, als den „wahren Leib" Christi bezeichnen. Der Blick auf die Eucharistie ist in einem und demselben der Blick auf die Einheit der Kirche.

Die scholastische Theologie hat das auf ihre Weise verdeutlicht. Die Eucharistie ist Zeichen (*sacramentum*) des unter diesem Zeichen verborgen gegenwärtigen Herrenleibes. Die eucharistische Gegenwart (Realpräsenz) ist jedoch nicht die letzte und eigentliche Wirklichkeit des Sakramentes, bei der man gleichsam stehen bleiben könnte, sondern ist selbst wiederum Zeichen (*res et sacramentum* = Realsymbol) für die Wirklichkeit, die das Sakrament des Herrenmahles letztlich bewirken soll: die Einheit der Kirche (unitas ecclesiae). Die eigentliche Gnade des Sakramentes (*res sacramenti*), das, worin das Sakrament seine Sinnerfüllung erreichen soll, ist in dieser (von der Hl. Schrift und der großen kirchlichen Tradition vorgegebenen) Linie: die Einheit der Kirche. Das heißt: Die Realpräsenz ist nicht das letzte Ziel der Eucharistie, sondern sie gehört selbst der Ordnung der Mittel an: sie ist Mittel zur Bewirkung und Beförderung der kirchlichen Einheit. Man müsste von einer dynamischen Realpräsenz sprechen: sie tendiert mit einer inneren, ihr weseneigenen Dynamik auf die Einheit der Kirche hin. Thesenhaft ausgedrückt:

In der Eucharistiefeier ist die Realpräsenz Jesu Christi eingefügt

in den dynamischen Prozess der Auferbauung des kirchlichen Leibes Christi.

Mit anderen Worten: Die Eucharistie ist nicht nur Zeichen der Einheit, sondern auch Mittel zur Einheit; nicht nur Zeichen schon bestehender und vollendeter Einheit, sondern auch Mittel zu ihrer Realisierung.

Gilt das aber (nach katholischem – und ähnlich nach orthodoxem – Verständnis) *nur* im Raum der katholischen (bzw. orthodoxen) Kirche – und nicht auch in Bezug auf die getrennten Kirchen als Mittel und Weg zur vollen Gemeinschaft?

Als Hilfe zur Beantwortung dieser (den ökumenischen Dialog bis heute belastenden) Frage werfen wir einen Blick auf die Taufe.

## 4. Die Taufe als fundamentale Begründung der Kirchengemeinschaft

Das Verständnis der Eucharistie als Sakrament der kirchlichen Einheit bedarf der Vermittlung mit dem Sakrament der Taufe. Denn die grundlegende Eingliederung in die Kirche als den (mystischen) Leib Christi ist die Taufe (vgl. 1 Kor 12,12). Im Ökumenismusdekret des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils heißt es, dass alle Christen durch die Taufe „Christus" eingegliedert werden (UR 3). Das meint hier nicht (nur), sie seien mit Christus innerlich verbunden, sondern es bedeutet, wie der Kontext deutlich macht, dass sie der Kirche, dem Leibe Christi, eingegliedert sind.

### 4.1 Die Taufe: Bleibende Gründung der Kircheneinheit

Die Taufe gliedert in die eine und einzige Kirche Jesu Christi ein (weil es nur eine einzige Kirche Jesu Christi gibt, auch wenn sie selbst – im Widerspruch zu ihrem innersten Wesen und zum Willen ihres Stifters – in sich gespalten ist). Die Taufe gliedert mithin nicht, wie es zunächst den Anschein haben mag, in eine bestimmte Konfessionskirche ein, auch wenn sie konkret in einer Konfessionskirche gespendet wird. Hier wird eine Aporie, ja ein Widerspruch deutlich, von dem alle Kichen betroffen sind.

Trotz aller Spaltung und Trennung gilt: „Die Taufe begründet ein

sakramentales Band der Einheit zwischen allen, die durch sie wiedergeboren sind“ (UR 22). Es besteht folglich eine fundamentale kirchliche Einheit aller Christen aufgrund der Taufe, eine Einheit, die konkret (!) ist und alle Christen und Kirchen durchgreift, eine wirkliche, reale (nicht bloß ideale) Einheit, die nicht erst hergestellt werden muss, sondern die uns von Jesus Christus her vorgegeben ist und in die wir durch sein Wirken in der Taufe eingefügt worden sind. Es besteht, anders gesagt, schon eine fundamentale Kirchengemeinschaft, die nicht verloren gegangen und nicht zerbrochen ist, und die auch schon Gottesdienstgemeinschaft (zumindest Gebets-und Wortgottesdienstgemeinschaft) einschließt. Freilich ist mit dieser Taufgemeinschaft als solcher nicht auch schon, wie die gespaltene Christenheit deutlich vor Augen führt, volle Kirchen- und Gottesdienstgemein- schaft gegeben. Das aber macht den schon erwähnten Widerspruch deutlich, der in einem Dialogdokument folgendermaßen beschrieben ist: „Das Nebeneinander verschiedener Konfessionsgemeinschaften, die wechselseitig die Taufe anerkennen, aber nicht in [voller] Kirchengemeinschaft leben, ist angesichts des Heilshandelns Gottes in der Taufe ein Skandal. Gerade unsere gemeinsame Taufe treibt uns zur Überwindung der kirchentrennenden Gegensätze. Deshalb dürfen wir nicht ablassen, nach Wegen zu suchen, um die unter dem Worte Gottes und im gemeinsamen Gebet praktizierte, in der wechselseitigen Anerekennung der Taufe bestätigte Gemeinschaft zur vollen Kirchengemeinschaft werden zu lassen.“ (Kirchengemeinschaft in Wort und Sakrament, Hannover/Paderborn 1984, Nr. 30).

### 4.2 Taufe und Eucharistie

Die Taufe ist kein statischer Anfang, sondern eine dynamische Kraft, die das Leben nicht nur des Einzelnen, sondern der Kirche bestimmt, sie muss im Leben realisiert und „eingeholt“ werden. In diesem Sinne heißt es im Ökumenismusdekret, dass die Taufe mit einer ihr wesenseigenen Dynamik „auf die vollständige Einfügung in die eucharistische Gemeinschaft“ hingeordnet ist (UR 22); anders gesagt: Die Taufe begründet in fundamentaler Weise Kirchengemeinschaft, die als Eucharistiegemeinschaft gelebt werden will. Hier wird ein Zweifaches deutlich:

(1) Die stärkste Motivation zum Willen, zur Suche und Förderung von Wegen zur Kirchengemeinschaft muss neben dem Bekenntnis zur einen Taufe von der Eucharistie / dem Abendmahl ausgehen. Ökumenische Gleichgültigkeit wäre eine Verachtung der Sinnrichtung der Sakramente.

(2) Getrennte Eucharistie- / Abendmahlstische sind, wie schon gesagt, ein Skandal. Sie widersprechen dem Willen Jesu Christi nach Einheit seiner Kirche (Joh 17,21) und der Sinnrichtung der Eucharistie / des Abendmahls. Denn auch die katholische Eucharistiefeier (um nur sie zu erwähnen) ist solange noch nicht an ihr Sinnziel gelangt (nämlich: sakramentaler Ausdruck der Einheit der einen Kirche Jesu Christi und der Versammlung der Christen in die Einheit des Leibes Christi zu sein), solange ihr noch getrennte Abendmahlstische gegenüberstehen bzw. sie andere getaufte Christen von ihrer Tischgemeinschaft ansschließt oder ausschließen zu müssen meint.

Hier stellt sich mit besonderer Dringlichkeit die Frage: Ist die Eucharistie nicht auch Mittel und Weg zur vollen Kircheneinheit, auf die sie doch mit innerer Dynamik ausgerichtet ist? Und das auch in Bezug auf die getrennte Christenheit?

## 5. Nicht nur Zeichen, sondern auch Mittel und Weg.

Der schwerwiegendste Einwand gegen eine Eucharistiegemeinschaft lautet: „Eucharistie- gemeinschaft ist Kirchengemeinschaft“ und umgekehrt: „Kirchengemeinschaft ist Eucharistiegemeinschaft.“ Solange keine *volle* Kirchengemeinschaft – solange auch keine Kirchengemeinschaft. Dieser (von der katholischen und insbesondere von der orthodoxen) Kirche vertretene Grundsatz der Alten Kirche ist im Prinzip richtig. Aber das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil hat hier zumindest einen „Türspalt“ geöffnet. Es spricht von „unvollkommener“ (partieller) Gemeinschaft, durch die die getrennten „Kirchen und Kirchlichen Gemeinschaften“ mit der katholischen Kirche verbunden sind, von gestufter Kirchengemeinschaft also. Aber auch „partielle“ Kirchengemeinschaft ist (schon) Kirchengemeinschaft. So lässt das Zweite Vatikanum deutlich erkennen, „dass zwischen völliger Kirchentrennung und voller Kirchengemeinschaft ein intermediärer

Bereich liegt", der die Frage entstehen lässt, „ob Übergangsformen der Eucharistie- und Abendmahlsgemeinschaft möglich, sinnvoll und nötig sind, die der vorhandenen Nähe oder erreichten Annäherung zwischen den Kirchen entsprechen" (vgl. Harding Meyer, in: *Ökumene-Lexikon*, Frankfurt/M., 2. Aufl. 1986, Sp. 9). Die heutige Situation entspricht ja nicht mehr der Situation der Alten Kirche, in der dieser Grundsatz entwickelt worden ist. Es ist doch ein Unterschied, ob Kirchen sich in einem *aktuellen* Prozess der Spaltung, der Abgrenzung und Abtrennung befinden oder ob Kirchen nach jahrhundertelanger Trennung sich wieder aufeinader zu bewegen und sich um Überwindung der Spaltung und um sichtbare Einheit und Ermöglichung von voller Gottesdienstgemeinschaft bemühen. Es drängt sich die Frage auf: Könnte eine (wenigstens gelegentlich praktizierte) Eucharistiegemeinschaft bzw. „eucharistische Gastfreundschaft" nicht als Zeichen schon bestehender (wenn auch noch nicht voller) Gemeinschaft gewertet werden, die dynamisch auf die volle Kirchen- und Gottesdienstgemeinschaft hindrängt und die Kirchen und Gläubigen darauf verpflichtet? Ich möchte diese Frage aus theologisch zu verantwortenden Gründen bejahen und dafür plädieren. In diesem Zusammenhang sollte darauf bestanden werden, dass die Eucharistie nicht nur Zeichen, sondern auch *Mittel* zur Einheit ist. Wo gesagt wird, die Eucharistie sei *nur* Zeichen *voller* Kirchengemeinschaft, nicht aber auch Mittel zu deren Realisierung, bleibt man hinter dem eigenen Sakramentsbegriff weit zurück, da doch der katholische (und auch orthodoxe) Sakramentsbegriff immer als „Zeichen *und* Werkzeug = Mittel" (signum *et* instrumentum), beides unlöslich zusammen, definiert wird (vgl. Vatic. II, Lumen gentium, Nr. 1). Überdies: Wenn in der Dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche (Lumen gentium, 1) die Kirche bestimmt wird als „Sakrament, d. h. Zeichen und Werkzeug für die innigste Vereinigung mit Gott *wie für die ganze Menschheit*", und wenn die Kirche nach katholischer Überzeugung die Eucharistie als „Quelle und Höhepunkt des ganzen christlichen (und kirchlichen) Lebens verehrt, – kann dann die Eucharistie nicht auch Zeichen und Werkzeug (Mittel) zur *Einheit der Christen und christlichen Kirchen* sein?

Die Frage sollte nicht lauten: Ist „partielle" (wenigstens gelegentliche) Eucharistiegemeinschaft beziehungsweise „eucharistische

Gastfreundschaft“ möglich, sondern sie müsste lauten: Dürfen wir uns im Blick auf die erreichten Gemeinsamkeiten und Übereinstimmungen im eucharistischen Glauben die eucharistische Gastfreundschaft noch verweigern?

Der Grundsatz, „Eucharistiegemeinschaft ist Kirchengemeinschaft“ (und umgekehrt), ist übrigens auf Seiten der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche nicht streng durchgehalten, insofern sie in bestimmten Ausnahmesituationen nicht-katholische Christen zur katholischen Eucharistiefeier (zum Kommunionempfang) zulässt. Für das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil sind, was die Gottesdienst- bzw. Eucharistiegemeinschaft angeht, „zwei Prinzipien maßgebend: die Bezeugung der Einheit der Kirche und die Teilnahme an den Mitteln der Gnade. Die Bezeugung der Einheit“ – so heißt es hier – „verbietet in den meisten Fällen [also nicht in allen!] die Gottesdienstgemeinschaft, die Sorge um die Gnade empfiehlt sie indessen in manchen Fällen“ (Ökumenismusdekret, Nr. 8). Das Ökumenische Direktorium und andere kirchliche Erlasse haben dazu nähere Ausführungsbestimmungen festgesetzt (z. B. „geistliche Notlagen bzw. Notwendigkeiten“). Jedoch handelt es sich hierbei immer nur um pastorale Aspekte der individuellen Heilssorge. Das Problem der Eucharistiegemeinschaft (der eucharistischen Gastfreundschaft) darf aber nicht nur unter dem Aspekt der „individuellen Notlage“ behandelt werden, sondern muß in erster Linie, wie unsere Ausführungen gezeigt haben, unter ekklesiologischen (kirchlichen) Gesichtspunkten, d. h. unter dem Gesichtspunkt der von Jesus Christus erbetenen kirchlichen Einheit, erörtert und gelöst werden.

Eine besondere (auch existentielle) Dringlichkeit stellt sich in Bezug auf die sogenannten konfessionell gemischten Ehen, besser: die konfessionsverbindenden Ehen: Denn in solchen Ehen (sofern sie wahrhaft christlich gelebt werden, bzw. sofern in ihnen versucht wird, Gemeinschaft von Christus her und in und mit ihm zu leben) wird *Kirchengemeinschaft, nicht Kirchentrennung* gelebt!

Katholischerseits stellt die Frage des ordinierten Amtes eine noch nicht überwundene Barriere für eine eucharistische Gemeinschaft dar. Aber auch schon vor einer endgültigen Klärung der Amtsfrage ist eine theologisch zu verantwortende „eucharistische Gastfreundschaft“ möglich. Nur zwei Hinweise seien hier genannt:

(1) Zwar spricht das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil im Ökumenismusdekret (Nr. 22) von einem „Defekt", einem ekklesiologischen „Mangel", der dem ordinierten Amt der reformatorischen Kirchen anhafte, weswegen sie „die ursprüngliche und vollständige Wirklichkeit des eucharistischen Mysteriums nicht bewahrt" hätten. Gleichwohl anerkennt es die geistliche Realität, die auch im „Heiligen Abendmahl" der „getrennten Kirchlichen Gemeinschaften" gegeben ist. Und Kardinal Joseph Ratzinger äußerte in einem Schreiben (vom 9. 3. 1993) an den (inzwischen verstorbenen) Landesbischof Hanselmann der Bayerischen Lutherischen Landeskirche, dass auch „eine am Sukzessionsbegriff orientierte Theologie … keineswegs Heil schaffende Gegenwart des Herrn im evangelischen Abendmahl leugnen" müsse. (Was kann es im Abendmahl / der Eucharistie aber mehr geben als „Heil schaffende Gegenwart Jesu Christi, die immer auch die Gegenwart und Zueignung seines ganzen Heilswerkes einschließt, weil Person und Werk Jesu Christi sich nicht trennen lassen?)

(2) Dasselbe Vatikanum II macht im gleichen Ökumenismusdekret (Nr. 3) die für eine ökumenische Theologie hoch bedeutsame Aussage, dass die „getrennten Kirchen und Gemeinschaften …nicht ohne Bedeutung und Gewicht im Geheimnis des Heiles" seien. Und es fährt fort: „Denn der Geist Christi hat sich gewürdigt, sie als Mittel des Heiles zu gebrauchen…" – und das, so können wir ergänzen, sicher nicht ohne ihre Ämter. Könnte man darin nicht schon eine ‚versteckte', implizite Anerkennung ihrer Ämter erkennen?

