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WHAT ITALIAN REFORMERS ?

From September 27 - 30 last, some twenty scholars from Italy, Germany, England and North America gathered at the Faculty of Religious Studies to discuss "The Cultural Impact of Italian Reformers". If you are saying *What Italian Reformers?* you're echoing the many who assume that 16th century Italy did not experience a Reformation, or that the Inquisition completely suppressed it. What is called the "Magisterial" Reformation - Lutheran and Calvinist in particular - has dominated our historiography. We knew that the Waldensians were an interesting, if quaint, example of early Reformation, and that there was a considerable Evangelicalism in 15th-16th C. Italy. Some even knew that certain important Italian churchmen had fled northward to Switzerland and beyond, when the evangelical cause sensed its doom around 1542. But since the speculative bent of Italian scholars is well known (think of Neoplatonism re-emerging in Florence during the Renaissance!) it was not surprising that some exiles became heterodox, even antitrinitarian.

Thus the Italian Reformation has had a bad press. Even Peter Martyr Vermigli, the most influential of the Italian exiles and an authority for generations of Calvinists, almost dropped from sight until the revival of interest in the past two decades. When I began research on him in Edinburgh for my doctoral (1951) I found information about him so scarce that it was an intriguing mystery story, from library to library and scholar to scholar. When the pieces began to fall together, a striking figure of solid theological erudition emerged, calling in question our stereotype of Calvinism and showing the significance of the Italian Renaissance for Reform.

Since the publication of my dissertation, *The Visible Words of God*, 1957) five books and several articles have turned to Vermigli as subject. It was this flurry of academic interest that first suggested the idea of calling such a conference; the cash support of Canada Council, the Interuniversity Centre for European Studies, and two McGill Faculties - Graduate Studies and Research, and Religious Studies - made it possible. The papers are expected to be published as a Journal supplement, while continuing contact among the group will build on the research base now established.

We were fortunate to have one of Italy's leading experts on the Renaissance, Professor Cesare Vasoli of Firenze (U. of Florence), besides five of the six authors of books on Vermigli. Thus it was inevitable that we should examine the Italian Reformation as a historical phenomenon, with Vermigli as a case study. Paul Grendler (U. of Toronto) began with a paper on "The Circulation of Protestant Books in Italy", noting that "The Protestant Reformation was the first great revolutionary movement in which the printing press played a large role". Since the cause of Reform in Italy was fed by pseudonymous books from the northern Reformers, this "one campaign in the press war" involved the smuggling of Protestant books into Venice, the printing and distributing centre of Italy, from about 1520 to the 1580s. John Tedeschi of the Newberry

English years was the controversy over the eucharist (the revised Book of Common Prayer of 1549 reflects this). At Oxford he engaged in a famous Disputation which was published along with his Treatise on the Eucharist, 1549. In tracing the story of Martyr's Oxford stay McNair indicated sources and also another complex scenario. For instance, Martyr's doctrine was hardly as affective on the Oxonian population as the presence of his wife, the first woman in those canonical cloisters!

One of the moot points in Vermigli research concerns his own pilgrimage of faith, where he fits in our usual spectrum of doctrinal positions. McNair argued that he was mature and settled by 1548 so that his influence on Cranmer is the key issue. Moreover, one must isolate two sorts of teaching in that era of suspicion, a private communication of radical ideas and the more public stance in lectures and sermons. Whether this is dissembling or wise caution remains open. Martyr was naturally a different person, and it is the more significant that at Oxford he decided to "throw caution and prudence to the winds" and declare openly his eucharistic doctrine. He was expounding First Corinthians, and chapter 10 provided the ideal place. The parliamentary debate on the Prayer Book provided the timing. And Oxford was still resentful of this outside agitator. Indeed, Richard Smith (the Baptist!) whom he had replaced as Regius Professor was still around, attending his lectures and heckling. It was quite a scene; and it called forth from Vermigli that sustained exposition of the eucharistic theology which had been maturing in him since first the "greater light of Gods truth" began to dawn on him in the fellowship surrounding Juan de Valdés at Naples almost twenty years before. Vermigli probably wrote more on this subject than anyone else in the Reformation, including his huge *Defensio* against Cranmer's old enemy Stephen Gardiner, the book which the Anglican exiles under Mary considered to consummate Cranmer's polemical work. Martyr's involvement with the English Reformation, then, signifies the unity of Continental with English Reform, and an influence on Cranmer, the 1549 Prayer Book, the *xlii* Articles and Anglican theology in general yet to be measured, especially by Anglicans themselves.

John Patrick Donnelly of Marquette is one of the most interesting contemporary writers on Vermigli, because he is a Jesuit. As ecumenism develops, the academic gain is immeasurable, for fresh perspectives are brought to old questions. Donnelly's book *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of Man and Grace* develops the thesis that PMV is a sort of Reformed Thomist whose Aristotelianism was used to serve scriptural exegesis and traditional Augustinian doctrine. He questions whether "Calvinism" is a proper title to cover the differing persons and viewpoints designated by that label, especially when it suggests that Calvin is Master and everyone else a Disciple. In his paper he presented "The social and ethical thought of PMV" to show the independent and thorough theology of Vermigli. Since the latter's *loci comm.* were in widespread use among Calvinists in the century and more following his death, and since the LC contain much more material on social ethics than does Calvin's *Institutes*, the other main textbook, Donnelly suggests that PMV may

be the more significant authority in this realm. (One can compare the two works in the appendix to the McNeill/Battles 1960 edition of the *Institutes*). Donnelly cites as exemplary cases Vermigli's teaching on social status, inequality and minorities (slaves, heretics, dissenters); the Christian and the economic order (PMV is more cautious than some Calvinists in linking wealth to predestination); marriage (polygamy was a 16th C question, as was mixed marriage, grounds for divorce, and celibacy).