## 6. Fazit

Die Frage der Eucharistiegemeinschaft (der eucharistischen Gastfreundschaft) ist gewiss keine leichtfertig „übers Knie" zu brechende Angelegenheit. Sie darf nicht zu einem „Kompromissgeschäft" zwischen den Konfessionen werden; denn die Eucharistie / das Abendmahl gehört ins Zentrum des Glaubens, in die Mitte des Evangeliums. Darin sind sich die Kirchen einig. Als Zusammenfassung des ganzen Heilsmysteriums und als „Summe und Kompendium des Evangeliums" hat die Eucharistie eine innere Dynamik auf die Einheit der Kirchen, die gegründet ist in dem Bund, den Gott im Kreuzes-

opfer seines Sohnes endgültig geschlossen und bestätigt hat, der in jeder Eucharistie- / Abendmahlsfeier auf uns zukommt, um uns zu versammeln als Volk Gottes, das vom Leibe Christi her lebt und dadurch selbst Leib Christi wird und ist. Eucharistische Gastfreundschaft, Eucharistiegemeinschaft ist dort möglich, wo der eucharistische Glaube (mitsamt seinen zentralen Glaubenswahrheiten) akzeptiert ist und Christen und Kirchen (unter der Spaltung leidend) sich leidenschaftlich um die Überwindung der Kirchentrennung bemühen und die Einheit der Kirchen „in versöhnter Verschiedenheit" (so die „Gemeinsame Offizielle Feststellung" zur Rechtfertigungslehre von 1999 in Augsburg) zu ihrem Anliegen machen, die die Gemeinschaft der Kirchen nicht nur theoretisch bedenken, sondern sie inständig erbitten. Hier darf von der Eucharistie- und Abendmahlsfeier die volle Kirchen- und Gottesdienstgemeinschaft als Frucht erwartet werden: Eucharistie als Mittel zur Einheit.

Der Einwand: Eucharistiegemeinschaft ohne vollendete Kirchengemeinschaft täusche etwas vor, was es (noch) nicht gebe und würde eher eine Lähmung des ökumenischen Impulses zur Einheit hin zur Folge haben, zieht nicht. Denn eher noch wird der ökumenische Impuls dort erlöschen, wo Kirchen meinen, schon im „Besitz" der vollen Wahrheit zu sein und deshalb der anderen Kirchen nicht zu bedürfen. In diesem Sinne äußerte sich Walter Kasper schon im Jahre 1980: Auch für die katholische Kirche ist „der Anspruch auf Katholizität … solange in seiner Fülle nicht verwirklicht, als er von einem großen Teil der Christenheit einen qualifizierten Widerspruch erfährt; die katholische Kirche ist darauf angewiesen, sich um Konsens mit den anderen Kirchengemeinschaften zu bemühen und deren legitime Anliegen anzuerkennen und zu rezipieren." Gerade auch in Bezug auf die erstrebte Kircheneinheit trifft zu, was Joseph Ratzinger so formulierte (1982): „Mit den Augen der Liebe die Wahrheit suchen und nichts als Wahrheit auferlegen, was in Wirklichkeit geschichtlich gewordene Form ist."

Den Kirchen ist ein – vielleicht unwiderbrinlicher – Kairos geschenkt, den sie nicht verspielen oder gar unterlaufen dürfen. Darum sind mutige und theologisch verantwortbare Schritte auf die Kirchen- und Gottesdienstgemeinschaft hin zu unternehmen, die ihren höchsten Ausdruck finden in der Gemeinschaft am Tisch des Herrn. Wir

können zwar die Einheit nicht erzwingen, wohl können wir sie schuldhaft verhindern. Darum fordert die Ökumene, insbesondere das Ziel der uneingeschränkten Tischgemeinschaft, die Umkehr der Herzen zu dem hin, der als der Herr seiner Kirche auch der Herr des Mahles ist.

*Volle Fassung des an der 20. theologischen Tagung des Instituts für ökumenische Studien in Prag an 27.–28.Mai 2005 gehaltenen Vortrages.*

# BEYOND FOUNDATIONALISM AND RELATIVISM IN SOCIAL THEORY: MACINTYRE, STOUT AND WALZER[1]

*Pavel Hejzlar*

## Introduction

This essay engages three significant contemporary moral philosophers/social theorists, Alasdair MacIntyre, Jeffrey Stout and Michael Walzer. They are neither foundationalists nor relativists, which distinguishes them from both the major recent spokesman for liberal modernity, John Rawls, and postmodern relativists. MacIntyre represents what Stout calls 'new traditionalism.' He finds the modern moral and political discourse in a state of grave disorder, without philosophical resources to bring the surviving fragments of earlier moral traditions into a coherent whole. MacIntyre therefore turns to the Aristotelian tradition for solution. While providing an outstanding exposition of Western philosophical thought, MacIntyre's account has been found wanting in its central contention that modern liberalism is devoid of virtues, consensus and resources for solving its problems. I share in the criticism of MacIntyre's proposal, since first, liberal democracy offers possibilities MacIntyre does not elaborate; second, he leaves largely unresolved both the substance of the good to be pursued and the way we might switch from our current modes of thought and social structures to the pursuit of the common *telos*.

Stout and Walzer on the other hand enable us to see the potential latent in liberal democracy. Although already present, this potential is often not fully realized. It is the social critic's task to awaken his or her fellow-citizens and to persuade them that they do not live up to their own ideals. Consequently, various aspects of our social life may

[1] This paper was first submitted to Dr. Glen H. Stassen in partial fulfillment of requirements of a Ph.D. seminar at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA. I owe much to Dr. Stassen for his helpful comments, although I have not always heeded his advice.

be reformed – without having to identify a set of a-historical principles all rational agents could agree upon or despairing over the pluralist ethos and returning to an authoritarian traditionalism. The attractiveness of Stout's and Walzer's pragmatism consists in starting right from where we are instead of either idealizing the past or envisioning Utopia. Thus I find Stout's and Walzer's proposals much more viable than MacIntyre's.

At the same time, the dark picture of MacIntyre's traditionalism painted by his opponents is only partly justified. In fact, MacIntyre does not advocate a return back to the Greek *polis* or an abandonment of human rights. Instead, he contends that modernity has not redeemed its promise of universally acceptable rational justification of moral principles. Walzer's work actually does not deny this claim. Walzer does not attempt to provide philosophical justification of moral principles. Instead, he reaches his trans-culturally binding principles only via the study of particular moral visions – through ethnography, not philosophy. Rather than being a traditionalist in the negative sense of the word, MacIntyre emphasizes the historical nature of moral inquiry. I am using his criterion of the tradition's ability to deal with an epistemological crisis to challenge Walzer's excessive optimism which seems to imply that the diverse moral outlooks are roughly equal alternatives corrigible through purely immanent criticism.

## Problems with MacIntyre's Traditionalism

### Dark Ages?

According to MacIntyre, the modern liberal state finds itself in a disarray of conceptions of the good. Particular conceptions of the good have been expelled from the public discourse. In other words, the value-neutral state has privatized the good. Consequently, both our moral discourse and politics are more than impoverished – they find themselves in an impasse. But is the situation as dire as he depicts it? Although Stout agrees that we do 'live in a society where economic and other forces seem increasingly to produce people who lack the virtues needed to use their freedom well' and 'make a repub-

lic work,'[2] he turns in *After Virtue* to examine the trustworthiness of its story of decline and fall of the virtue ethics. The disagreement over moral issues is for him not a sign of an appalling crisis. Instead, the disagreements center around certain issues (such as war or abortion) which consequently attract attention, while there is a widespread consensus on other issues (such as slavery or torture) which are not even discussed, since agreement on them is presupposed.[3] It is disagreement over the former set of issues which makes MacIntyre wonder whether the moral debate may be rationally resolved at all. 'It would be more striking,' Stout counters, 'if it ceased to be so and moral language came to be used in public settings largely for the ceremonial expression of widespread moral agreement.'[4] Moreover, a total disagreement on the good would leave us 'unable to identify a common matter to disagree over.'[5] Moral issues may be graded with respect to their difficulty. Those upon which consensus is easily reached can be compared to the subject matter of Physics 101, whereas the heavily contended issues are likened by Stout to an advanced debate among the physicists – a debate as tense and interminable as that over difficult moral issues.[6] It is inappropriate to criticize our own society for lack of moral consensus, as if the previous ages were indeed characterized by such a deep agreement or ability to supply rational reasons for their moral premises.[7]

By making us opt between Nietzsche and Aristotle, MacIntyre creates a sharp dualism. Due to our shared understandings, however, our society is not Nietzschean. Neither is MacIntyre's proposal purely Aristotelian, since he has to purge off Aristotle's errors.[8] The dichotomy MacIntyre creates leaves unnoticed the resources present in our society that might be used for its self-transformation,[9] while leading MacIntyre into utopian sectarianism tagged by Rorty as 'terminal

[2] Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel,* Boston, Mass 1988, p. 232.
[3] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 210.
[4] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 210.
[5] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 212.
[6] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 42.
[7] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 214.
[8] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 240.
[9] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 224.

wistfulness.'[10] What we need to discover, Stout maintains, is 'the mean between liberal apologetics and implicitly utopian criticism.'[11] As the reference to 'the mean' in between two vicious extremes suggests, Stout is ready to utilize this Aristotelian concept. The *telos*, however, does not need to be artificially constructed, since 'we always find ourselves, at any moment in our history, already committed to pursuing a cluster of interrelated ends, our conception of which changes as we pursue them.'[12]

## MacIntyre's Good

While MacIntyre says the moral philosophy of liberalism has not reached any consensus regarding either specific rules of behavior or procedures to secure rationally such rules, the liberals (Kantians and utilitarians) point out the lack of consensus on the nature of the good among the Aristotelian-Thomists.[13] David Solomon identifies 'a certain kind of symmetry' between MacIntyre's and the liberals' arguments against each other. Both parties 'are concerned to secure a rationally safe foothold… for moral considerations. …They differ only over how this is best to be achieved.'[14] The liberal reasons as follows. Since the moral rules based on some conception of the good will be only as secure as that particular conception of the good, and since rational agreement on the conception of the good cannot conceivably be reached, it is necessary to give priority to the right over the good 'and search for some rational foundation for moral rules that will be neutral between various conceptions of the human good.'[15] If MacIntyre insists that the moral rules cannot be rationally secured apart from a conception of the good, and the Aristotelian-Thomists then fail to reach a consensus on the nature of the good, 'he has

[10] Stout, *Ethics,* pp. 228–9.
[11] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 232.
[12] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 238.
[13] David W. Solomon, "Comment on MacIntyre," *Review of Politics*, Summer 1990, Vol. 52 Issue 3, Full Text, p. 369.
[14] Solomon, *Comment*, pp. 369–70.
[15] Solomon, *Comment*, p. 370.

merely prepared the way for the moral relativist and the moral nihilist.'[16]

Solomon observes that the two parties 'are disagreeing at the deepest level precisely about the correct conception of the human good.'[17] He argues that Kant's and Mill's works after all, contrary to appearances, do contain a conception of the human good, albeit thin when compared to the picture of the good in Thomism. '[T]hey are simply *liberal* in what they count as a good life for a human being.'[18] The debate would be advanced if articulated as one between competing conceptions of the good, rather than between the good and the right. In Stout's view too, liberal politics embodies a positive good of tolerance based on the historical experience of a failure to resolve in a peaceful way the conflict over the detailed conceptions of good in early modern Europe. To be sure, the conception of the good presupposed by modern society is only thin. We are left with a social framework in which we are free to pursue our own thick conceptions of the good. Stout agrees with Solomon also on the Aristotelian-Thomists' lack of consensus and clarity regarding their own conception of the good. According to Stout, MacIntyre fails to supply any specific conception of the good. The purified Aristotelian framework only places:

> "constraints on what a fully acceptable conception of the good must involve, constraints that determine a minimal interpretation of the virtues required for living well. But more specificity in a conception of the good can come, by his own reckoning, only from particular practices and traditions. Here the 'tradition of the virtues' is too amorphous to help, and it would be useful to know where MacIntyre would have us turn for details and why."[19]

[16] Solomon, *Comment*, p. 370.
[17] Solomon, *Comment*, p. 373.
[18] Solomon, *Comment*, p. 373, italics original.
[19] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 223.

## MacIntyre on Human Rights

According to MacIntyre, the existence of human rights cannot be demonstrated. 'The truth is plain: there are no such rights, and belief in them is one with belief in witches and unicorns,' MacIntyre boldly asserts.[20] He arrives at this conclusion via encountering the rights-language only comparatively recently in the history of moral thought. '[T]here is no expression in any ancient or medieval language correctly translated by our expression 'a right' until near the close of the middle ages.'[21] Here, I am afraid, MacIntyre leans on potentially misleading generalizations. First, as he himself admits, the absence of the rights-language in pre-modern cultures does not by itself entail that the concept of rights is a modern invention.[22] Likewise in *Whose Justice*, he states '[i]t does not of course follow that before some particular set of words… becomes available… those words and concepts did not already have application.'[23] Second, although MacIntyre refers to classical Hebrew among other languages where the rights-vocabulary was supposed to be absent, an Old Testament passage may be brought in to suggest otherwise: 'To crush underfoot all prisoners in the land, to deny a man his rights before the Most High, to deprive a man of justice – would not the Lord see such things?' (Lam 3:34–36, NIV). Whatever the Hebrew term rendered here as 'rights' was, the context clearly demonstrates that a minimum of decent treatment was to be guaranteed even to prisoners of Jeremiah's time. MacIntyre is right that the United Nations declaration on human rights in 1949 amounted to a simple assertion for which no reasons were given.[24] But does it matter? Stout claims it does not. In his view rights do not need any ontological basis. Instead, they are a thin pragmatic construct that people have been able to agree upon. This, however, does not diminish their reality and significance.[25] 'Rights in-

[20] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory,* 2nd ed., Notre Dame, Ind 1984, p. 69.
[21] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 69.
[22] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 69.
[23] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame, 1988, p. 183.
[24] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 69.
[25] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 225.

volve legitimate claims *to* the enjoyment of certain goods. … If some such claims are legitimately made on behalf of everyone… then there *are* human rights.'[26] Nevertheless, Stout admits, the rights-language does not exhaust the whole realm of morality. The talk of virtues and the common good can coexist well with the concept of human rights.[27] 'When it comes time to appraise character… we need to speak of virtues and vices, not of rights.'[28]

## MacIntyre's Community

What would the community MacIntyre envisions actually look like? Throughout *After Virtue,* especially toward its end, MacIntyre assumes the role of a social critic. He rejects modern politics, individualism and prioritizing of the market.[29] Acquisitiveness used to be a vice for Aristotle, but it has been turned into the driving force of modern production.[30] Although he criticizes the dominance of the market, he is aware that after the failure of the socialist experiment in Russia and elsewhere, there is no alternative to the capitalist economy.[31] Consequently, it seems that MacIntyre proposes to evade two vicious extremes, prioritizing of the market on the one hand and Marxist practical Kantianism / utilitarianism on the other. Presumably, one needs *phronēsis* to determine the desirable mean-course for one's own society with respect to its historical circumstances.

MacIntyre envisions a community where renewal of the whole society might start. The examples from the early middle ages he advances, however, suggest that the church, or rather the viable parts of the church, such as the order of St. Benedict, used to be the community of moral renewal, the alternative community that survived the fall of the Roman empire and preserved the ancient tradition. There-

[26] Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, Princeton and Oxford 2004, p. 207, italics original.
[27] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 225.
[28] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 206.
[29] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 254.
[30] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 227.
[31] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 262.

fore nowadays, I infer, the church might serve again as a model community provided it lets itself not be dominated by the prevailing social ethos. The closing line of *After Virtue*, '[w]e are waiting… for another… St. Benedict'[32] might then be read as a prophecy possibly fulfilled in the firm moral attitudes of the new pope, Benedict XVI. Nevertheless, MacIntyre issues a 'frustratingly vague' call for construction of local communities instead.[33] In *Dependent Rational Animals*, where he lists some examples of such communities, local church is featured just as one among many forms of community.[34] Dunne concludes that 'what he [MacIntyre] means by 'local community' is unclear and its contours remain indistinct.'[35]

Moreover, an essential feature of the contemporary West is its ideological diversity. While MacIntyre highlighted that the medieval Europe was not uniform, containing Jewish and Muslim elements besides Christendom, the three monotheist faiths, their conflicts notwithstanding, share an overarching theological structure. By contrast, the contemporary West accommodates also atheists, Hindus, Marxists, feminists and lesbians. I wonder what kind of shared *telos* the adherents of these dissonant ways would endorse – apart from the current liberalism. In Stout's view, it is hard 'to imagine a full-blown alternative to our society that would be both achievable by acceptable means and clearly better than what we have now.'[36] To be sure, everyone is able to imagine a better society, that is better in his or her perspective and based on everyone else seeing things exactly as he or she does.[37] This, however, would bring us back to the clash of the thick conceptions of the good.