Robert Kingdon of Wisconsin is not only a leading Church Historian but also someone increasingly interested in Vermigli. His paper on 'The political thought of PMV' complemented that of Donnelly, while exploring several related questions: PMV and Beza on politics; the apparently Erastian bent on PMV; the particular *loci* (chiefly from Vermigli's O.T. commentaries) which constitute the influential texts in Calvinism. Vermigli looks to both Aristotle and Scripture, often to the former for definition and the latter for example. He also knew Roman and canon law, and his use of these various sources leads Kingdon to pose the hard question of Vermigli's standard of judgement. It is not always nor consistently *sola scriptura*!. But on the burning issue of whether passive resistance to tyranny or oppression can ever become active, Vermigli sides with those Reformers who gave a cautious affirmative to "inferior magistrates" who may lead insurrection against tyranny. In this regard he did not "develop a political doctrine as radical as that of his fellow exiles from England or the more militant French followers of Calvin".

The paper of J.C. McLelland examined the question 'Humanist or Scholastic?' in regard to Vermigli. It is posed sharply by Brian Armstrong's thesis (*Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*) that Calvin's pure and biblical theology was sold into "scholasticism" by Beza, Vermigli and Girolami Zanchi. The last two being Italian, it is clear that the Italian Aristotelian connection is sinister. My point was that Armstrong is simplistic in assuming that scholasticism is always the same (and always a Bad Thing!), and that Aristotle is read the same way from age to age. We cannot accept the thesis that labels medieval Thomism as merely a philosophical interlude, unbiblical and anti-Reform (until Luther struck the first light in 1517). As Donnelly has shown, Vermigli's Thomism is compatible with Reformed theology, not least because the biblical basis for Vermigli's work combined with a judicious use of Aristotle and a positive reading of Aquinas. Armstrong's thesis assumes that Aristotle did little else but develop The Syllogism, as if formal logic is all that classical philosophy supplies to Christian theology. Vermigli himself, who lectured on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, notes the distinction differently: "All our knowledge is either revealed or acquired. In the first case it is Theology, in the other Philosophy".

Vermigli was a Florentine (home of Platonism) who studied at Padua (centre of Aristotelianism). He represents that convergence of the two streams - of "humanism" with "scholasticism" - which modern historians, especially of church history and historical theology, so often resist. Instead of making separations where only distinctions existed, we need to learn from examplars such as Vermigli what sort of personal unity is possible.

Two other papers spoke to this issue at the conference, besides Vasoli's vigorous arguing for a unitive view. Antonio D'Andrea of McGill's Italian Department spoke on 'Geneva 1576-8: the Italian Community and the Myth of Italy'. What sort of influence did the Italian congregation in Geneva have on Calvin and friends? Italian exiles tended to be favourable toward Italian freedom and a republican regime - hence to Machiavelli, secretary of the Florentine Republic. Therefore it was a signal event when a French exile, Innocent Gentillet, published a *Discours contre Machiavel* - in Geneva in 1576! He charged Italians in general with sympathy to Machiavelli, moral and political corruption, and those precious and various vices associated with the northerner's image of passionate Italians - hence the "myth of Italy". Calvin and Beza remained suspicious of Italian temperament, not least because of the Italian influence in the affairs of their homeland under Catherine de' Medici. In this little sideshow of the Reformation, Vermigli's correspondence suggests a certain agreement with Calvin's suspicion (because of the troublemakers and antitrinitarians among the Italian exiles), although Vermigli himself was apparently considered free from the Italian disease.

Charles Partee of Buena Vista College, Iowa, concluded the conference with a "prolusion" on Calvin, 'Calvinism and Philosophy'. Based on his recent book *Calvin and Classical Philosophy*, the paper examined the debate with Calvinism concerning the nature and extent of philosophical influence on Calvin (even the phrasing of the question is significant). Roughly speaking, there are explicit Calvinist philosophers who enlarge on the extent of Calvin's Platonism, while others of Barthian stripe downplay the issue. Partee stated: "I believe that the Calvinistic philosophers claim too much for Calvin and philosophy and the Barthians claim too little ... It is obvious, with the 'Calvinists' and against the Barthians, that Calvin does use philosophy, but it is equally clear, with the Barthians and against the 'Calvinists' that Calvin does not have a systematic interest in using philosophy as the basis for theology". Moreover, Partee underlines that central but neglected doctrine shared by Calvin and Vermigli, union with Christ. Without this dynamic content doctrines such as justification and predestination become distorted and loaded.

So much for the conference papers themselves. What are the results? The direct effect of every such gathering is personal contact among participants. To meet and personify "names" furthers scholarship because the communal aspect of research is clarified. Second, participation in live and lively discussion with a variety of perspectives from experts in the field advances knowledges in a quantum leap. These two formal principles were exemplified at our conference. For one thing, the vexed question of the relationship between Renaissance and Reformation was put in positive light by the presence of Vasoli and other historians. People like myself, raised in a polemical age which taught us that Reformation was "saved" from involvement with Renaissance (just as the Barthians saved Calvin from philosophy), need such constant commentary from Renaissance scholars to keep us honest. If Vermigli was both a Calvinist and a Thomist, what does that do to our historic debates

which assume that these are incompatible? (Grounds for divorce are getting narrower these days). For another thing, the interface among such diverse phenomena as the circulation of pseudonymous books in Italy, the rhetorical-dialectical tradition, the influence of Machiavelli, the tendency toward nicodemism, and the impact of such leading churchmen and reformers as Vermigli and Ochino (and Sozzini!) before their exile - such a menu is hard to digest but even a nibble yields considerable satisfaction.

So to the future: a conference yields more than personal results. One hot topic was the fate of the *Corpus Reformatorum Italicorum*, a joint publishing venture (Italy and USA) to produce critical editions of the *eretici* themselves - presently suspended, before anything of Vermigli or Ochino has appeared. Somewhat related, but more optimistic, is a *Bibliographia Vermigliana* being prepared by Kingdon and Donnelly. (There is also a book of Vermigli translation by Duffield and McLelland, completed but held up at the printers ... in Northern Ireland). When more texts become available it will be easier for scholars to develop our knowledge of Vermigli's thought and its influence.

As an immediate follow-up to the conference, copies of a brief report and of the program are being mailed widely, to estimate interest and ways of proceeding by interested scholars. (Montreal has become the Venice of today's distribution, except that smuggling is no longer required). Thus if the academic underground is correct, the growing interest in Vermigli, and of the significance of Italy for the Reformation, suggests a need for cooperation and coordination in producing texts, translations and exposition.

Is Vermigli worth it? The conference reinforced my own view that he is more than a second-string Reformer. He was of such influence in historical Calvinism that he holds the key to its scholastic development (regardless of who played the villain). The extent of his influence on continental Calvinism and English-American Puritanism may be measured by the editions of his *Loca* and biblical commentaries. The Heidelberg Catechism reflects his teaching, and he sheds light on the development of covenant or federal theology. Again, in his own right he deserves attention because of his active search for peace in the church (rather more tolerant than most in that highly intolerant age) and a synthetic theology worthy of both tradition and new knowledge.

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ON BEING THE CHURCH IN QUEBEC TODAY

THE CONTEXT

In Quebec, the centre of French Canada, a rebirth of nationalism in the past twenty years has culminated in the coming to power, last November 15th, of the *Parti Quebecois*. This government is dedicated to the establishment of a sovereign French state, with or without possible association with the rest of Canada.

The November election and subsequent legislation, especially in the area of language, has created shock waves throughout the entire country. Nowhere has this shock been felt more than in Quebec itself, among the anglophone minority concentrated in the Montreal area. For generations this group has lived side by side with, yet politically and culturally apart from the French majority. Because of their great financial ascendancy and power, the anglophones have been able heretofore to sustain a sense of confidence and security. Now this privileged position has been dramatically challenged, and on all sides the once-confident anglophone community has been reduced to a loud clamouring for its rights.

The question that this situation poses for the Church in Quebec--especially for the anglophone churches--is whether there is anything like a distinctively "Christian" witness to be made here. Is it possible for the Christian community to act out of a concern for basic human goods, or will its witness merely echo the same biases, values and fears as other elements of the anglophone community? Will the stance of the Church in this society be perceived as something different, another dimension? Or will the anglophone churches' statements and deeds be little more than religious-sounding editions of the same things that business men, teachers' organizations, and other representatives of the English-speaking minority are saying? Can the churches think again *as Church*? Or are they so thoroughly identified with their cultural base as to be incapable of independent reflection and action?

The following is a manifesto which came out of one Protestant group's attempt to exercise a Christian perspective on the situation. Unfortunately the document did not even succeed in passing the lower courts of the church concerned. However, it has become a meaningful statement for a growing cross-section of Christians in Quebec and beyond. We offer it to our readers for what it is: an expression of the faith and conviction of a small segment of the Church facing the challenge of living as Christians in Quebec today.

A MONTREAL DECLARATION

We, the representatives of the Montreal Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, conscious of the opportunities for Christian work and witness opening to us at this time, wish to clarify our intention under God to serve Him and

our fellow-citizens of Quebec and Canada faithfully and with imagination. Addressing ourselves in particular to the anglophone community of Quebec, and to the United Church of Canada. . .

- 1) *WE AFFIRM* that the Spirit of the God who acted decisively in Jesus our Lord for the liberation of mankind is ever at work in the world "to make and to keep human life human";

WE LAMENT, therefore, every form of cynicism which sees in political and other events in history nothing but the will of man and the clash of power with power.

- 2) *WE AFFIRM* that while no human deed, achievement or programme should ever be identified unqualifiedly with the will of God, historical events which offer humanity a way into the future are never without a transcendent dimension;

WE LAMENT, for this reason, the tendency of some within the Christian churches to place God's providence so far above the historical flux as effectively to deny his love *for the world*.

- 3) *WE AFFIRM* the new sense of hope that has come to inspire our francophone fellow-citizens at this time; we give thanks for their openness to the future, and want to share in their enthusiasm for new possibilities of human community in this place;

WE LAMENT therefore the tendency of some of our anglophone brothers and sisters to give way to feelings of personal anxiety, resentment, and cultivated apathy, so that they miss the awareness of opportunities implicit in our present situation.

- 4) *WE AFFIRM* that Christians are called to involve themselves in the affairs of human communities, and without pride or quest for power to assume responsibility for society;

Thus *WE LAMENT* the retreat of many anglophones from this province, and the abdication of responsibility on the part of many who remain.

- 5) *WE AFFIRM* the manifest need for an anglophone community in Quebec.. "a new breed of anglophone"--which is committed to the good destiny of this province and its unique contribution to Canada;

WE LAMENT, therefore, the continuing spirit of narrowly racial, economic and other interests, which gives priority to self-preservation and to the fostering of ends which deny Christ's call to human solidarity.

- 6) *WE AFFIRM* that we are prepared to live in Quebec as part of a minority; we intend to be a creative element within that minority, to support the vision of a better society as it inspires many of our leaders, and to be vigilant for human dignity according to our Christian understanding of the nature of humanity;

WE LAMENT for this reason any remnant of false pride which may still keep us and our English-speaking compatriots from accepting the posture of such a minority, wishing instead to play a dominating role.