[32] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 263.
[33] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 223.
[34] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues.* Chicago and La Salle, Ill 1999, pp. 134–5 and p. 143.
[35] Joseph Dunne, "Ethics Revised: Flourishing as Vulnerable and Dependent. A Critical Notice of Alasdair MacIntyre's Dependent Rational Animals." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, August 2002, Vol. 10 Issue 3, Full Text, p. 352.
[36] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 229.
[37] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 229.

## Positive Interpretation of MacIntyre: The Indispensability of History

To a corpus of writings as rich as MacIntyre's there are bound to be many facets. So far I have focused only on challenges to MacIntyre's proposal. Now I would like to mention some convergences between his, Stout's and Walzer's reasoning. First, all three authors concur regarding the indispensability of history for any talk about morality. They unanimously deny the possibility of basing morality on a-historical principles. Stout and Walzer maintain it is necessary to launch social criticism from where we are, from our location within a given society at a particular point of time. Likewise, according to MacIntyre, to be able to understand our present situation of moral disarray we must trace the development of thought and society to see where we have come from. Since there has never been '*morality as such*' apart from its historical embodiments,[38] MacIntyre corrects Aristotle, for the latter had little understanding of historicity.[39] Not surprisingly, both *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice* assume the form of a narrative. Thus all three thinkers set themselves apart from the Enlightenment quest for basic moral principles upon which all rational people should agree.

Second, since the moral norms are inescapably context-bound, it is necessary to allow for a measure of relativity to the conceptions of justice. Along with Stout and Walzer, MacIntyre too is aware of this relativity. For Aristotle '[t]o be just is to give each person what each deserves,' which in turn presupposes 'that there are rational criteria of desert and that there is *socially established agreement* as to what those criteria are.'[40] The individual and common good at a particular time are determined through the process of 'conversational justice'[41] This is so because the conception of the *telos* evolves. '[T]here is not one kind of life the living out of which is the *telos* for all human beings in all times and places.'[42] Moreover, even where there is a

[38] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 266, italics original.
[39] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 159.
[40] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 152, italics mine.
[41] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 110–1.
[42] Stout, *Ethics,* p. 238, quoting MacIntyre.

consensus on *telos* and on the criteria of justice, the law does not cover every conceivable situation. This is why Aristotle's disciple has to decide on the mean between two extremes. There is, however, no absolute measure of what is too much and too little. '[W]hat is to fall into a vice cannot be adequately specified independently of circumstances: the very same action which would in one situation be liberality could in another be prodigality and in a third meanness.'[43] This is why Aristotle emphasizes more virtues than rules (although for MacIntyre the virtues do not displace the rules).[44] The intellectual virtue of *phronçsis* is indispensable as it enables the agent to make a just judgment relative to his or her circumstances.

## MacIntyre on Aristotle's Exclusions

Susan Moller Okin subjected MacIntyre to severe criticism for advocating the Aristotelian tradition, which, in her view, cannot be redeemed.[45] Nevertheless, MacIntyre clearly dissociates himself from Aristotle's exclusions of women, artisans, slaves and non-Greeks from political participation in the *polis*. Although the most elaborate expression of MacIntyre's critique of Aristotle's elitism is found in *Dependent*, MacIntyre's earlier writings demonstrate sufficiently that he has always been aware of Aristotle's failure. *Dependent* therefore does not present any departure from or re-evaluation of MacIntyre's previous work.

As early as in *After Virtue* MacIntyre concedes that we rightly feel offended at Aristotle's exclusions. He criticizes Aristotle for sharing in the 'blindness of his culture'[46] and treating the barbarians and the Greeks as if they had fixed natures. While Aristotle made the *telos* central to his moral and political philosophy, he confined it to individuals. He failed to apply it to history of the *polis* and humankind.[47]

[43] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 154.
[44] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 150–2.
[45] Suzan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender and the Family,* New York 1989, p. 41ff.
[46] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 159.
[47] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 159.

Nevertheless, an 'allegiance to Aristotle's metaphysical biology' is unnecessary.[48] Moreover, the medieval synthesis of Aristotelianism with Augustinian Christianity supplied what was missing in the former: the virtue of charity, the awareness of corrupt will, the notion of forgiveness and the idea that external forces cannot deprive one of *eudaimonia.*[49]

In *Whose Justice* MacIntyre engages Aristotle's exclusions in even greater detail. They are disclosed as stemming from 'fallacious reasoning,' whose 'premises are often enough in part true and are indeed made true by the effects of irrational domination.'[50] Women were thought by Aristotle not fit for citizenship due to their uncontrollable emotions, and slaves because they are unable to rule themselves. These premises, MacIntyre argues, were subsequently confirmed not because of the innate incapability of women and slaves, but due to oppression:

> "Those reduced to the condition of slavery do to some large extent become irresponsible, lacking in initiative, anxious to avoid work, and incapable of exercising authority. Women faced with incompatible role demands and deprived of education… will often enough exhibit strong and undisciplined emotion."[51]

MacIntyre believes metaphysical biology may be excised from Aristotle's thought, since 'in the best kind of *polis* the distribution of public offices and the honoring of achievement will be in accordance with excellence, that is, with virtue, [this basic approach] is independent of any thesis about what kinds of persons are or are not capable of excellence.'[52] The 'participation of women or of artisans would require restructuring of their occupational and social roles,'[53] which, admittedly, was inconceivable for Aristotle.

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[48] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 196.
[49] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 174–6.
[50] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, p. 105.
[51] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, p. 105.
[52] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, p. 105.
[53] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, p. 105.

MacIntyre's departure from Aristotle's exclusions culminates in *Dependent*. MacIntyre turns there to Aquinas, who modified considerably Aristotle's teachings. Aquinas, for example, posited the Christian virtue of humility against Aristotle's magnanimity.[54] In MacIntyre's view the facts of human vulnerability and dependence need to be given a central place in any philosophical account of the human condition.[55] Only recently have the feminist writers exposed the 'connections between blindness to and denigration of women and male attempts to ignore the facts of dependence.'[56] While Aristotle

> "understood very well the importance of the relevant kinds of experience for rational practice… in neither ethics nor politics did he give any weight to the experience of those for whom the facts of affliction and dependence are most likely to be undeniable: women, slaves, and servants, those engaged in the productive labor."[57]

MacIntyre then allows the facts of vulnerability and dependence to shape his understanding of distributive justice.

## Flourishing as Vulnerable and Dependent[58]

MacIntyre's vision of community has been criticized above for being unrealistic and vague. It is fair to add that first, MacIntyre is aware of the Utopian character of his proposal, yet he argues that 'trying to live by Utopian standards is not Utopian.'[59] Second, as will be shown, MacIntyre's vision of community is not entirely amorphous.

In *Dependent* MacIntyre makes human vulnerability and dependency central to his conception of distributive justice. The facts of human vulnerability and dependency entail that 'each of us achieves

[54] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, xi.
[55] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 1.
[56] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 3.
[57] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 6.
[58] I have borrowed this headline from Dunne, "Ethics Revised: Flourishing as Vulnerable and Dependent."
[59] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 145.

our good only if and insofar as others make our good their good by helping us through periods of disability.'[60] Thus the individual and common goods are interconnected. One cannot achieve the *telos* of a good life (flourishing as a human being from conception to death) just by him or herself. Therefore one needs 'to find one's place within a network of givers and receivers.'[61]

Just social structures will result from a double emphasis on both need and desert. In this way justice will be sought for both the independent and the dependent. While the former will receive in proportion to their own contribution, the later will contribute according to their ability and receive according to their need – as far as the limited resources allow.[62] The community should be protected from gross inequality of income, because it 'obscure[s] the possibility of understanding one's social relationships in terms of a common good.'[63] This 'does involve a rejection of the economic goals of advanced capitalism.'[64]

Moreover, all members of community are to have an opportunity to participate in decision-making. The inclusion of those who are unable to speak for themselves in the public requires that a formal place be given to their proxies in the communal political structures.[65]

The pursuit of the common good takes place in the space between the state and the family.[66] The modern state can be leaned on to a limited degree only, since its policies, instead of reflecting the real mind of the citizens, are a series of compromises based on the bargaining power of the entities involved. In short, although the state performs some important functions, it does not represent a genuine nation-wide community. Apart from the power of money in shaping nation-state politics, a truly democratic discussion is precluded at the state level by the sheer number of citizen-voices that would need to be taken into account. It follows, then, that a smaller forum is re-

[60] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 108.
[61] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 113.
[62] As MacIntyre himself admits, these are Marxist maxims. MacIntyre, *Dependent*, pp. 129–30.
[63] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 144.
[64] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 145.
[65] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 130.
[66] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, p. 131ff.

quired. Families, on the other hand, are not self-sufficient. Their flourishing largely depends on the quality of their social context. Consequently, the cultivation of the virtues of acknowledged dependence requires an intermediate space between the state and the family. In my view, these three levels of socializing, including the civil society, already exist anyway. I remain unconvinced that the civil society should be emphasized over against the family and the state. As MacIntyre himself admits, 'local communities are always open to corruption by narrowness, by complacency, by prejudice against outsiders and by a whole range of other deformities, including those that arise from a cult of local community.'[67]

## Stout on the Virtues of Liberal Democracy

A major problem with MacIntyre's proposal is his 'tendency to undermine identification with liberal democracy'[68] by pointing away from the current social arrangements as if they were utterly beyond repair. Although, in Stout's view, the new traditionalists ask pertinent questions regarding the kind of selves that the market and the liberal state produce, hardly anyone would desire to return all the way back to the denial of women's rights, prohibition of free speech, pre-modern forms of trial and punishment and arranged marriage.[69] Is infringement of our freedom the price we have to pay for fostering virtues? By no means. It is only the new traditionalists who create this artificial dichotomy. They trade on the thought that the modern demise of tradition leaves us after virtue. Doing so, however, they consign much of modern ethical discourse to invisibility, telling 'a largely false story about modern ethical discourse.'[70]

'Are there no examples of ethical debates in our culture that have come to an end?' Stout asks, pointing out that MacIntyre does not raise this question at all.[71] Nevertheless, incommensurable premises

[67] MacIntyre, *Dependent*, 142.
[68] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 118.
[69] Stout, *Democracy*, pp. 118–9.
[70] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 119.
[71] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 123.

did not prevent Americans from reaching a high level of consensus on slavery, suffrage, prohibition of alcoholic beverages and civil rights.[72] Moreover, the tradition of the virtues advocated by MacIntyre is not better off as for its internal coherence than the modern discourse, since:

> "it gathers together people with vastly different tables of virtues and conceptions of the good. …Any tradition so diverse could not supply the wanted contrast with liberal modernity, nor could it satisfactorily resolve the problem of point of view. To do those things, MacIntyre would have to commit himself to a particular conception of the good life and correlative table of the virtues."[73]

It was exactly the clash of the competing thick conceptions of the good that necessitated the modern liberal arrangements. '[B]y neglecting the role of… religious conflict, in moral history, MacIntyre had simultaneously neglected one of the reasons that public discourse in many modern settings has become secularized.'[74]

While MacIntyre's intentions 'to make the idea of 'liberalism transformed into a tradition' strike the reader as paradoxical'[75], for Stout no inconsistency is implied. Democracy is a tradition the ethical substance of which, however, 'is more a matter of enduring attitudes, concerns, dispositions, and patterns of conduct than it is a matter of agreement on a conception of justice.'[76] He understands the inauguration of liberal modernity as a pragmatic endeavor intended 'to tailor the political institutions and moral discourse of modern societies to the facts of pluralism.'[77] This move, however, does not amount to a demise of virtues. A partly new set of virtues is free to flourish instead. Stout turns to Whitman, whose *Democratic Vistas* suffice as an argument against MacIntyre's claim that with the rise of

[72] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 123.
[73] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 125.
[74] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 126.
[75] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 129.
[76] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 3.
[77] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 129.

modernity virtues declined.[78] Modern 'academic philosophers paid much less attention to the virtues' Stout admits, nevertheless, 'academic philosophy is only one locus of ethical discourse.'[79] Whitman, representing the non-academic thought, mixed 'concepts drawn from Old World theories of the virtues with local [American] conceptual artifacts fashioned by lovers of democracy.'[80] Emerson, Whitman's predecessor, acutely aware of the newness of the American circumstances, taught that 'we are put in training for a love which knows not sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere.'[81] Whitman likewise placed equality and respect for persons at the center: 'Neither working men, nor women, nor the masses of common people are to be deemed virtuous for knowing their place in a hierarchy… They will all be encouraged to assume the posture of self-respect.'[82]

## Stout's Pragmatism

Stout's pragmatism may be traced back to Hegel's opposition to Kant's universal principles. Kant's proposal treated moral norms a-historically, which is not the way such norms originate.

> "The societal process in which norms come to be made explicit is dialectical. …Because this process takes place in the dimension of time and history, the beliefs and actions one is entitled to depend in large part on what has already transpired within the dialectical process itself."[83]

Consequently, there is no need to 'search for a common basis of reasoning in principles that all 'reasonable' citizens have reason to accept.'[84] This liberates us for discursive exchanges.

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[78] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 28.
[79] Stout, *Democracy*, pp. 28–9.
[80] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 29.
[81] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 36.
[82] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 37.
[83] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 78.
[84] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 79.

The notion of the social contract is unnecessary too. The social-contract theory aims at taming 'the concepts of ethical and political discourse in the interest of stabilizing the social order. It hopes to settle the basic question of the fair terms of social cooperation so that deliberative discourse can proceed within a stable 'contractual' framework.'[85] Nevertheless, history has demonstrated that Americans 'are more deeply committed to freedom, and to a more substantive, positive kind of freedom, than the theorists suspect. For historically they have not restrained themselves in the way contractarians have proposed.'[86]

Stout therefore embraces a version of pragmatism that 'combines Hegel's dialectical normative expressivism with the Emersonian conviction that the most substantial spiritual benefits of expressive freedom are to be found in a form of social life that celebrates democratic individuality as a positive good.'[87] This blend of ideas Stout finds in Whitman and Dewey. Pragmatism, however, does not necessarily amount to relativism. In this respect Stout consciously departs from Dewey.[88]

Stout focuses on '*activities* held in common as constitutive of the political community.'[89] Nevertheless, these activities are not to be understood in merely procedural terms, since substantive commitments are embedded in them, while being a matter of an ongoing debate at the same time. These commitments 'are initially implicit in our reasoning, rather than fully explicit in the form of philosophically articulated propositions. So we must be careful not to reduce them to a determinate system of rules or principles.'[90] Since our commitments evolve, it is necessary to keep the democratic discussion going. Such a discursive practice is 'a self-correcting enterprise which can put *any* claim in jeopardy, though not *all* at once.'[91] Our overlapping consensus on the legitimacy of democracy involves 'a practical commitment to holding one another mutually responsible for our po-

[85] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 81.
[86] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 84.
[87] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 84.
[88] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 14.
[89] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 4, italics original.
[90] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 5.
[91] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 213 quoting Sellars, italics original.

litical arrangements.'[92] We owe reasons to one another whenever taking stand on important political questions.