- 7) *WE AFFIRM* that, in view of the grave dangers of a monolithic technocratic society present on this Continent, it is essential for concerned Canadians actively to preserve the French language, culture and heritage; and we recognize that in the face of such dangers government may need to resort to what may seem strong or artificial measures in order to achieve this goal;

Hence *WE LAMENT* the failure on the part of many anglophones in Quebec and Canada to manifest a sympathetic comprehension of such measures, on the assumption that the preservation of the French heritage will occur as a matter of course.

- 8) *WE AFFIRM* that the present conflict is complex and multidimensional; it is not simply a struggle for the maintenance of French Canada but for our Country as a distinct entity on this Continent and a creative force in world affairs;

Therefore, *WE LAMENT* the tendency of some, simplistically to construe this as a struggle between French and English elements, and so to miss the larger issues.

- 9) Finally, *WE AFFIRM* that the Church of Jesus Christ transcends racial, national, linguistic and other particularities; yet it is not indifferent to these, for it recognizes that human liberation is always being worked out in the specifics of daily existence;

So *WE LAMENT* on the one hand the failure of some Christians to rise above cultural and traditional loyalties to the higher loyalty of faith in the universal Lord; and on the other hand the assumption of some that Christian faith ought simply to ignore the particularities of nation, race, speech and culture.

In the confidence that we are not alone; that our God is present in these crises and uncertainties; and that many human beings of good will everywhere can identify themselves with the directions suggested in this Declaration, we commend it to all who care about the Land, and especially to the household of faith.

Formulated by the Presbytery Committee on the Future of the Church in Quebec, and forwarded to Montreal Presbytery on May 18, 1977. This Report was tabled by the Presbytery. (A version of the above article is also being published in *The Ecumenist*).

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QUEBEC: A CHANGING CONTEXT FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

With the election of the Parti Quebecois Government and the subsequent passage of Bill 101 (The Charter of the French Language), the "quiet revolution" has ended and we have entered a new phase of Quebec history. Our attitude and reaction to what has been happening is determined by who we are and what we believe, by our sense of identity and our philosophy or theology of life. Those of us who claim to be Christians may go further and contend that our believing, our theology, is, in turn, informed by Scripture. But then we should also explore the opposite: that our interpretation of Scripture is significantly influenced by our present social and political context and by our self-understanding in the midst of this context.

CONTEXTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Biblical scholars have long recognized that an understanding of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures involves careful research into Near Eastern history, geography, culture and religion. The biblical record needs to be read in its historical context. Particular passages are illuminated by an awareness of the *Sitz im Leben* of the material as well as by a clarification of the situation of the writer using the material.

Another context for interpretation is the canon. The place of each passage in the canon and the form of the canon (whether Jewish, Roman Catholic or Protestant) also bears on the question of interpretation, especially when this relates to the life of the Church.

But as one reviews the history of hermeneutics from ancient times to the present and in various religious traditions, it is also clear that the context of the interpreter has a major influence on how the biblical material is understood and related to contemporary life. Note the differences, for example, between Qumran *pesher* exegesis, Origen's threefold approach, Rabbi Akiba's "atomistic exegesis", Rashi's literal simplicity, Luther's "*historia*" in contrast to allegories, Barth's theological interpretation of Romans and Bultmann's demythologizing. But recently we have become more aware of our human context in terms of social, sexual, racial and other factors. The exegetical reflections of biblical scholars in "third world" countries contrast markedly from those of western countries. Negroes and feminists also read Scripture out of their growing awarenesses.

Here in Quebec, at this moment of time, we not only read our Bibles out of a common historical experience within this province (as over against those who are not living here) but also out of our interpretation and evaluation of what is happening. Does this mean that biblical interpretation is a hopelessly subjective enterprise? Yes and No. Yes, it is subjective and we need to be clearer and more honest about how subjective. No, it is not hopeless. When we consciously bring our human context to the biblical material, we also (just as consciously it is hoped) seek to discover the theological perspective of

that material and to open ourselves to the new light that that perspective can shed on our interpretation of what is now happening to us. This exercise can lead to fresh insights especially when this task is undertaken by anglophones and francophones together.

CONSTITUTIVE AND PROPHETIC MODES OF INTERPRETATION

But on a contextual approach, especially when the present context is taken seriously, there are some further questions which could be of major importance. Does our interpretation of tradition challenge or support the behaviour of the believing community? Should we interpret the biblical materials differently depending on whether we feel the community needs to be affirmed or confronted? Does our present context influence how we formulate our approaches to interpretation?

To illustrate the issues involved in these questions, I wish to examine in some detail an article by James Saunders entitled "Hermeneutics" and found in the supplementary volume of *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*.

According to Saunders "the Word (of God) is the point that is made in the conjunction of text and context, whether in antiquity or at any subsequent time". Discerning the ancient context clarifies the impact that the text had; defining our current context clarifies how the original point is to be transmitted to our situation today.

Saunders then goes on to develop two basic modes of hermeneutics: the constitutive and the prophetic. These, he claims, are to be found in the biblical materials themselves. There are the interpreters of religious tradition read the tradition either in a supportive way (constitutive) or in a challenging way (prophetic). When the believing community was weak and needed reconstituting the constitutive mode was proper. Then, for example, the patriarchal stories, when read during the Exile, were interpreted as messages of encouragement and hope. But when Israel had power and confused its power with God's, the same patriarchal stories were interpreted as warnings and judgement. At that historical moment the prophetic mode was indicated.

Extending this approach to our hermeneutical task today, Saunders indicates that we need to discern from our context which mode is now appropriate. For struggling churches who are not sure of survival the constitutive mode would seem to be the correct one. But for the established churches which have confused their identity with the dominant culture, a prophetic reading is required.

THE QUEBEC CONTEXT

It may be that out of the context of New York City from which James Saunders writes, this either/or approach both to the understanding of Scripture's reflection of hermeneutics and to our interpretation of Scripture for the Church and world today, makes sense. But as I live in the midst of this

province the separation of the constitutive from the prophetic, affirmation from confrontation, is theologically disastrous. It plays directly into the hands of those who would comfort and encourage a harried anglophone community criticizing, in the name of human rights, those government leaders who have dared to challenge the economic subjection of the francophone majority by the anglophone minority. This separation would allow clergy to be pastors to their own people and prophets to other people. My historical context has forced me to rethink the Saunders' paradigm. Yes, I am aware that the so-called kerygmas of the Yahwist, the Elohist, the Deuteronomist and the Priestly writers interpret the Torah Story in various ways that emphasize important theological messages for their respective historical situations. But I do not agree that these interpretations of tradition can be made to fit in *either* a constitutive mode *or* a prophetic one. But even granting that there were times when one or the other of these aspects of interpretation may have been emphasized, that at a particular time a certain proclamation was more supportive or more confronting, the final canonical form is a combination of sources. One of the amazing characteristics of the biblical record for me is the juxtaposition of differing materials, of those that seem more "constitutive" right alongside of those that seem more "prophetic".

The polarization of the positive and the negative application of tradition is particularly clear in Saunders's reference to Jesus' sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30). If we read this incident constitutively, he says, we identify with Jesus rather than with the congregation and the message of the passage is perceived as being anti-Semitic. We are angry with the Jews for trying to destroy Jesus. If, on the other hand, Saunders tells us, we read this incident prophetically, we identify with the congregation and ask why the words of Jesus are so offensive. This leads to a fresh realization of God's freedom to be gracious and of the Church's tendency to want to own God for itself. But this illustration clarifies the illegitimacy of separating affirmation from confrontation. The so-called "constitutive" is not a legitimate interpretation of that passage if that means anti-Semitism and the "prophetic" stance in the context of the whole of the Gospel of Luke is not only a word of judgement but also one of grace.

Theologically, it seems to me essential to articulate the Gospel as *both* judgement *and* grace. These two must be kept together lest we lose the biblical meaning of Gospel: judgement is related to hope and grace is at the cost of suffering and rejection; crucifixion should not be separated from resurrection; resurrection is the sequel to crucifixion.

In the midst of the changes taking place in this province, I believe it is essential to be aware that the biblical tradition cuts both ways; it is affirming and confronting as we bring our human situation to it and receive light from it. But it is both of these together at the same time. For me it usually seems that by focussing on how the biblical perspective stands over against my own, I am able to glimpse anew God's forgiveness and acceptance. The affirmation is not of the *status quo* but of a better awareness

of what God seems to be doing here and now. By concentrating on the theological thrust of various biblical passages rather than on verbal or symbolic analogies between the past and the present, I may avoid "using" Scripture to bolster my own prejudices and, instead, be freed to think theologically about my human context.

Yet I am keenly aware that I write as an anglophone Quebecer. How does all this appear to *les quebecois français*? That requires dialogue and both anglophones and francophones who appeal to the same biblical traditions need each other in order to "hear" and interpret the Gospel responsibly. That dialogue has only begun and requires serious dedication from both communities for its furtherance.

In the meantime, I feel constrained to add one additional word for our anglophone churches. These are days in which many are experiencing major readjustments, pain, discouragement and bewilderment. The pastoral task is enormous, but it will not, in my view, be discharged responsibly (that is, consistent with the Gospel) if it is separated from the prophetic task of discerning God's perspectives over against our own. The hope and joy of the Church's life and proclamation emerge out of the darkness and out of an awareness that we are part of the darkness ourselves. On the corporate, as well as on the individual level, rejection can lead to significant insight. With the help of our biblical traditions such insight is clarified in and for particular experiences so that we can perceive some of the contours of hope and resurrection.

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THE OTHERNESS OF GOD

When Christian preachers speak of the otherness of God, they may be saying quite different things. At a time when the church has identified itself with a successful and forward-moving culture and Christians recognize divine Providence in the achievements of their nation, the stress on the otherness of God is a critical theological principle. God is other means that Christians are not looking for God in the high points of the dominant culture. Since in such an age so many Christians claim to see God's imprint in their society and hence defend it against its critics as if it were divine, the preaching of God's otherness reveals the ambiguity of the present age and brings to light the ugly underside of our great achievements. God as the wholly other calls the church to a wholly new imagination and puts a question mark behind existing values and ideals.

However at a time when the dominant culture is becoming less successful and no longer moving forward, the stress on the otherness of God has a different meaning. At such times the dominant structures of society, whose ambiguity is clearly visible to all, are seriously challenged by various countervailing trends. Critical movements want to reconstruct society in accordance with greater justice and humanity: they seek the loyalty of growing numbers and organize the struggle for a renewed social order. The appeal of these movements to Christians is considerable: for many of them hunger and thirst for justice. To stress God's otherness in such an age is a way of cautioning Christians against getting too deeply involved in these countervailing movements. God's otherness here means that God is not identified with any historical movement whatever, not with the dominant structures nor with the critical forces that seek to replace them. What is needed, therefore, is a cautious distance from politics. God's otherness is a call to aloofness. In such an age, therefore, the preaching of God's otherness becomes all too easily a defense of the *status quo*. The present society may have its faults, but that is the human situation; any movement for social reconstruction will have its faults too. The Christian must remain critical in all directions. Those who stress the otherness of God prefer to leave things as they are.

Today we find the doctrine of God's otherness uttered in new social situations. There we find a third meaning of this doctrine. Black religious leaders claim that God's otherness means that God is not white. They claim that the God proclaimed by the churches is the protector and patron of the successful world. The God of the churches is a white God who makes other races, especially the black people, appear as strangers, appendices to humanity, marginal figures in world history. To proclaim God's otherness in this situation ushers in a transvaluation of values. God is not the God of Pharaoh, but of Israel. To say that God is black means that it has become necessary to re-read European and American history and review American society from the viewpoint of the most despised.