## Walzer: Justice as Complex Equality

It is neither possible nor desirable to aim at simple equality, guaranteeing all citizens equal political power or material resources. Even if they start out from a position of simple equality, their skills and decisions will necessarily lead to differentiation among them. In Walzer's view, egalitarianism has abolitionist roots. It always struggles against domination rather than for simple equality. Consequently, distributive justice must be complex. Just social arrangements have to take seriously both similarities and differences among people.[93] 'Justice requires the defense of difference – different goods distributed for different reasons among different groups of people.'[94] The essence of injustice, on the other hand, is a spill-over of power from one distributive sphere into other spheres. In the United States it is currently an invasion of the sphere of politics by wealth and the exercise of something like political power in spheres where consent of the governed is not asked for (e. g. factory, family).[95]

Opposition to domination by a single overarching value/meta-narrative is a common postmodern theme. Walzer's unique contribution, however, is his constructive theory of justice. He does not merely deconstruct the modern (or any other) meta-narrative, but offers criteria for justice applicable to a broad spectrum of spheres. As Glen H. Stassen has demonstrated, there are two principles implied in Walzer's project, '(mutual respect for all persons and their communities, and opposition to domination) and three sets of rights (the right to life, to liberty, and to community…).'[96] These criteria are trans-cul-

[92] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 184.
[93] Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality,* New York 1983, pp. xi–ii.
[94] Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad,* Notre Dame, Ind 1994, p. 33.
[95] Walzer, *Thick*, pp. 57–8.
[96] Glen H. Stassen, 'Michael Walzer's Situated Justice' In: *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 22/1994 Fall, p. 375.

turally valid, although it is only in the modern West that they have been spoken of in terms of 'rights.' Nevertheless, Walzer insists, these principles are not an invention or discovery of universal, a-historical moral laws subsequently applied to various cultures. Instead, they are an overlap of thick moralities. Thus Walzer's theory exhibits a unique blend of particularism and universalism.

## Immanent Criticism, Muslims and Communists

The source of social criticism is the moral idealism present in every culture. To be able to respect themselves, 'the members of society (especially the leading members) need to believe that their distributive arrangements and policies are just.'[97] This provides the social critic with an opportunity to remind them of their ideals whenever they do not live up to them. The task of the social critic is to interpret the culture, or, in Stout's words, to be involved in 'reflexive ethnography,'[98] 'to articulate the ethical inheritance *of* the people *for* the people while subjecting it to critical scrutiny.'[99]

Walzer's conviction that there is something to start with in any society, including the contemporary West, sharply contrasts with MacIntyre's pessimism. In MacIntyre's perspective, modern liberalism left us after virtue and any virtue still surviving is nothing but a remnant of a bygone age. For Walzer, on the other hand, 'philosophical sectarians who argue that true knowledge of the good society was delivered to the ancient Greeks and lost forever after… are critics who work at too great a distance from ordinary life and everyday understanding.'[100] Indeed, Walzer's approach is more hands-on. Yet, there is no reason why the ancient Greeks could not gain some crucial and universally valid insights. When Aristotle formulated syllogism, for example, he stated a fundamental law of logic, which has always been a standard of sound reasoning for all rational beings.

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[97] Walzer, *Thick*, p. 42.
[98] Stout, *Ethics*, p. 228.
[99] Stout, *Democracy*, p. 5.
[100] Michael Walzer, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century,* New York 2002, p. 11.

Bounds[101] and Okin[102] fear that Walzer's shared understandings of the meaning of the social goods is nothing but conventionalism, domination by majority opinion. Although, as Okin says, there are currently '*no shared understandings*'[103] on gender in the U.S., there are, I believe, more fundamental shared understandings on equality of persons regardless of attributes such as color or sex. Unless used as a critical principle, the shared understandings would indeed function as a merely formal rule potentially filled with arbitrary appeals to the public opinion. Instead of opening the door to such abuses, Walzer's shared understandings are meant to serve as a starting point for criticism immanent to a given society.

What I am worried about is rather the marginality, if not absence, of analogous egalitarian resources in certain non-Western cultures. Of course, to prove that there are no adequate resources for purely immanent criticism in Muslim or Hindu societies would require a high level of expertise in these traditions. I can point in this direction only tentatively. I wonder whether Walzer's particular social location causes him to be over- generous to other cultures, neglecting the historical development which led to the acknowledgment of human rights in the West, including the Jewish and Christian sacred texts that have played an indispensable role in the process. Other gods may demand other virtues and social arrangements from their devotees. The irreconcilable conflict among cultures seems to be due to their underlying metaphysical commitments. Such a conflict may be exemplified in the clashing moral visions embodied by Jesus and Muhammed. The awareness of the limits of a purely immanent criticism leads us to consider an adoption of ideas external to a given culture and eventually conversion itself.

According to Walzer, '[e]ach nation can have its own prophecy, just as it has its own history, its own deliverance…'[104] '[T]here is… no single, correct, maximalist ideology.'[105] Indeed, there are various

[101] Elizabeth M. Bounds, Coming Together/Coming Apart: Religion, Community, and Modernity, New York and London 1997, pp. 52–4.
[102] Okin, *Justice,* p. 62ff.
[103] Okin, *Justice,* p. 67, italics original.
[104] Michael Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism,* Cambridge, Mass 1987, p. 94.
[105] Walzer, *Thick*, p. 49.

prophecies – but some of them voice mutually incompatible claims. Thus according to Qur'an, God has chosen Ishmael – not Isaac, that is the Arabs, not the Jews. Likewise, neither was Jesus God's Son, nor did he die, according to the Qur'an. As we will see, such claims carry moral implications. Far from being an appendix to a given culture, they are a kernel of which morality is an outgrowth. Even where the kernel itself is no longer adhered to wholeheartedly, it continues to exert its influence.

A devout Muslim would hardly endorse Walzer's claim that 'there is… no single, correct, maximalist ideology.'[106] Walzer does not include examples from the Muslim world. This is striking, given the fact that Muslim countries have been the main human rights abusers and Islam the number one source of worldwide terrorism in recent decades.[107] The whole concept of human rights as understood in the West seems to be alien to Islam. Charity beyond the bounds of one's own religion,[108] forgiveness, reconciliation and love of one's enemies are absent from Islam. A Muslim terrorist is able to cry out 'Allahu akbar' (God is merciful) right before plowing a hijacked aircraft into the World Trade Center. Is this a travesty or an outgrowth of the Qur'anic teachings?

The differences between the Western and Muslim concepts of rights have to be traced back to the founder figures of Christianity and Islam. Jesus underwent suffering and death instead of inflicting it on others. Muhammad, by contrast, was a conqueror – and so were his followers who spread Islam to north Africa and Europe. Jesus, by

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[106] Walzer, *Thick*, p. 49.

[107] Examples abound. Since I assume that the reader is aware of what is going on around the globe, I desist from providing a list of evidence to support this claim. Scholars fostering interreligious dialogue on the assumption of rough parity and salvific efficiency of the world religions, such as John Hick or Hans Küng, are located in the safety of Western academies. For reasons they choose not to reflect upon, Western universities provide a more convenient place for interreligious dialogue than schools in Teheran or Riyadh. Blinded by the liberal ideology some Western scholars were even unable to acknowledge the religious motifs of the 9/11 attack. By contrast, a Muslim leader despaired on CNN news, saying that the recent Beslan tragedy is a sign of the bankruptcy of the Muslim civilization, since there is no other comparable source of terrorism in the contemporary world.

[108] With the exception of hospitality in the Near East, which, however, did not originate with Islam.

contrast, told his disciples to spread his message exclusively through teaching, example, healing and persuasion. Although forced conversion of and violence against the 'infidels' is not to be applied to the Jews and Christians according to Qur'an, Muslim anti-Judaism has been persistent, the largely Christian United States has been equated with 'the Great Satan' by some Muslim leaders, Christians enslaved in Sudan, raped and killed by Muslims in Indonesia.

I am inclined to believe that there are Muslim traditions that are potentially useful for an immanent critique of Muslim societies. To be sure, there are varieties of Islam. Nevertheless, Muhammed is the norm. While the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament are dialogical, incorporating a diversity of voices mutually balancing each other, the Qur'an is a single piece of revelation downloaded by a single mediator within a short time-span. Moreover, no equivalent to biblical criticism is conceivable among the Muslim scholars. The only doctrine of inspiration acceptable in Islam is verbal inspiration conceived as word by word dictation. Consequently, Muslim believers, in reforming their own faith and society can go only as far as Muhammad allows them. No authentic Muslim reformation can entail parting of ways with Muhammad himself. Thus while Christians engaged in an immanent criticism may counter any crusade-mentality of their fellow-believers by pointing to the example and teaching of Jesus, authentic Muslims cannot but end up with Muhammad the conqueror.

Walzer himself admits that in some cases an adoption of an external moral vision may be the only reasonable course of action. To illustrate his point, Walzer elaborates the gradual abandonment of communist ideas in East Europe, where '[t]he primary critics of communism… were dissident communists, demanding that the tyrants actually deliver on the values to which they claimed to be committed.'[109] Nevertheless, it gradually dawned to them that the communist system of simple equality and radical redistribution made the state too powerful, which in turn undermined the communist ideal.[110] Consequently, 'the recognition of the extreme unlikelihood of reform

[109] Walzer, *Thick*, p. 46.
[110] Walzer, *Thick*, p. 46.

from within… led the critics to adopt… [an] external model.'[111] Having witnessed the collapse of communist rule in East Europe myself, I largely agree with Walzer. His point might be illustrated by Alexander Dubcek, the communist leader of the Prague Spring in 1968. Engaged in an immanent criticism of the communist policies, Dubcek was deposed after the invasion of the Soviet-led armies. In 1989 Dubcek reappeared briefly in Czechoslovak public life, greeting the crowds that marched through the capital and celebrating with them the advent of a new era. But that was all. There was no place for him in the new political life. Under the new circumstances only a handful of staunch communists were able to contemplate reforms as a sufficient remedy. The majority of Czechs and Slovaks insisted on an abolition of the leading role of the communist party, free elections and the adoption of a free-market economy. So far Walzer's preference for immanent criticism works. Yet, this is just one part of the picture. Besides Dubcek, there were other Czechoslovak citizens and emigrants (as well as total outsiders such as Western economists and philosophers), who saw clearly that the system did not and could not work. Was Dubcek a more authentic and discerning critic just because he happened to be within the communist camp? To the contrary, those who opposed the communist system have been always right whether they were immanent critics or not. Walzer, however, does not spend much time on the question of truth or adequacy of an ideology/system. This renders him a sort of relativist, in spite of the fact that his theory does include certain trans-cultural principles and norms. I agree with Walzer that immanent criticism tends to be more efficient, because the external critics are not listened to. Nevertheless, this is just a pragmatic concern, which does not deal with the question of truth.

## Cross-Cultural Criticism and Conversion

Walzer imagines that non-Israelite readers of Amos might 'be moved to imitate the practice of prophecy (or perhaps to listen in a new way

[111] Walzer, *Thick*, p. 47.

to their own prophets). It is the practice, not the message, that would be repeated.'[112] A theologian, however, might point out that Walzer focuses only on one aspect of prophecy. Albeit the biblical prophets were highly perceptive social critics, there is more to biblical prophecy. In my view, there are limits to an imitation of biblical prophecy, since God has chosen Israel as an agent of special revelation.[113] Therefore, even though to some extent helpful, reiteration cannot be the final answer. Walzer suggests the others might be encouraged 'to listen in a new way to their own prophets.' Perhaps, but they need criteria to discern true prophecy from fraud. According to Walzer, however, we are able to discern truth from error along the way.

In spite of his insistence on the primacy of purely immanent criticism, Walzer has to acknowledge that some social arrangements are beyond repair unless external principles are adduced. Where inevitable, therefore, the social critic legitimately introduces foreign elements into her culture, but she must do so in a culture-sensitive manner. '[I]f he has picked up new ideas on his travels, he tries to connect them to the local culture.'[114] Walzer's reluctance to admit superiority of one thick morality over others, however, is not without problems. A foreign idea imported into a system does not necessarily fit there:

> "Derived as it is from a genuinely alien tradition, the new explanation does not stand in any sort of substantive continuity with the preceding history of the tradition in crisis. In this kind of situation the rationality of tradition requires an acknowledgment … that the alien tradition is superior… to their own."[115]

Instead of complementing the existing morality, the alien idea may call the whole system into question. This is why Jesus taught that it is imprudent to pour new wine into old wineskins (Mark 2:22); and that one is not to expect a bad tree to bear good fruit (Matt 7:17).

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[112] Walzer, *Interpretation*, p. 92.
[113] 'He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws' (Ps 147:19–20, NIV).
[114] Walzer, *Interpretation*, p. 39.
[115] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, p. 365.

The very need of Christian ideas in other religions lays bare the insufficiency of the latter. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, had to adopt the idea of nonviolence from the Sermon on the Mount to which he was exposed through his correspondence with Tolstoy.

Even in the extreme case of the Indian caste system, however, Walzer doubts that domestic resources for criticism would be entirely absent. By his lights, there is no need for an import of foreign ideas, since even the most hierarchical societies must already contain seeds of resistance to inequality: 'We should not assume that men and women are ever entirely content with radical inequality.'[116] It does not occur to him that even the most downtrodden Indians can be genuinely convinced that their social position is determined by their actions in their previous life. Of course, one can easily imagine that they resent it, but this is something else than to demonstrate they possess arguments that would resonate in the whole society and bring about change. Instead of advancing generalizations and assumptions that neatly fit his overall scheme, Walzer should have supplied examples from universally accepted Indian traditions, such as the Vedas, showing their potential for immanent criticism and reform.[117] Because Walzer responds even to the blatant abuse of human rights in the caste system of India with his characteristic optimism, he positions himself side by side with the theological liberals who downplayed the concept of human depravity. Every problem can be supposedly fixed provided people receive education and engage in social efforts. If even the caste India is able to attain complex equality through self-help, so were the ancient Israelites, I infer. There was no reason for Yahweh to intervene, Moses to be sent and Israelites to be led away. Instead, it would take just one Egyptian scribe tactfullyto remind Pharaoh of his benevolent self-understanding and his pledges. Walzer explicitly uses the example of a scribe appealing to Pharaoh's better self without, however, drawing the implications for Israel's story.[118] The Exodus account, however, is realistic. Pharaoh hardened

[116] Walzer, *Spheres*, p. 27.
[117] Medieval European Christendom was hierarchically organized too, yet the Scripture always contained an egalitarian strand that could be appealed to.
[118] Walzer, *Thick*, p. 42.

his heart which necessitated God's use of force. Deliverance of the oppressed and deposing of their oppressors are two sides of the same coin in Scripture. Should we consign the violence of the Exodus story to the past and look for guidance to Jesus alone, conflict remains anyway. It is only transposed to another level. Jesus sent out his disciples into the world of competing ideologies to spread God's kingdom. This very commission implies there are limits to what can be achieved through purely immanent criticism. Of course, the good news is to be contextualized and the indigenous churches are to retain much of their cultural heritage. Yet, they will be at the same time carriers of a new, specifically Christian content.

MacIntyre is realistic in seeing the traditions of moral inquiry as competing – and that some of them are ultimately better than others. He has demonstrated that the choice among the competing moral outlooks does not have to be arbitrary. Traditions can be rationally tested as for their viability. The best criterion for testing is the capability of a tradition to respond to an 'epistemological crisis.'[119] 'Confrontation by new situations… may reveal within established practices and beliefs a lack of resources for offering or for justifying answers to these new questions.'[120] Another tradition, by contrast, may present a viable alternative to the old tradition which, due to its incapability to deal with the epistemological crisis, is no longer believed to provide an adequate account of reality. I believe that the evaluation of the viability of the traditions proposed by MacIntyre has a broad application. Walzer, on the other hand, is confident that the moral traditions for the most part possess all that is needed for immanent criticism. An adoption of an external idea or even of a replacement of the whole system is for him only the last resort.

## Conclusion

I have surveyed the debate over justice, virtues, and the good in the main writings of three leading ethicists/social theorists, MacIntyre,

[119] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, p. 363.
[120] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice*, p. 355.

Stout and Walzer. All of them contribute to the current American public debate, none of them argues from a particular religious perspective. All three authors discussed strive for radical democracy, that is broad participation in decision-making and mutual accountability for political arrangements. Stout and Walzer defend liberal democracy, while MacIntyre found the modern moral discourse in a hopeless disarray. Stout's and Walzer's method of social criticism, which aims at enhancing the virtues already present in our current arrangements, therefore presents a more helpful tool for social change.

Stout's label of 'new traditionalism,' however, holds for MacIntyre only to a limited degree. In his social theory MacIntyre draws on Marx, which hardly renders him traditional. His opposition to the rights-language has to be seen within the perspective of his contention with the Enlightenment rationality that sought to establish a-historical, universally binding moral principles, but, as MacIntyre correctly points out, failed to provide rational justification for them. Walzer, then, may be seen as supplying that desired justification for human rights. They are an overlap of thick moralities, a moral minimum cross-culturally acknowledged and therefore useful for criticism from a distance. Although MacIntyre might be seen as a traditionalist due to his affiliation with the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition, it is necessary 'to distinguish between traditional*ism* (the praise of a golden past or the current status quo) and the argument that rationality is tradition-*constituted*.'[121]

Both Stout and Walzer (the former more explicitly) have demonstrated that, while American liberal democracy is far from perfect, it is erroneous to despair as if it were altogether devoid of virtues. The liberal social arrangements embody a positive good of tolerance, which is vastly preferable to the preceding armed clashes over the detailed conceptions of the good. Likewise, MacIntyre leaves unnoticed the widespread consensus on numerous moral issues. Much is taken for granted in the modern West; the debate centers around some

[121] Elizabeth Phillips, "Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Walzer, and Communitarianism," an unpublished seminar paper, Pasadena, Ca: Fuller Seminary, 2002, p. 14, italics original.

more difficult issues. Disagreements are a normal aspect of an ongoing debate, not a sign of crisis. MacIntyre's conception of both the good and the community have been found vague and therefore not helpful. Obviously, MacIntyre is strong at the level of philosophical abstraction, tracing in detail the development of the threads of the Western tradition, whereas practical application of his thought to social arrangements gives rise to grave objections. I agree with Stout that the ideologically diverse population of the Western democracies cannot be expected to embrace voluntarily any alternative to the current liberal arrangements.

The prevailing disagreement among the Aristotelian-Thomists as to the specific nature of the good has been further pointed out. In fact, MacIntyre provides only a teleological framework without any thick content. This lack of substance in MacIntyre's teleology, however, may be its advantage, since for MacIntyre, as for Walzer, justice is relative to circumstances. Therefore, nothing can be settled in detail apart from the historical context of a community.

MacIntyre has been unjustly accused of perpetuating Aristotle's exclusions. The truth is that the concept of tradition not only allows but even calls for development. Therefore MacIntyre rightly feels free to correct Aristotle on issues of gender and social domination. There is no need to abandon the Aristotelian scheme as such, however, since offices and rewards in a just polis were to be distributed according to excellences/virtues of the candidates. This Aristotelian thesis is independent from his prejudice against certain groups of people as innately inferior.

Human vulnerability and dependency are central for MacIntyre's conception of distributive justice. They necessitate social structures where all members of society take turns in both giving and receiving; and have a voice in communal decision-making. Only then will everybody be able to flourish as a human being throughout the whole course of his or her life. The capitalist economic goals, however, are not conductive to the pursuit of the common good. The modern state, although indispensable, often fails to reflect in its policies the real mind of the citizen-body. Family, on the other hand, is not self-sufficient. It is, therefore, the communal space between the state and the family, where virtues as well as truly democratic dialogue are free to

flourish. Admittedly, one would wish that MacIntyre's social theory were more elaborate. There are also dangers in overemphasizing the local communities over against the state and the family.

I have further argued that conceptions of justice in various systems are incompatible due to the irreconcilable underlying metaphysical claims involved. Although MacIntyre is right that Judaism, Christianity and Islam share the Aristotelian scheme with its 'fundamental contrast between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature,'[122] human 'essential nature' is conceived differently in the three systems. Muslims would not say that human beings were created in God's image, nor would Jews agree with Christians, that Jesus Christ is the ultimate measure of humanity. Therefore traditions like these need to be seen as competing for allegiance to their particular metaphysical claims and consequently also to their particular tables of virtues. A decision which tradition to adhere to does not have to be irrational. While MacIntyre seems to have referred rather to a body of scholars evaluating their own tradition from within, 'epistemological crises' are responded to also at the individual level. Immanent criticism is a good starting point, but when it dismantles the source of the bankruptcy of the system in the inadequacy of its underlying metaphysics, a conversion will be in order rather than ad hoc borrowings from an alien tradition.

[122] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 52.

# HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS[1]

*Thomas K. Johnson, Praha*

In spite of the growth of democracy in much of the world, there is still reason to be very concerned about the protection of human rights. In addition to the terrorism associated with matters in the Middle East, the genocide associated with conflicts in Africa, the seemingly growing religious persecution in several parts of the world, and widespread abortion in much of the first and second worlds, two particular matters merit our attention, since they represent similar events in several parts of the world. The first of these: the European Humanities University of Minsk, Belarus, a fine liberal arts university with an openly pro-democracy orientation, was closed by force at the orders of the dictator in 2004, as part of a general crack-down on any persons or groups seeking political, economic, or religious freedom. This was a clear violation of freedom of speech which should provoke indignation among all people of good will. Much to our regret, totalitarianism is not dead in the post-communist world.

A second matter that should provoke our concern is the loss of civil rights due to the expanding influence of certain types of Islam. It is noteworthy that the Dutch press, made sensitive to these matters by recent events in the Netherlands, is taking a serious interest in the new use of Islamic Shariah law in Ontario, Canada. Women from Iran, who fled to Canada to find equal protection for the rights of women, are now terrified that their rights will be abused by the imposition of the Shariah within a western democracy. As one Muslim spokeswoman in Ontario put it, "Women and children are being sac-

[1] Much of the content of this article was first presented as a special lecture at the European Humanities University in Minsk, Belarus in 1996. This article is written in honor of my brave colleagues from EHU who have struggled to gain protection for basic rights in the face of grave personal danger. It was my privilege to serve with them as a Visiting Professor, sponsored by the International Institute for Christian Studies, 1994–96.

rificed on the altar of multiculturalism."[2] If multiculturalism means that all systems of law, including those that do not protect human rights, are now acceptable in the west, the rights of more people will be at serious risk, even within our western democracies that claim to stand under the rule of law.

Heart-rending problems such as these will not be eliminated merely by philosophical clarity on the theory of rights, but the practical problems may be compounded by the widespread confusion on the topic of human rights found in the writings of many ethicists and philosophers today. And just as the concern to protect human rights arose largely under the influence of the Christian movement, it may be possible for a clear theory of rights to arise in the Christian community and then cross over into the broader political culture.[3]

One of the earlier Christian ethicists to write on the topic of human rights was Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). Though what he wrote on the topic was brief, his incisive analysis provides a very constructive starting point that can be easily clarified and expanded by bringing it into dialogue with recent theories and questions. St. Thomas asks, "Are we morally obligated to obey human laws?" His question assumes his distinctions between the four types of laws: (1) the eternal law which exists in the reason or mind of God; (2) the natural law, which is the reflection or image of the eternal law written by creation into human reason; (3) the divine law, which is the special revelation of God in the Bible; and (4) human law, the very fallible rules written

[2] Quotation from Alia Hogben in "Moslimvrouwen en Canada vrezen shariarechtbank" by Marjon Bolwijn in *de Volkskrant,* June 15, 2005, p. 4.

[3] Some of this history is told by Max L. Stackhouse in *Creeds, Society, and Human Rights: A Study in Three Cultures* Grand Rapids 1984, especially chapters two and three. A concern to protect human rights within secular society should probably be seen as a result of God's common or civilizing grace, which must be clearly distinguished from God's saving or special grace in Christ. As has often been mentioned by theologians studying God's common grace, there is some type of cooperation between common grace and special grace, since there is a unity within the eternal plan of God. Such common, civilising grace has allowed many moral beliefs and theories to arise within the Christian community and then find further reception and application in wider circles of political culture. See especially J. Douma, *Algemene Genade: Uiteenzetting, vergelijking en beoordeling van de opvattingen van A. Kuyper, K. Schilder en Joh. Calvijn over 'algemene genade,"* Goes 1981.

and enforced in every society.[4] The answer Thomas gives to his own question is very interesting.

> The ordinances human beings enact may be just or unjust. If they are just, then we have a moral obligation to obey them, since they ultimately derive from the eternal law of God… An ordinance may be unjust for one of two reasons: first, it may be contrary to the rights of humanity; and second, it may be contrary to the rights of God.[5]

The conclusions that Thomas draws from this assessment is that people have no strict moral obligation to obey unjust laws, though prudence does require great caution before deciding to disobey a law. However, in some situations, one may have a moral obligation to disobey a seriously unjust law, which is to practice civil disobedience.

## 1. The Proper Function of Human Rights Claims

This assessment of Aquinas gives us the classical Christian definition of the proper function of human rights claims: to show that the actions of a government are so terribly unjust that one should protest or disobey. There are several ideas related to this definition of the function of human rights claims that Aquinas either assumes or articulates. He assumes that the proper function of government is to protect human rights by means of enforcing just laws. He clearly teaches that there is a standard of justice higher than government, a standard which

[4] For more on how the theology and philosophy of law synthesized by Thomas can be appropriated within Protestant ethics see Thomas K. Johnson, *Natural Law Ethics: An Evangelical Proposal* Bonn 2005.

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* question 96, article 4. The translation used here is that of Manuel Velasquez (Copyright 1983), an excerpt of which appears in *Ethics: Theory and Practice,* edited by Manuel Velasquez and Cynthia Rostankowski (Prentice Hall, 1985), pp. 41–54. The quotation is from pages 52 and 53. The choice Thomas made to locate his discussion of human rights within his discussion of the natural moral law indicates that he saw human rights as an organic part of natural law philosophy.

exists in the eternal mind of God. He believes that human beings have rights because they are created in the image of God. And he argues that human practical reason, the image of God's reason, can generally, with careful use, write laws that are more just than the laws of his day.

The importance of this classical, Christian theory of human rights became much more clear during the course of the twentieth century, and that for a profound but simple reason. During the twentieth century many of the worst crimes against humanity were committed by several governments against their own citizens or against people over whom they ruled. One can easily mention the Nazi Holocaust, the Stalinist purges and death camps, the atrocities in Asia during World War II, South African Apartheid, and many other events that properly belong in a nightmare. At a time when people often looked to government to protect them, they mostly needed protection from an unjust government, often from their own government. One can see why the Apocalypse of John portrays unjust government as a devouring beast. Helmut Thielicke sagely commented,

> Man must be protected against himself. The so-called basic rights, or human rights, have been formulated in light of this insight. From the dawn of their first realization they contain a protest against the trend of the state towards omnipotence.[6]

## 2. The Ontological Status of Human Rights Claims

Unfortunately the classical Christian philosophy of rights has been widely denied in philosophy in the twentieth century. One can understand this problem by asking ontological questions such as "Do human rights really exist?" and "What is the source of human rights?" The answers one encounters to such questions are quite disturbing when viewed from within the classical Christian perspective. For example, Delos McKown writes, "The concept of inherent, natural

[6] Helmut Thielicke, *Theological Ethics, Vol 2: Politics*, edited and translated by William H. Lazareth, Grand Rapids 1979, pp. 230, 231.

human rights was at best a useful myth in the days of yore, but it was a myth nevertheless, with all the vulnerability that this implies. Accordingly, the idea of natural human rights should be demythologized."[7] If human rights are seen as a myth to be demythologized, our culture has truly fallen into metaphysical despair, without a theoretical foundation for government or justice.

In answer to the question, "Where do rights come from?" there are three types of answers. The first says that human rights come from the State or from Society. Variations on this theme are found both in western democratic philosophy and in Marxist or Communist philosophy. For example, Soviet Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, without doubt following the official communist line of thought, wrote "the rights and freedoms of citizens cannot and must not be used against our social system," clearly assuming that rights come from the government or the communist party.[8] Strangely, this is not very different from what one finds in the works of some western humanists. Paul Kurtz wrote, "rights have evolved out of the cultural, economic, political, and social structures that have prevailed."[9] In other words, rights come from society and/or government. The obvious problem with any theory that says that rights come society or the State is that what the State gives, the State can take, leaving people with the impression that they are the property of the State and without an effective way of talking about the fundamental injustice of many states. If one says rights come from the State or from society, the discussion of human rights has lost its fundamental purpose and function.

The second answer to where human rights come from is to say that rights come from the self. This is most commonly found in western liberalism. A typical representative philosopher, Michael Tooley, claims that rights are based on the interests of the individual, and that the interests of the individual are based on the consciousness and desires of that individual.[10] This type of individualism can be seen as the extreme opposite of the collectivism that says rights come from

[7] As quoted in David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times* 1991, p. 512.
[8] As quoted in Noebel, p. 533.
[9] Paul Kurtz, *Forbidden Fruit*, Buffalo 1988, p. 196. Quoted in Noebel, p. 510.
[10] See Michael Tooley, "In Defense of Abortion and Infanticide," in *Applying Ethics*, edited by Jeffrey Olen & Vincent Barry, 1992, pp. 176–185.

the State or from society. It too has serious philosophical problems. On the one hand, it leads to unlimited and irrational claims of rights, for once I say my rights come from my interests and desires, it is difficult to say which interests and desires do not lead to rights. Maybe I have a right to everything I desire. On the other hand, if I have no desires or interests, maybe I have no rights at all. This is why western liberalism cannot decide if I have unlimited rights or no rights.

In passing one should notice two serious problems that arise whether one claims rights come from the self or one claims rights come from the State/society. The first can be called "functional dehumanization." Both collectivism and individualism strongly tend to see the value of a person as rooted in some function or ability. Western liberal individualism tends to see the value of the person as rooted in a function such as the ability to communicate, the ability to reason, or the ability to be creative. Collectivist theories tend to see the value of the person as rooted in a societal function, such as the ability to be economically productive or to contribute to a particular type of society. The similarity between the two is that the value of the person is based in some function or ability. Rather consistently, both individualism and collectivism tend to think that a person who has lost or never had some particular function or ability is sub-human or a non-person, and therefore without all rights. People without the ability to function in a particular way as defined within the theory ruling over that society are then discarded, whether through a concentration camp, abortion, euthanasia, or some other means.

The second serious problem that arises from both individualist and collectivist theories of the origin or source of human rights is that human rights are seen as alienable. This is closely related to the problem described of functional dehumanization. When the American Declaration of Independence claimed that people are endowed by their Creator with *inalienable* rights, a very important claim was being made. This is that certain basic rights cannot be lost, whereas rights that are alienable can be lost or given away. In some varieties of seventeenth and eighteen century philosophy, the individual was seen as the source and owner of rights, but these rights could be given away in exchange for security, since the rights were alienable. Once these rights were given away to the sovereign, or so it was claimed,

the individual no longer had any rights over against the sovereign state, which begins to lay the theoretical foundation for totalitarianism.[11] This made the claim that some rights are inalienable very important.

The third type of answer to the question of the source of human rights is to say that rights come from God. This is, of course, the classical Christian point of view seen in the great Christian thinkers, based on the biblical account of humans being created in the image of God. This point of view is also seen, more or less, in many of the deist thinkers of the Enlightenment, who tended to selectively accept some ideas from classical Christianity, in so far as they related to political ethics.[12] This point of view claims that human rights come from God without regard to functions or abilities a person may or may not have, and that some basic rights cannot be taken away by the State or society. There is, thus, an ultimate guarantee of the value of each human life, such that an attack on a person is ultimately an attack on God. It is best to interpret the classical Christian understanding of the value of human life as a gift that comes from God that is therefore extrinsic to the person and not to talk as if humans have some inherent or intrinsic dignity or value. Helmut Thielicke coined the term "alien dignity" to describe how Christians should see the value of each human life.[13] Contained within this term is a reference to the classical Reformation theology of salvation that used the term "alien righteousness;" this term means that Christ's righteousness is accounted to the believer as a gift that comes from outside the person and is, in a sense, alien to a person's status as a sinner. In an analogous manner we see the dignity of each person as a gift that comes to each person because of how God sees that person.

History would indicate that one does not necessarily need to be an orthodox Christian to say that human rights come from God, even though the belief in the dignity and value of a person that comes to

[11] The classical representative of this point of view is Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651). In his philosophy, human rights arise from the self and are transferred to the Sovereign, showing that individualism and collectivism are not truly polar opposites, as is usually claimed.

[12] Good examples would be the political philosophy of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, which led to the American Declaration of Independence.