In the contemporary women's movement operative in the church, the otherness of God means that God is not male. To say that God is not male does not only express the traditional teaching that God has no gender and hence is neither 'he' nor 'she', it also corrects the church's proclamation of God as protector of male and often patriarchal power. When the doctrine of God's otherness is preached in the midst of an oppressed or disadvantaged people, it is a call to re-think the entire Christian tradition and re-examine the present social structure from the viewpoint of the poor, the marginalized, the excluded. The cross becomes here the key for the understanding of society.

The doctrine of God's otherness has several meanings depending on the social location from which it is uttered. Today many Christians in the churches have become convinced that they must listen to the voice of the excluded people. They are willing to re-read history and review the meaning of Christian doctrine from the viewpoint of the most devastated or crucified classes in society. To say that God is other then means that God cannot be encountered in the familiar context: we will have to leave the circle to which we belong, transcend the values and categories we have inherited, and listen to what the outsiders, the others, have to say to us. The otherness of God means that God can be encountered only if we are willing to transcend the barriers between us and the others. God's otherness, in other words, is not a metaphysical principle that can be assimilated in a purely conceptual manner: God's otherness expresses a stance toward the world of men and women.

In a certain preliminary sense, this has been the experience of Christians involved in ecumenical dialogue. Here we moved out of the familiar world, here we crossed boundaries, listened to the others, and were willing to question ourselves. Because we were willing to acknowledge the others as recipients of God's gifts, we were able to encounter God in these others and as they spoke to us, be addressed, through their speech, by the divine Word. For many ecumenists this was a precious experience of God's otherness. To speak of the otherness of God while we lock ourselves into our own community does not make sense: the decision thus to enclose oneself means, on the contrary, that God is familiar, that God is not other at all. To affirm God's otherness in a meaningful way implies the crossing of boundaries and the discovery of the other, the excluded brother, the invisible man.

Since dialogue implies equality of partners, it is an important but as yet limited activity in the world. Since we have divided the world into masters and servants, rich and poor, developed and underdeveloped nations, -- the world is like a hockey game inevitably divided into winners and losers -- the sphere of equals and hence the possibility of dialogue are quite restricted. In the present age many Christians have come to realize that God's otherness implies the crossing of boundaries and the encounter with the other oppressed, -- not just with the equal brother but with the unequal sister.

To say that God is other means that God cannot be found if, clinging to the Bible or the Church, we remain in familiar territory. We must be willing to encounter God in the hidden ones, those who have become invisible behind the structure erected by the powerful. Of course these others, the unequal ones, are often cold and irritable, they may not be inviting: the powerful have made them thus. With these others, dialogue may be impossible. First, because there is no equality of power, the others may not want to speak to the powerful since they do not want to appear as their friends and allies; and secondly, the powerful are unable to speak because their words will be interpreted by the powerless as a strategy to keep them happy. In a situation of significant inequality, dialogue easily becomes an ideological instrument; it keeps the powerless sitting quietly around the table while those at the top keep their real power. Thus bishops sometimes want to dialogue with their priests -- to keep them smiling. And thus English-Canada wants to dialogue with Quebec. Yet dialogue is only authentic if it is accompanied by a political commitment to the removal of inequality. We desire to live in a world where dialogue is universally possible, in a world, that is to say, where the domination of man over man has been overcome and people have equal access to power, resources and honour. We enter here into what has been called (Sister Marie Augusta Neal) "the theology of letting go."

The doctrine of God's otherness turns out to be uncomfortable indeed. For the successful people in this world it implies a crossing of boundaries and a political commitment to the emancipation of men and women. This sounds a little startling. To stress the otherness of God means that we are unable to find God in our heart and on our knees unless the inward gesture of faith be accompanied by a special commitment in regard to earthly realities. This reminds us of the scriptural teaching, "Unless you love, you cannot know God." Unless there be a special relationship to the others, the ever newly discovered others, we are unable to surrender ourselves to the God of Jesus Christ.

Let me add, in keeping with the Catholic tradition, that because God is other we must not only affirm this otherness but also deny it. To say that God is other means that we have to negate any predicate attributed to God. Thus God is familiar! The meaning of this doctrine also has different meanings depending on the social location in which it is uttered. In the context of the theological trend discussed in this brief article, to say that God is familiar means that God is present to all people in their day-to-day yearning for freedom, humanity and joy. Despite the alienation and hopelessness inflicted upon people by the present world system of power and organization, there breaks forth in the most humiliated, inexplicably, an ever new yearning for the expansion of life. In an old-fashioned Catholic litany we used to address Jesus (the Sacred Heart, if you please) as "the longing of the everlasting hills."

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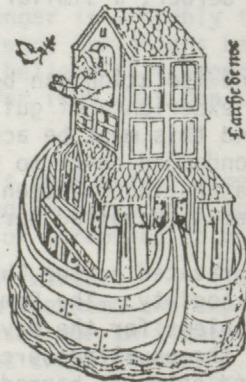
MINISTRY : SELECTED READINGS