[13] Helmut Thielicke, *Politics,* pp. 305 and 393; also elsewhere throughout his works.

political expression in the discussion of human rights is rooted in the biblical belief system. The choice of Thomas Aquinas to include his discussion of human rights within his discussion of the natural moral law is an indication of his intuition that the awareness of the value and rights of people is rooted in God given practical reason as well as being rooted in the biblical account of creation. The awareness of the value and rights of humans given in nature is strengthened and renewed by the deeper awareness of the value and rights of humans given by grace in special revelation and redemption. For this reason it is possible for the perception of and concern for human rights to flow out from the believing community into the secular community. Nevertheless, the full explanation of the value and rights of men and women is given only in the biblical account of creation. And if western culture is in a status of metaphysical despair, without an account of human dignity, value, and rights, the time may be ripe for a theory of human rights firmly rooted in classical Christian thought to flow into the broader stream of western culture.

## 3. What Rights Do People Truly Have?

The discussion of human rights starts to become much more specific when one begins to ask what rights people really have. The answers one hears about what rights people have seem to be partly dependent on one's theory about the origin of those rights. Thus, writers who think that rights come from the State or from society will be inclined to think people have whatever rights the State or society provides, which tends to lead to very short, limited lists of human rights. And writers who claim that rights come from the self tend to write as if we have as many rights as we want, which tends to lead to wildly exaggerated lists of supposed rights, that may resemble a child's Christmas wish list. These opposing tendencies may make particular human rights claims sound arbitrary and therefore not worthy of serious consideration.

As an example of this problem one can look at the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Parts of this document seem to be worthy of serious consideration. Article 4 claims, "No one

shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." One can seriously hope that people of good will will say "of course." But article 25 claims, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." Statements like article 25 may easily discredit most claims to violations of human rights, for suddenly it sounds like there is a moral equivalency between a government not providing very high unemployment benefits and a government selling people (or allowing people to be sold) into slavery. Article 25 sounds like a wish list for a comfortable society that arises out of the assumption that we have as many rights as we want because rights come from the self. It bears repeating that such arbitrary claims to unlimited rights can easily discredit the entire effort to seriously consider human rights.

A good way to begin considering what rights people have is to go back to the view of the person in classical Christian natural law theory, in which classical human rights theory is rooted. Thomas Aquinas and the other classical Christian ethicists saw the person as naturally living with a number of moral obligations which are rooted in the requirements of practical reason and every day life. From this one can easily conclude that people have rights to do the things they are morally obligated to do. Our rights correspond to our moral duties. Specifically, people feel a moral obligation to speak, worship, assemble, work, raise a family, educate their children, and so on, leading to rights to do these things. These matters could be designated our "primary positive rights." In order to protect such primary rights, we need to have many specific legal arrangements and principles, matters like fair trials and a principle like "innocent until proven guilty." These could be called procedural rights that protect primary and basic rights. And the term "basic rights" could be used to designate those things that are presupposed in our moral obligations, things like rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Obviously, basic rights must be protected in order to allow people to exercise their primary positive rights.

Some further illustrations may be in order. In the realm of work, the result of this type of human rights theory would be the following: obviously a wise government will follow well considered economic policies that promote the availability of good jobs, but there is no basic injustice, no violation of human rights, unless government interferes with a person's moral obligation to work. In the realm of education: obviously a stable government and healthy economy require a well educated population, so the government has a legitimate interest in both elementary and higher education. But individuals, families, and local communities feel strong obligations to speak their mind, practice their religion, and educate their children in light of their own convictions and beliefs. Thus, there is a violation of human rights if any government carries out its proper obligations in a manner that prevents individuals and families from carrying out their moral obligations.

## Observations

This general approach to human rights theory is clearly rooted in Christian ethics, however it is a set of ideas that could probably be appropriated by people who may not share those Christian beliefs. It is possible that this way of talking about human rights could cross over from the Christian community into our wider political culture and provide additional clarity about one of the fundamental problems of politics.

# FÜR PROFESSOR HELLER ZU SEINEM 80. GEBURTSTAG

*„Die Botschaft Gottes, der sich niederneigt, oder sogar zum Menschen heruntersteigt, halte ich für das Wichtigste, dass als roter Faden durch die ganze Bibel geht und dass am sichtbarsten und am tiefsten das Alte und Neue Testament verbindet. Damit unterscheidet sich die Bibel von anderen heilligen Schriften, die den Menschen häufig Rat geben; wie man in den Himmel zu Gott, oder zu den Göttern kommen oder hinaufklettern kann; oder wie man sich auf der Erde den Himmel einrichten soll, auch wenn nur im Inneren des Menschens. Das ist, kurz gefasst, das wichtigste Ergebnis meiner Bibelarbeit, der ich mich 40 Jahre an der Evangelischen Fakultät und in der Kirche widmen durfte.“*

Im April des vergangenen Jahres feierte Prof. ThDr. Jan Heller – einer der bedeutenden tschechischen Theologen und Bibelwissenschaftler der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts – seinen 80. Geburtstag. Durch seine Lebensgeschichte gehört Jan Heller zu der starken und bedeutenden Theologengeneration, die sich im Laufe des II. Weltkrieges und kurz danach geformt hat. Ähnlich wie eine Reihe von anderen Theologen dieser Generationsgruppe, hat auch Jan Heller auf das ganze Leben die Theologie von Josef B. Souček und Slavomil C. Daňek orientiert – eine Theologie breit gebildeter Bibelwissenschaftler, die (obwohl jeder anders, aber in vielen Hinsichten ähnlich) die Grenzen ihrer Disziplinen überschreiteten, ausführliches Interesse an Theologie als Ganzes hatten und eine starke Beziehung zur Kirche auf ihrem konkreten geschichtlichen Weg pflegten.

Aus diesem Nest, dass sich in der Hälfte des letzten Jahrhunderts um Daněk und Souček bildete, kamen ein Paar große Projekte hervor. Zu den bedeutesten gehorte zuerst die s.g. Große Konkordanz zur Bibel aus Kralize, später dann die langjährige Teamarbeit an der s. g. Ökumenischen Übersetzung (für den alttestamentlichen Teil auch mit Erläuterungen). Jan Heller war nicht nur anwesend bei diesen Projek-

ten, aber er trug mit bedeutendem Teil bei. Der Apparat der terminologischen Ekvivalenten in der Großen Konkordanz sind Fruchte seines Fleißes und seiner Erudition. An der okumenischen Übersetzung beteiligte er sich als einziger an der Arbeit der beiden Übersetzungskommissionen, er arbeitete wie an der Übersetzung des Alten Testaments, so auch an der Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments.

Warum interessiert sich Jan Heller so viel für die Bibel, was führt ihn dazu – und vor allem, was verspricht sich ein Theologe von einer so orientierten Arbeit? Die Antwort auf diese nur sichtbar einfache Frage publiziert, erklärt und drügt Heller (vielmals und in verschiedenen Weisen) aus. Im Kern der Sache ist sein Schreiben Ausdruck eines klassischen Reformzuganges zur Frage der Erscheinung, der Schrift und Erkenntnis Gottes. *Sola scriptura* und *Simplex cognitio Dei* – nicht als historische Stichwörter oder beschreibende Etiketten, aber als Organisationsprinzipien theologischen Denkens, dass auch auf dem breitesten Feld Religionserscheinungen, kirchliche Traditionen, modernes theologisches Schaffen oder in der Kritik der Religionen eine sichtbare Orientierung ermöglicht.

Jeder Fachmann ist in der methodischen Hinsicht im beträchlichem Maße immer ein Kind seiner Zeit. Wie anders, jeder Schuler lernt von seinen Lehrern, später konsultiert und polemisiert er mit seinen Zeitgenossen. Jan Heller erarbeitete sich zu einem ausgezeichneten Bibelwissenschaftler in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahren. Im Gegensatz zu seinem Lehrer Slavomil C. Daněk, der sich das ganze Leben mit dem Zugang der s. g. religiös-geschichtlichen Schule ausglich, und im Gegensatz zu Miloš Bič, der die Anlässe von Daněk in eine kultisch-rituale Perspektive ausarbeitete, so wie sie ungefähr in der Hälfte des letzten Jahrhunderts vor allem skandinavische alttestamentliche Wissenschaftler profilierten, schuf Jan Heller seinen Weg vor allem im Kontakt mit den Zugängen der Schule der Traditionsgeschichte oder der Schule der geschichtlichen Darbietung. In dem nachkriegerischen Europa wurde diese Richtung von Gerhard von Rad, Hans W. Wolff, Walter Zimmerli, später von Werner H. Schmidt und einer Reihe von weiteren durchgesetzt. Diese Forscher interessierten sich nicht mehr nur für die Fragen der Rekonstruktion der ältesten Schichten der Bibelstoffentstehung oder für die möglichen Formen der kultischen Feiern, in denen vielleicht bestimmte Tra-

ditionstypen ihren Grund haben könnten. Sie richteten ihre Forschungsaufmerksamkeit zum Prozes des allmählichen Tradieren des Stoffes als Gebiet, das in grundsätzlicher Weise, gewöhnlich in mehreren Schichten, die Form der Bibelaussage gab. Einen großen Einfluss in ihren Ansichten bekamen die Bruchaugenblicke der Geschichte. Einerseits als Grund zu einem gründlichen Umbau und einer Umstellung übernommenen Religionstraditionen und weiter auch zum Bilden neuer Traditionen. Das Grundsätzliche an der Bibelaussage ist dann aber nicht im Anfang gegeben (*in principiis*); das grundsätzliche und wichtige (also das prinzipielle) ist nötig eher in inneren Verhältnissen des langen Bildungsprozeses und in der Stoffverfeinerung zu suchen, durch die die Bibelaussage durchging. Eher als das älteste Teil der Tradition oder die älteste Glaubensformulierung sollten wir das Prinzip innerer Koherenz und den Grund der Kontinuität des biblischen „Kerygma" quer durch die geschichtliche Brüche suchen.

Dieser methodische Zugang ermöglichte Heller die Auffassung des Traditionsprozeses von Daněk neu zu ergreifen und zu entwickeln. Schon Daněk hat im Gegenteil zu den positiven und evolutionsgerichteten Historiographen seiner Zeit betont, das der alttestamentliche Stoff „aus dem Titel der Religion" entstand und sich entfaltete. Heller benutzt eine andere Terminologie. Er spricht eher über kerygmatische Funktionen, über eine botschafliche Rücksicht, aber die Grundintention ist gleich: das bewegliche Prinzip der Tradition und das bestimmende Kriterium seines Formen ist das Interesse der biblischen Zeugen wie es nur möglich ist, angemessen und aktuell die Botschaft zu bezeugen – nicht nur treu das äusserliche historische Bild der behandelten Geschichten oder Themen zu ergreifen; und auch nicht nur die innere Entwicklung des religiösen Denkens des altzeitlichen Israels zu dokumentieren. Die botschaftliche Funktion ist für die Entstehung und Bildung der Bibelstoffe das grundsätzliche und bestimmende. Ganz gleich sollte sie auch richtungsweisend für ihre Auslegung und Interpretation in unserem heutigen Kontext sein.

Hier sind wir im methodischen Kern des großen Abenteuers, zu dem uns das Schreiben von Heller einladet. Es geht ihm darum, diese innere Dynamik der biblischen Tradition in der biblischen Nachricht

auseinanderzukennen und sie zu begreifen. Er bemüht sich mit seiner fachlichen Arbeit in diesen Prozes zu steigen und im Zusammenklang mit seiner kerygmatischen Betonung – natürlich mit aller Kritik, aber auch rückgängig unter der Kritik des Wortes – den Sinn des Textes auszulegen und zu interpretieren, so dass es uns lebendig anspricht. Es klingt einfach, aber jeder, der jemals versucht hat in diese Dienste einzutreten, weiß, wieviel harte Arbeit es bringt und was fur ein offenes Ende sie im Schluss hat. Am breiten Anklang der Texte, Auslegungen, Vorträgen oder Predigten von Heller ist jedoch sichtbar, dass ehrliche theologische Arbeit nicht nur einer harten Ordnung ähnlich sein mag, aber dass sie auch ihre Verprechen hat und das sie zum Segen wird.

Wir wünschen deshalb Jan Heller auch in die nächsten Tage und Jahre beste Gesundheit und viel Freude aus dem Wort, das auf Ewigkeit auferstehт (Es 40,8).

*Martin Prudký, Prague, Übersetzung Eva Flachowsky*

# ICH BIN ZU GERING

*Jan Heller, Prag*

Gen. 32,10 (M + 11): Herr, ich bin zu gering aller Barmherzigkeit und aller Wahrheit, die du an deinem Knecht getan hast; denn ich hatte nicht mehr als diesem Stab, als ich hier über den Jordan ging, und nun sins aus mir zwei Lager geworden.

So könnte ich mit Jakob sagen: als ich hinausging in die Wirren der Hugend und die Stürme der Zeit, hatte ich nur den Stab des Wortes Gottes, jetzt aber, wo ich heimkehre von meiner Pilgerfahrt, habe ich außer einer fast so großen Familie wie die Jakobs noch zwei Lager, die Fakultät und die Kirche. Sie sind freilich nicht mein, das weiß ich gut, aber ich gehöre zu ihnen und sie zu mir. Es sind gute Lager. Und auf meinem ganzen Weg, auch wenn ich des öfteren durh die Wüste menschlicher Schwachheit und Angst ging, wenn dien menschlichen Augen Hilfe fern zu sein schien, umgab mich doch ständig, überwiegend allerdings verborgen, die Barmharzigkeit und Wahrheit Gotter genau so, wie es Jakob bekennt.

Gottes Barmherzigkeit (*chesed*) ist genauer Gotter Treue, mit der er zu seinem Bund mit uns steht. Und Gottes Wahrheit bedeutet dann, daß er alles erfüllt, was er versprochen hat, wenn auch manchmal anders als wir selbst erwarten, vor allem so, daß er alles Böse für uns zum Guten wendet. Ich versuche kurz zu erzählen, wie sich das auf meinem Lebensweg offenbarte.

Wie Jakob wurde ich von einer zahlreichen Familie auf meinem Weg begleitet. Meine leibe Frau war mir all die Jahre hindurch eine treue Gehilfin (nach Gen 2,20) und hat mir den Freiraum für meine Arbeit geschaffen. Zwei tüchtige Söhne und sieben hoffnungsvolle Enkelkinder und drei Urenkelkinder sind ein großer Reichtum. Doch möchte ich hier die Gaben Gotter hervorheben, die meinen Lebensweg auf noch andere, besonderse Weise charakterisieren.

Eine besondere Gabe Gottes war für mich erstens eine zarte Gesundheit, schon von Jugend auf. Allergische Beschwerden, vor allem

mit der Atmung, hatte ich von meinem vierten Lebensjahr an. Oft ging es und geht es mir nicht gut. Zeiten des Wohlbefindens im eigenen Leib werden immer seltener. Kaum ein Tag, an dem ich nicht an mein eigenes Ende denke. Das sieht zwar böse aus, aber es kann zum Guten gewendet werden. Wie?

Während andere von einem vorwitzigen „Hans Dampf in allen Gassen" durch ihr Leben begleitet werden und von einer berauschenden Täuschung, wurden mir das Wissen um die eigene Begrenztheit und das ständige Versagen alles menschlichen Elans als Führer gegeben. Und das ist eine kostbare Gabe. Sie schützt zwar nicht vor der Versuchung, vor den Vgrsuchen, dem eigenen Elend durch die Flucht in verschiedene Rauschzustände zu entkommen, natürlich auch in religiöse, aber von allen luziferischen Ausflügen in problematische Höhen (Jes 14) kehre ich ziemlich schnell auf den Erdboden zurück. Manchmal habe ich mich dabei verletzt, aber die blauen Flecken waren zum Guten.

Solch ständig neues Durchleben des eigenen Elends und des bitteren Ringens mit den eigenen Gefühlen lehrte mich wahrscheinlich allerlei, manchmal Ironie bis hin zum schwarzen Humor, aber manchmal auch etwas, was ich mir selbst meistens nicht einmal bewußt machte, was aber andere um mich herum offensichtlich manchmal fühlten. Und sie kamen, oft anders, als ich erwartete, und oft auch mehr, als ich mir wünschte.

Und damit hängt die andere Not und zugleich auch das andere Privileg meines Lebens zusammen: Der, der den Menschen zur Gemeinschaft bestimmt hat, erlaubte mir fast niemals, allein zu sein und etwas auszuruhen in der Gemütlichkeit eines müden Mit-sich-allein-Seins. Wenn ich auch manchmal da hinein flüchtete und freilich auch Zeiten beklemmender Isolierung weit von Gott und den Menschen erlebte, wurde es mir doch niemals erlaubt, lange darin zu verweilen. Menschen kamen wieder und wieder, ja oft drängten sie sich geradezu in meine Nähe, und zwar vor allem die auf manche Art selbst Gezeichneten, als ob sie ahnten, daß ich sie von meinem eigenen Elend her besser verstehen würde. Einige waren mir schwer erträglich, und ich habe sie abgeschüttelt. Auch sie blieben jedoch in mir als ein lebendiger Vorwurf des Gewissens. Mit anderen versuchte ich ein Stück zu gehen. Diese schwierigen Briefe und langen, oft mich

erschöpfenden Gespräche! Und doch war es eine kostbare Schule Gottes, wenn mich die Kommenden in ihre Nöte mitnahmen, wohin ich selbst überhaupt nicht wollte, und wenn sie mich dadurch von den meinen und überhaupt von mir selbst frei machten… Wie belanglos erschienen mir dann oft meine Beschwerden im Vergleich zu dem, was sie belastete! Ja, solche Bedrängnis bzw. Umklammerung durch das Elend anderer aknn eine kostbare Art Gottes sein, ein selbstsüchtiges Herz vom Kreisen um sich selbst und von seiner Anspruchshaltung zu befreien.

Und nun das dritte: Das wäre alles freilich nicht möglich, wenn mir nicht schon von Jugend an als grundlegende Gabe vergönnt wäre, mich bei meinem stolpernden Wandel auf den Stab des Wortes Gottes zu stützen. *Maqqel* ist im Hebräischen nicht nur der Pilgerstab (Gen 32,11; Ex 12,11), sondern auch der zur Wahrsagung benutzte (Hos 4,12 Rabdomantie) Stab. Nach Hosea befragen die Heiden den fallenden Stab, wogegen das Volk des Bundes sich unter den Stab des Wortes Gottes neigt.

Wie ich dazu gekommen bin? Hier ist wahrscheinlich eine Bemerkung darüber am Platz, warum ich mich für das Studium der Theologie entschieden habe. Ich muß gestehen: Es war keine direkte, persönliche Anrede Gottes. Es gibt Christen und Prediger, die können aufrichtig sagen: An dem und dem Tag, in jener Stunde, hörte ich Gottes Stimme, die mir sagte: Sei mein Zeuge, mein Prediger, und studiere Theologie. So war das bei mir nicht. Dieser mein Weg war eher so etwas wie eine *via negationis* als ein *hodos apofatike* der alten Väter. Es war mir nämlich gegeben, wahrzunehmen, ja zu spüren, welcher Weg nicht weitergeht oder in den Abgrund führt. Schon als Kind, obwohl sehr sorgfältig erzogen, im bürgerlichen Sinn (Vater und Mutter waren Lehrer), ahnte ich etwas von der Macht der Dämonen des Verderbens.[1] Nach der Konfirmation durch den Katzenjammer meist künstlerisch-ästhetischer Art kam ich zu der Überzeugung, daß, wenn mein Dasein Sinn haben sollte, also wenn es

[1] Es war damals der zweite Weltkrieg, den ich – zwar als Junge, aber schon sehr bewußt – erlebte. 1925 geboren, war ich 1939 vierzehnjährig, bei dem Kriegsende zwanzigjährig. Vater entlassen, zwei Onkel in KZ, keine gute Zeit zu einem billig optimistischen Wachstum. Kein Wunder, daß mich damals die Einstellungen der harten Existenzialisten ansprachen.

Gott gäbe, es irgendein Wort geben müsse, in welchem die Antwort aug alle schmerzhaften Fragen einer bedrängten Seele enthalten ist. Schon hier irgendwo sind vermutlich die Wurzeln meiner späteren Neigung zu dem dialogischen Buber und meiner viel späteren antwortenden Hypothesen zur Entstehung der Religionen.[2] Ich suchte danach, wo dieses Worte zu vernehmen sei. Und da wurde es mir geschenkt – in Pilsen in der evangelischen Jugend in der Sexta des Gymnasiums –, es aus der Heiligen Schrift zu hören. Es ist das Wort, das am Anfang bei Gott und das Gott selbst war, natürlich Jesus, allerdings als der Erlöser Christus, der in der ganzen Bibel als die Verkörperung des Erbarmen Gottes zu uns kommt. Das ist der „Stab des Wortes," der fallend die Richtung weist, und auf den ich mich dann bei meinem weisteren stolpernden Wandel stützen konnte. Ich muss hier bekennen, daß ich das nicht sehr eifrig und konzentriert getan habe, daß mir der kostbare Stab des Wortes gelegentlich aus der Hand fiel, und dann ich auch selbst und verletzte mich. Aber – und das ist bei dem heutigen retrospektiven Blick wichtig – ich verletzte mich immer zu meinem Nutzen. Weil ich dann erneut zu dem Stab griff, und das dankbar und gern, und bereitwilliger die verführerische Betrachtung des eigenen strammen Schrittes ablegte. Ich denke sogar, daß Gott die Seinen manchmal aus Liebe in Sünde fallen läßt, um sie so – durch Leiden, Schmerz und Buße – von etwas noch Schlimmerem, nämlich von religiöser Selbstgefälligkeit zu befreien.

Ich muß hier auch dafür danken, daß Menschen ohne jede religiöse Selbstgefälligkeit unter meinen Lehrern waren. An erster Stelle steht da Slavomil Daněk, der sich dem Suchen nach der Wahrheit ohne jede Rücksichtnahme auf den persönlichen Vorteil widmete, „es falle zu, wem es zufällt," auch wenn wir am Ende mit leeren Händen dastehen. Er konnte es, weil er an eben die Wahrheit glaubte, die alle Götzen und allen Aberglauben, alle kirchlichen Konventionen und alle historisch-kritischen Konstruktionen zerstört. Ich bin in meinem

[2] Die „antwortende" oder wohl besser die responsive Hypothese soll zu der üblichen „Entwicklungshypothese" der Positivisten und ihrer Nachfolger und zu der „degenerativen Hypothese" von W. Schmidt ein Gegenstück bilden. Nach der „responsiven Hypothese" entsteht die Religion immer neu, wenn der Mensch, gedrängt durch das Bewußtsein seiner Endlichkeit, sich bemüht, die Frage nach dem Sinn des Lebens zu beantworten. Auch die Verneinung des Sinnes ist eine Glaubensaussage und deshalb die Wiege der Religion.

Leben nie wieder einem Menschen begegnet, vom dem ich sagen könnte, daß er so scharf gedacht un zugleich so stark geglaubt hätte.

Und eine weitere kostbare Gabe: Es wurde mir geschenkt, mit Hilfe einiger Lehrer, allen voran Karl Barth, verhältnismäßig schnell zu erkennen, daß die ganze Schrift vom Evangelium durchdrungen ist, daß Gottes Gesetz nicht vorrangig das Wort eines vernichtenden Gerichts ist, sondern ein Instrument kostbarer Hilfe aus dem Gericht. Rettung ist da freilich Gericht, aber gerade Gericht ist auch die Rettung. So wurde das Evangelium für mich zum Bestandteil der Tora – es Wegweisers in das verheißene Land und in das Neue Zeitalter. Wer den Weg geht, den dieser Wegweiser zeigt, dem gilt vor allem die Verheißung dessen, wohin er führt, dessen, was darauf steht: „Das Land der Verheißung – 40 Jahre." Das ist Barths Priorität des Evangeliums vor dem Gesetz. Nur, wer sich in der Wüste der Welt eigene Abkürzungen und „Kurzschlüsse" sucht, geht dürstend nach Liebe und Hoffnung zugrunde. Und so tat sich mir als weitere Gabe der Weg des Mitpilgerns mit Israel auf, und die Wokensäule war in Sichtweite.

Und nun will ich von der größten Freude meines Lebens erzählen, einer Freude ohne Enttäuschung und bitteren Nachgeschmack. Das ist (nach Mt 13,52) die Freude „eines Lehrers im Königreich der Himmel, ähnlich dem Hausvater, der aus seinem Schatz Altes und Neues hervorholt". Ich finde es wunderbar, daß der ursprüngliche Text hier lautet „jeder Schriftgelehrte, gelehrt zum Königreich der Himmel". Es gibt also nicht nur untaugliche Schriftgelehrte, sondern auch tüchtige, wenn sie Gelehrte des himmlischen Königreichs sind. Nichts anderes wollte ich und will ich sein – zumindest in meinen klaren Momenten. Und mein Wunsch wurde mir erfüllt, ich durfte zwei Lager weiden – allerdings tat ich das sehr ungeschickt und mangelhaft.[3]

[3] Und doch blieb es nicht nur bei der Wirkung an der Evangelischen theologischen Fakultät, wo ich seit 1950 gelesen hatte. Als man 2003 die früher konservative Katholische Fakultät der Karlsuniversität rekonstruiert hatte, wurde ich – natürlich schon als Ruheständler – dort hin berufen und mit einem kleinen Lehrauftrag beauftragt, und zwar als erster evangelischer Theologe in der bewegten Geschichte der Karlsuniversität in Prag. Das ist in unseren Umständen ein wichtiges Zeichen der fortschreitenden ökumenischen Gesinnung, mindestens auf dem akademischen Boden. Unsere theologischen Fakultäten (der Lehrkörper) treten jetzt regelmässig zusammen und beteiligen sich gemeinsam an einigen wissenschaftlichen Projekten. Das macht mir große Freude.

Und zu dem allen noch das letzte: Ich habe es schon erwähnt: Nicht nur den Saum der Herrlichkeit durfte ich erfahren und erblikken, sondern auch weiden durfte ich, weiden von der Kanzel und vom Beichtstuhl aus, wenn auch evangelisch nichtinstitutionell, und weiden vom Katheder und vom Schreibtisch aus, wie es dem Lehrer gebührt. Das war mir immer Vorrecht und Freude. Beides hat sich dann durchdrungen zu einer Arbeit. Die Erfahrung des Lehrstuhls half auf der Kanzel, und die Erfahrung der Kanzel auf dem Katheder. Es gehört zusammen. Ich erinnere mich – heute mit Schmunzeln – wie wir den Genossen Referenten, unseren ägyptischen Aufsehern des alten Regimes, erklärten, wenn sie uns und besonders mich nicht auf die Kanzel lassen wollten – daß das doch die Verbindung von Theorie und Praxis ist, die sie haben möchten! Wenn ich Funktion und administratives Handeln, Statistiken, Prüfungen und ähnliches, lassen konnte und mich an einen biblischen Text setzen, war das immer wie das Eintreten in ein warmes Bad. Ich gestehe, ich bin ein ständig improvisierender Zauderer, ich habe in meinem Leben den richtigen und weisen Grundsatz „nulla dies sine linea“ nicht konsequent durchgehalten, wenn ich auch den Studenten dazu geraten habe. Aber oft, wenn mir schwer ums Herz war, schlug ich einen hebräischen Text auf, am häufigsten die Psalmen. Ich fand mich selbst wieder – oder wurde gefunden – im Elend derer, die dort klagen. Und mit ihnen und von ihrem Ort her sah ich neu die Herrlichkeit der Hoffnung. Und dann war es mir möglich, es weiterzugeben. Daraus sind meine Verkündigung und verschiedene persönliche Exkurse an der Fakultät entstanden, die dazu beigetragen haben, daß aus meinen Zuhörern zumindest so etwas geworden ist wie meine Kinder. Ich weiß, daß alle, die verstehen und durch mich etwas empfangen konnten, mir gegeben worden sind. Nicht alle Kinder sind gleich gut geraten, sicher auch durch meine Schuld. Und doch, wenn ich mich umschaue in den Praffhäusern der evangelischen Kirche oder vielmehr der Kirchen bei uns, so ist dort fast überall jemand, dem ich begegnet und mit dem ich wenigstens ein Stück des Weges unter dem Wort gegangen bin, und der auch ein Stück dessen weiterträgt, was mir am Herzen lag und bis heute am Herzen liegt.

Und an der Fakultät ist es ähnlich. Vielleicht läßt es sich mit dem Bild vom Staffettenläufer ausdrücken, der den Stab schon abgegeben

hat und noch ein Weilchen von der Wechselbank aus zusehen darf und sich vom Herzen freut, daß die, denen er den Stab übergeben hat, eine noch bessere Zeit machen als er selbst.

Ach ich bin viel zu wenig, zu rühmen seinen Ruhm, der Herr allein ist König, eich eine welke Blum. Jedoch weil ich gehöre gen Zion in sein Zelt, ist's billig, daß ich mehre sein Lob vor aller Welt.

# DANIEL ALEXANDER NEVAL

(30 May 1970–3 June 2005)

It is with great regret that we mark the death of Daniel Neval, an enthusiastic supporter of the ETF in Prague and these pages.

Daniel spent the 1996–1997 Academic Year in Prague, taking a break from his studies at the University of Zürich. Coming from a Czech family who had emigrated to Poland during the persecutions after the Battle of the White Mountain (Bílá Hora) Daniel came in search of his roots. He knew his family's more recent past as, until his grandfather's time, it had a long history of offering its sons to serve as ministers of the Church of the Bohemian Brethren (Jednota Bratrská) in their Polish exile. What Daniel found in Prague was to change the course of his life – he also came into contact with the greatest figure of the first wave of the Bohemian exiles – Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius).

Popularly known outside as his native land as a pedagogue, Daniel discovered Komenský as a theologian and, as a consequence, changed the course of his studies devoting his academic energies to the rehabilitation of Comenius as theologian. In a brief seven years, Daniel published some twenty-five articles on Comenius in German and English – his doctoral and habilitation work is still in press. This constitutes the largest published corpus of work by a single author on the theological work of Comenius in any language and, for the first time, makes him accessible for study and evaluation alongside the theologians of the Second Reformation.

Daniel's enthusiasm for his spiritual Bohemian past was also showered on its contemporary Czech institutions – particularly the ETF where he was a regular lecturer in the programme for foreign students, teaching in both German and English. In 1999, Daniel was elected President of the Association of Friends of the Protestant Theological Faculty. As with all things, he threw himself into its work with great enthusiasm, organising the academic programme for its annual autumnal meeting and finding speakers from both within and without the Republic. Papers from these meetings have appeared

in the pages of this journal and are a witness to Daniel's work on behalf of the faculty (see e. g. the special issue of Communio Viatorum XLIV 2002: Religion without Confession? The Significance of Confessions for Church and Society, Papers related to the Conference of the Association of Friends of the Protestant Theological Faculty 9th–11th November 2001).

Daniel's academic interests were not confined to the Bohemian Reformation alone. His linguistic skills qualified him for a research project for the Swiss government on how Switzerland was perceived in Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War – a period during which his native land lost much of its perceived "innocence" in Daniel's eyes. This work resulted in a number of publications including the book: *Wenn die Russen kommen* (Brno, 2004). Czechoslovak political issues were also fascinating for Daniel as can be seen in his book: *Vorsehung und Auftrag. Politik und Geschichte bei Edvard Beneš* (Brno, 2002).

During the most recent past, Daniel was serving as Secretary of the Committee of the Czech Bishops' Conference and the Czech Ecumenical Council of Churches for the Study of Recatholisation of Bohemia in the16th till the 18th Century, where he saw himself as a part of a process which move beyond the wounds left by the wrongs of the past. His enthusiasm, however, was often frustrated by deep-seated historical animosities that remained beyond his ken.

Daniel died while out running near his Czech home in Kladno. Those who attended his memorial service held at St. Martin-in-the-Wall were astounded by the number and breath of the friendships he left behind including his fiancée Eva Slavíčková to whom Daniel was engaged to be married last September.

May he rest in peace.

*David Holeton, Prague*

## Modern Idolatry

Bruce Ellis Benson, *Graven Ideologies. Nietzsche, Derrida and Marion on Modern Idolatry*, Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 2002, ISBN 0-8308-2679-3, 243 pp.