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

- 1) Eckardt, Arthur Roy. *Elder and Younger Brothers; the Encounter of Jews and Christians*. (New York: Scribner, 1967). In order to solve the problems arising from Christian claims to have superseded Judaism, the author suggests that both are involved in a single covenant with God but have different functions; excellent study of theological pathology.
- 2) Eckardt, Arthur Roy. *Your People My People; the Meeting of Jews and Christians*. (New York: Quadrangle, 1974.) - Summary of recent literature; essays on theology after Auschwitz, antisemitism disguised as antizionism, the accomplishments and limitations of the declarations of Vatican II, etc.
- 3) Fleischner, Eva. *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era? Reflections on the Holocaust*. (New York: Ktav, 1977.) - The author sees the Nazi Holocaust as the ultimate result of centuries of Christian anti-Judaism.
- 4) Glock, Charles, and R. Stark. *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1966.) - Results of a five-year study made by the University of California on patterns of belief presented in textbooks and other teaching materials used by churches, and their relationship to prejudice.
- 5) Hay, Malcolm. *Thy Brother's Blood; the Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism*. (New York: Hart, 1975.) - Paperback, also published as *Europe and the Jews*, and as *The Foot of Pride*; devastating historical analysis of theological antisemitism; the author concludes that this was not the result of popular ignorance and superstition, but of theology deliberately propagated by the Church.
- 6) Isaac, Jules. *Jesus and Israel*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.) - A lucid, direct and scholarly account of the 'teaching of contempt'; studies the myths of the 'deicide people', the 'degenerate' state of Judaism at the time of Christ, and the diaspora as a divine punishment.
- 7) Jacob, Walter. *Christianity Through Jewish Eyes; the Quest for Common Ground*. (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974.) - Possibilities of rapprochement from the perspective of Reformed Judaism.
- 8) Littell, Franklin H. *The Crucifixion of the Jews*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1975.) - Intensely emotional and moving study of the Jewish-Christian relationship in history; the author calls for a radical reversal of Christian theology as an ethical imperative for Christianity today.
- 9) Rabinowicz, Oskar. *Arnold Toynbee on Judaism and Zionism; a Critique*. (London: Allen, 1974.) - Response to the historian's assumption that the Jews are only a 'fossil people' with no reason for continued existence, since Judaism ceased to have meaning or vitality with the coming of Christ.

- 10) Ruether, Rosemary R. *Faith and Fratricide; the Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*. (New York: Seabury Press, 1974.) - The ultimate attack on a theological tradition which goes back to the New Testament itself, and to the attempts by the Church Fathers to read Christology into the Old Testament; superb scholarship; if you read nothing else - read this.
- 11) Slonim, Rueben. *Family Quarrel: the United Church and the Jews*. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1977.) - Jewish response to the attacks on Israel of A.C. Forrest, former moderator of the United Church of Canada.
- 12) Talmage, Frank, ed. *Disputation and Dialogue; Readings in Jewish-Christian Encounter*. (New York: Ktav, n.d.) - Jewish and Christian documents from the patristic period to the present; authors include Barth, Baum, Cox, Buber, Eckardt, Ruether, Fackenheim, Herschel, Klausner, etc.
- 13) Trachtenberg, Joshua. *The Devil and the Jews; the Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944.) - Classic work on the image of the Jew as sinister alien, agent of Satan, sorcerer, subverter of Christendom.

Paul Nathanson



Noah's Ark
from *La Mer des Histoires*,
15th cent, French

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Divorce is a widespread and common occurrence in all strata of society and the Christian Church also finds increased divorce among its members. The intention of this paper is to examine divorce in the Christian community using as reference the experience of divorced and/or separated couples. Also as a guide, Dr. Kübler-Ross's five stages of dying, in her book *On Death and Dying* will be compared to the phenomena of divorce. It is hoped that this comparison will prove helpful because divorce is a form of death, the death of a marriage.

Dr. Kübler-Ross speaks of five stages of dying which are: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. According to Kübler-Ross, except in cases of sudden death, these stages, not always in order and sometimes at the same time, describe how an individual faces his own death. She makes a strong point that this gamut of emotions is a normal and acceptable form of human behaviour under the circumstances.

Her findings are not new, nor are they inconsistent with Biblical teachings. Israel Gerber, author of *The Psychology of the Suffering Mind* draws similar conclusions. In his analysis of the Book of Job, written eighteen years before Kübler-Ross's research, he finds the same stages in Job's story. They have been found also in the Tibetan "Book of the Dead".

As with the dying person, people involved in a divorce experience denial and isolation. This behaviour is manifested by such remarks as "don't tell anyone", if that person, at the time of the crisis, is relating to anyone at all. The inclination is to become narcissistic and dwell on nothing but one's own condition. According to Gerber, a similar characteristic can be found in the behaviour of Job.

While the period of denial and isolation can be considered healthy, the same thing cannot be said for the experience of guilt. In the death of a marriage there is certainly failure and this must be acknowledged. A doctor, however, in losing a patient is not condemned never to practice medicine again, as long as reasonable care and attention has been taken to prolong life. The same benefits are not extended to divorced persons in many churches.

The feelings of guilt are aggravated by the Churches' being identified with the anti-divorce elements in society. The Roman Catholic Church, in particular, has caused special problems for the devout Catholic. In extreme cases the divorced Christian finds the usual resources of his faith unavailable to him. He or she is isolated and outcast; barred from the sacraments of the church. On the other hand, in other denominations their stand is not clear. A considerable amount of time may be spent convincing divorced people that they are accepted in their Christian communities. As far as the general public is concerned, with these two extremes operating in the Christian

churches, it is not surprising that divorced Christians find themselves feeling guilty and insecure.

Insecurity is heightened by isolation, but another problem exists at this stage. Isolation is traumatic for the divorced or divorcing persons but it is equally a problem for the community. Members of a close community feel rejected by the divorcing person's withdrawal. They are confused and hurt when no confidence is shared and no help asked. This can be especially acute for those in the helping professions, the clergy for example, for not only are they themselves rejected but their professional expertise as well.

In many ways the community is now also involved in a death dynamic. They too experience the same stages as the divorcing member of their community. Firstly, the community is isolated by the stand of their member and secondly, their own feelings about the matter take over and they too withdraw. There are feelings of unbelief and shock and an unwillingness to discuss the subject. Guilt also plays an important role, especially for the helping professions, who feel hindered by their own reactions and those of the divorced persons.