In his book *Graven Ideologies* Bruce Benson focuses on what is called "the religious turn of French phenomenology." He opens his monograph with the observation that themes like idolatry, God, negative theology and religious language appear with increasing frequency in the works of contemporary French philosophers. Benson focuses especially on E. Levinas, J. Derrida and J. L. Marion.

In the introductory chapter Benson describes one of the most serious problems of Husserlian phenomenology, which is viewed by the above mentioned thinkers (Levinas, Derrida, Marion) as betraying a potentially "idolatrious" tendency of Husserlian (and Cartesian) epistemological outlook. Detecting and trying to overcome this idolatrious tendency of classical phenomenology (and in fact of much Western philosophy in general) was one of the important factors which gave rise to the "religious turn of French phenomenology," i. e. to focusing on questions which have traditionally belonged to the domain of theology.

Now what can be idolatrious about phenomenology, asks Benson. The problem lies in one of the axioms of Husserlian epistemology, namely in "the immanence of phenomena to consciousness." Benson describes the problem as follows: The starting point of Husserl's philosophical method is the Cartesian ego, which is the basis, the unshakeable foundation of all possible knowledge. This epistemological "turn to the subject" (suggested by Descartes and taken over by Kant) includes one important vulnerability: the thinking subject, i. e. the intending consciousness, is in a certain sense put in the place of God. All reality is ultimately derived from the *ego cogito*, the world depends for its existence on the subject's perception and/or *Sinngebung*. So Husserlian phenomenology, which follows the epistemological trajectory of Descartes and Kant, is in danger of becoming solipsistic.

There is one common idea in Levinas, Derrida and Marion, as Benson suggests: they all criticize (in different ways) this major prob-

lem of classical phenomenology, and they all attempt (in different ways) to preserve the otherness and exteriority of reality (the world, other human beings, God), or in other words, to save the transcendence of phenomena, to prevent the intending consciousness from absorbing the entire world into itself.

In the following chapter, Benson focuses on the little known fact that this major problem of modern phenomenology (and in a certain sense, of all philosophy) had been foreshadowed by F. Nietzsche. Yet, Nietzsche doesn't start with Descartes. He sees the entire project of Western philosophy as a series of attempts to master all reality by a man-made conceptual schema, by an all-encompassing logos, by an all-inclusive ideology. Nietzsche believes that since Plato all philosophers in a sense usurp the place of God. Benson shows by a detailed analysis of Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* (and other writings) that this thinker believed the basic aspiration of philosophy to be idolatrious hubris, an attempt to create a world (and, indeed, to create God) in man's own image. The most essential aim of the great founders of Western philosophical thought is attaining *episteme*, i. e. establishing (epistemologically) a controllable, safe, ordered reality (including the ultimate reality, i. e. God). In Nietzsche's view philosophers like Plato are great dogmaticians, they engage (as they search for *episteme*) in creating "conceptual mummies" i. e. intellectual idols, which they substitute for reality. They create intellectual representations of reality which speak more about themselves than about reality as it is *an sich*.

Benson shows how Nietzsche's penetrating insights apply to the classical correspondence notion of truth as *adaequtio rei et intellectus*. Even this very definition betrays the aspiration of the knowing consciousness to be equal with the known object. As Aristotle says, the knowing consciousness has to be coextensive with the thing known, it has to be "of the same magnitude." Or as Hegel says, perfect knowing implies being one with the thing known. Which is how Husserl's thesis about the "immanence of phenomena to the consciousness" can and has been interpreted.

Now how does this all apply to our knowledge of God, asks Benson. It seems obvious that we simply cannot apply the correspondence notion of true knowledge (*adaequatio*) to knowing God. Benson

speaks in this context of the "idolatry of *adaequatio*." There will always be a lack of equivalence or adequation between me and God (between human *noesis* and divine *noema*) indeed even between me and another human being, says Benson. If we understand Nietzsche's famous words about the death of God in this context, i. e. if Nietzsche means the God of metaphysics, the abstract God of the philosophers, the conceptual idol of speculative theology, then believers have a good reason to agree with Nietzsche. If "death of God" means the death of a man-made conceptual mummy, then we should celebrate that death with joy. This is certainly, as Benson points out, how Heidegger understands Nietzsche's claim that God is dead (i. e. God as *ens realissimum*).

In the last part of the chapter on Nietzsche, Benson points to several interesting parallels between him and Jesus, between Nietzsche's and Jesus' view of morality and law, and also between Paul's warning against "vain philosophy" (Col 2,8) and Nietzsche's criticism of the Western philosophical project.

In the following chapter Benson returns back from Nietzsche to recent French philosophy. He shows how Levinas goes beyond Nietzsche by insisting that conceptual idolatry of the all-absorbing philosopher's mind is not only mistaken or self-deceptive, more importantly, it is morally wrong. The greatest failure of Western philosophy, suggests Levinas, is of an ethical nature. For it doesn't respect the alterity of the other, the other becomes necessarily part of the self (in the knowing process). Levinas argues that as long as the other is mediated by my own categories, it is in effect assimilated into the same, it is muted. Against this epistemological violence, Levinas suggests what he calls the "ethics of hospitality." Instead of domesticating the other by our conceptual framework, we must allow the other to supply its own logos. Instead of shaping the other into our own image by imposing our a priori conceptual schemas on it, or by the monologuous process of *Sinngebung*, we must welcome the other simply as other.

In a similar way, Derrida speaks of the necessity to deconstruct every supposed *episteme*, i. e. every allegedly possessed knowledge, or truth about reality. Truth is "messianic," it is "always not yet, still to come." This is what he calls *differance*, the iconoclastic herme-

neutics of suspicion towards every alleged final truth. In this anti-idolatrous, anti-ideological tendency *differance* is very close to negative theology (as Derrida himself says). This is how we should understand, Benson suggests, the so-called religious turn in Derrida's late thinking. He did not actually deny the existence of a referent for religious utterances (according to his own words, he prayed regularly): he just rejected (deconstructed) in principle every premature conceptual representation of the Ultimate, i. e. God, similarly as the proponents of negative theology. He always insisted (like Levinas) that the world, human beings, God, are not reducible into the transcendental ego and its intellectual creations, i. e. they cannot be possessed by the knowing consciousness or contained in it.

The final chapter of Benson's book deals primarily with the writings of one of Derrida's pupils, J. L. Marion. Marion investigates the consequences of Levinas' and Derrida's criticism of the (above described) epistemological idolatry/hubris of Western philosophy for theology. He agrees in principle with Nietzsche's diagnosis of the essentially idolatrous tendency of much Western philosophy and points out the ever present danger of conceptual idolatry in every philosophical system. Benson focuses on Marion's attempt to ground (or "save") the transcendence, independence (exteriority) of phenomena in relation to the intending consciousness. Marion insists that we must distinguish between idols, i. e. creations of the Cartesian ego, and icons, i. e. phenomena, which by their very nature point beyond themselves. They cannot (in principle!) be fully absorbed by consciousness. They function as a "trace" (the Levinasian term, which Marion uses), or as windows through which we encounter something essentially other, i. e. something that transcends the immanence of consciousness. Icons are necessarily limited representations, but exactly by their obvious limits they point beyond, to what they represent.

In a similar sense, Marion speaks about "saturated phenomena," i. e. those phenomena, which cannot be "tamed" by the perceiving mind, they are "saturated with otherness." An example of a saturated phenomenon, which Levinas often uses, is human face. Marion (who is a practising Roman Catholic) suggests the sacraments as another example of saturated phenomena. By their very nature the sacraments

point beyond themselves to what they represent. At the same time they mediate the encounter with the divine (i. e. essentially "other") reality they stand for.

What is the consequence of this distinction for talking about God, asks Marion? In theology, we have to (in a sense) break from the philosophical logos, we have to look for God outside metaphysics (as Nietzsche suggested), indeed, "God outside Being." Talking about God is the paradoxical and impossible task of conceptualizing otherness (without turning it into an idol). It is only possible when we reject the Cartesian *ego cogito* as the foundation of all epistemology. Marion suggests instead what the phenomenologists call pure givenness (*Gegebenheit* in German, *donation* in French). Prior to Husserlian transcendental ego, prior to Heideggerian *Dasein*, there is a deeper foundation, which Marion names (theologically) "a call," which establishes me from the outside, which displaces me as a centre of my world, which is a sheer gift. I am not the foundation, I am founded by the Other. Language, in a similar sense, is not the instrumental property of the Cartesian *cogito*, it is a gift. Similarly knowledge is always a gift, it is never self-grounding, never a self-sufficient *episteme*. Only when I realize this, can I humbly wait for "God who reveals Himself apart from human logos." Only if we realize this can theology be iconic, not idolatrous (ideological). This is Marion's challenge to theologians.

Benson, who agrees with most of what Marion says, also offers some critical questions concerning his attempt to break from the solipsistic/idolatrious tendency of phenomenology (and much Western philosophy): icons morph into idols, as is well-known. We must not idolize even the authentic past representations of the Other (i. e. religious tradition). But how can new phenomena (or even new revelations) make any sense for us, unless they are interpreted on a particular horizon, in the context of a particular tradition? Without a particular horizon (provided by a particular tradition), phenomena have no meaning. Yet, if our tradition becomes the interpretive grid for every icon, for every saturated phenomenon, we will have to resist the temptation of shaping it to our own image, of making an idol out of it. We need a logos, a tradition, a language to make sense of anything (even negative theology is a decidedly Christian negative

theology). Yet our tradition, our logos, our language, our conceptual framework tend towards absorbing potentially all reality into a coherent whole, into a conceptual mummy, into an ideology, into an idolatrious system. This is the dilemma of postmodern epistemology, the dilemma which Marion's insightful distinctions have not removed, that is Benson's final conclusion.

Benson's book is an excellent analysis of the so-called religious turn of recent French phenomenology. But even more, it is an excellent exposition of the postmodern intellectual situation, particularly in the so much discussed area of epistemology. Benson shows how the postmodern epistemological paradigm contains many challenges to the Christian faith, but, more importantly, how it resonates in many respects with the epistemological presuppositions of the Judeo-Christian tradition (in its sharp criticism of idolatry).

Benson's style is lucid and reader-friendly, he explains complex ideas with clarity and creativity. He convincingly shows the importance of thinkers like Nietzsche, Levinas, Derrida and Marion for modern Christian theology. His book can be highly recommended as a guide to the postmodern intellectual landscape and a rich resource for theological reflection.

*Pavel Hošek, Prague*

## An Introduction to Rabbinic Midrash

Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and the Interpretation of Scripture. Introduction into the Rabbinic Midrash*. Hendrickson Publishers, Massachussets, 2004, ISBN 1-56563-706-2

From one of Judaism's leading and prolific authorities comes this new addition and contribution to our understanding of the body of Rabbinic literature written in interpretation of the written Torah known as the Midrash. In one of Professor Neusner's earlier representative works *An Invitation to the Talmud*, he wrote that the Talmud could not be read, but only taught, and set about teaching the reader how this body of literature works, using texts as examples which were then analysed. The approach in this newer work is somewhat similar. As opposed to standard introductions which write about a given body of documents, this book uses larger textual examples to illustrate to the reader the distinctive features of each document, as well as writing about the document itself, thus giving the reader a valueble opportunity to experience them at first hand, showing what it is that makes Rabbinic theology unique.

Neusner explains that it is precisely this theology, embodied in its hermeneutics, rather than the exegetic methods themselves that make the Midrash documents unique. These uncover and mediate the written Torah's theological truths, interpreting the historical events therein described as paradigms of the human condition. This creates a coherent systematic statement, expressive of Hebrew thinking that places all events past, present and future on a single plane. All single actions in the Scripture can contain within themselves compacted accounts of Israel's social order within the larger framework of eternity. These actions are significant of patterns realised within Israel's history. These transcend time, and Midrash thus shows these events as taking place in the present, transforming Ancient Israel's narrative into the categorical structure of Eternal Israel, so the past, present and future meet together in the here and now. Universal paradigms, against which all things are compared, replace historical particularism, so that time ceases to be a criterion, turning the narratives into mathematical models which find ahistorical abstract patterns in events. These events in turn yield rules, that become important in generating

a pattern, actualising, rather than spiritualising Scripture. Thus Midrashic thought is entirely rational, using the past to explain the present inasmuch as they both occur on the same plane. This is what enables the sages to overcome the chronological gap between the past as described in the Scripture and present time with its problems and concerns. The pattern is not a cycle, as Neusner points out.

In the first two chapters, Neusner illustrates the different methods of Midrash exegesis of the Scripture, showing how the sages worked with it. Some methods, we are shown, combine propositions amplifying a verse which is then used as a basis for creating the logic in the amplifications; others use syllogism and philosophical methods to create a coherent discourse; still others group names and events in lists that together yield an emotion or express an attitude. The core of the book deals with the documents forming the body of Tannaite *Midrashim*, exposing each one's history, systems, themes and theology. It is interesting to see how both the Haggadic and Halakhic documents are both governed by a similar approach and theology. One of the great strengths of the book, especially in this regard, is Neusner's ability to involve the reader in the exegetic exercise. One can discover how the Tannaite sages used Haggadic Midrash exegesis in such documents as *Genesis* or *Ruth Rabba* to find stories forming the rules governing Israel's history which could help clarify contemporary events and give them meaning. Thus the creation, deeds of the forefathers, or Israel's being ruled by the nations become omens for final generations, the narrative stories pointing out Israel's sin and rebellion against God's will mediated by the Torah as being the cause of the oppression they experience, the final goal of history as being Israel's salvation. In the chapters dealing with the Halakhic documents, we see how various meanings of a word can greatly multiply the meaning of a sentence in the *Mekhilta,* the passage suddenly unravelling several abstract statements simultaneously; all however coming together, leading to the same point exposed in an initial verse of Scripture, often broadening and deepening it. Or one suddenly finds oneself a participant in an unfolding syllogism. We are shown how in *Leviticus Rabba*, for instance, a fundamental philosophical discourse occurs in a syllogistic argument organised around a proposed theorem, a method articulately presenting an idea amplified and validated

through given verses of Scripture, a result of a philosophic mode of thought proposing to discover the rules and facts governing Israel's life. One thing must be read in terms of another. This is to show how the sages saw laws of history as being knowable from probative cases of Scripture. Their central message in doing this was that Israel's eschatological salvation depends on its sanctification and moral condition in the here and now.

The concluding chapter of Rabbinnic midrash theology shows how the Torah provides the data and facts about God's presence among men, forming generalisations and rules that may apply to other data, initial acts transforming into procedure, cases forming into rules capable of encompassing further facts, forming a compact structure carrying potential for further intellectual reworking and systematisation. Neusner tries to show how the Torah reveals God's plan of creation, its perfection mappable according to a single paradigm transcending change. Man's intent will, the sole power capable of loving, or defying God's will is seen to be the disrupter of the creation, which it flaws in its defiance against God. God is able to punish man, or be merciful to him if he repents. Thus man is seen to be capable of changing his fate and being reconciled with God, thereby achieving perfection. The Torah is shown as containing the rules of proper conduct, the world to come to be attained by obeying it. The universalising method of paradigmatic thinking about matters of Scriptural narrative yields a universalistc message concerning the destiny of man. At the centre of the paradigm is the principle pattern of liberation and restoration. Israel's return to Zion is analagous to Adam's return to Eden. This will happen when Israel chooses to obey God. Interestingly, Neusner points out that Israel finds reassurance in the oppression they suffer under the nations: There is the hope of the Messiah. Redemption, moreover, came through oppression, not through the prophets' admonitions. The eschatological conclusion is that the Gentiles (idolators) will cease in the world to come, having renounced idolatry and accepting one God, serving Him under the wings of His Presence within Israel, bringing the book to a close.

Among the vast literature available on Rabbinic Midrash, this book provides readers with an excellent and lucid introduction to those great documents from the formative age of Judaism. In using the

practical method of acquainting readers with well-chosen texts, and explaining their exegetical methods within the larger frame of describing the documents containing them the author teaches the reader a great deal about the essence of Midrash. That is only one of the things that make *Judaism and the Interpretation of Scripture* well worth careful reading.

*Pavel Šuba, Prague*

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