There are now, therefore, two death processes occurring instead of one. The net result is that one process gets in the way of the other, causing confusion and pain to all parties. There is the danger that the community will refuse to deal with the situation at all; stay in the denial stage and relegate the divorce to the area of gossip. This response is aided and abetted by the wishes of the divorcing persons to remain isolated. However, there is something positive to be said for the human condition as a high percentage of the time the next stage, that of anger, occurs whether it is wished for or not.

For the Christian community anger is probably the most difficult stage to handle. This occurs because many Christians have the self-image that they must be "nice" people. They believe that anger and hate are negative and destructive emotions and suffer from what can be called the "gentle Jesus meek and mild" syndrome.

The result of this syndrome is that unreal expectations have been set for church men and women. Here again we do well to travel with Job. Job at this stage was certainly not nice or accepting of his condition:

Why did I not die at birth,
 come forth from the womb and expire?
I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
 I have not rest; but trouble comes
 (3:11,26).

Nor was Jesus reticent about expressing anger, as his cleansing of the Temple ably demonstrates.

On the other hand, the tendency of the community is to become "Job's Comforters" and issue platitudes of comfort. This attitude is attributable to the community's not wishing to deal with anger. They do not want the divorcing persons to express anger because the community cannot handle it. Worse, there is the lack of recognition that the community too may be angry and have similar need for expression as the divorcing persons. As stated before, there are two processes going on and a need for the recognition of both.

In relationship to anger, another thorny issue for Christians is violence. Here again, the Christian self-image of "niceness" and the mistaken belief that violence occurs only during war and on "the other side of the tracks" causes extreme distress. No doubt physical violence is directly related to the deep hurt and pain experienced by divorcing persons. In divorce this is aggravated by the stage of isolation and the repression of genuine anger by all concerned. Pent-up feelings must be expressed somehow. If they are not, they will emerge sooner or later and often violently.

Directly related to "niceness" is the Christian reluctance to deal with God in anger, to quote C.S. Lewis: "our God is too small." Christians forget that the churches have taught that man is in a relationship with a God who is all-knowing, omnipotent and all-loving. The presumption on the part of Christians is that God will respond in kind to anger; they forget that God is more than capable of understanding the onslaughts. Christians, therefore, by denying negative emotions in their relationship with God all too often deny "so called" negative emotions in themselves and their fellow man. Anger as pointed out by Dr. Kübler-Ross, however, is a stage in dealing with loss and by denying it we hinder the process of healing and growth in the individual and the community.

Bargaining is the third stage and it takes place on many levels with respect to divorce. It occurs between the individual and his God, between the two persons involved in the divorce and between the community and the divorcing member. As far as the bargaining between the individual and his God is concerned, if there has been any marriage at all, too much hurt is experienced for anything more than: "if you will help me make it through the night, maybe tomorrow I'll deal with the situation." This level of bargaining is often closely linked to denial and isolation. The second level, however, involving the partners, is closely related to anger especially if custody of children is contested. The attitude in the courts aggravates the situation as the couple is considered to be adversaries by both judges and lawyers. The third level, the bargaining between the community and the divorcee encompasses both denial, isolation and anger. An example of the denial process is found in the stand of both Church courts and congregations to divorcing clergy; if you go away and not involve us, more accurately embarrass us, we will transfer your lines.

The community takes this stand because they believe it is better for their clergy to make a new start and not entangle the congregation in the messy details of a divorce. Concern is expressed that the congregation will split with various factions taking sides. However valid this point may be, what really appears to be taking place is bargaining to facilitate denial on the part of the congregation and court.

Initially, denial is healthy but if it continues it blocks a meaningful confrontation with the issue. It also denies the existence of a Christian community, in the New Testament sense of the word, that we should "bear one another's burdens". The unwillingness to "bear one another's burdens" or even discuss the subject isolates everyone and can be interpreted as a lack of caring on the part of the community towards the divorcing couple; the reaction, of course, is hostility. The tragedy is that very often the community does care but does not know how to express its caring.

On the other hand, the entire congregation need not be drawn into the picture. Nor should it necessarily become an issue in the courts of the church. Congregations and courts, as many Christians know, are not automatically Christian communities. Where community exists, however, the crisis could be shared.

The topic of depression is more acceptable to the Christian churches than anger and, while depression can be aggravated by a person's repressing his feelings, in particular anger, another word is also appropriate: mourning. Admittedly it can be said that mourning and Kübler-Ross's five stages of dying are the same thing. For the sake of expediency, however, and because the average person often equates mourning with depression, mourning will be discussed under the stage of depression.

The issue is the death of a marriage and to mourn is both helpful and necessary. To mourn a marriage, however, has its own peculiar twist as the person lost is not dead. The person is dead to the partner but he/she is not dead to everyone. While it would be accurate to say that it is the relationship that has died, this description does not suffice either, because the death of the relationship does involve the loss of a partner.

For a marriage of short duration it might be possible to bury a partner if there is no occasion for the couple to meet, but a marriage of any length and commitment, and with children, does not lend itself to decent burial. The closest description of this problem is that while a body is buried the soul, or to use a folklore expression, a ghost, still haunts the living.

There are constant reminders to both partners that the other person is still alive. As anyone who has been harassed by alimony payments knows: "from things that go bump in the night, good Lord deliver us". In light of this problem with "ghosts" it might be worthwhile not to condemn the traditional churches' stand against divorce for, in essence, if there was no marriage

there is really no divorce. Conversely, if there was no marriage, whatever the civil status books say, there is naturally no divorce, only a legal proceeding.

What divorce does for the once-married is to give permission for both parties to start a new life. This stresses the importance of working through the entire process of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining and depression to final acceptance by all concerned, the couple and the community alike. If this does not occur, the old will continue to haunt the new; old hurts will continue to surface and strangle new growth for all people.

Finally there is acceptance. To use the Christian idiom: after the cross the resurrection follows: After death occurs life. Unfortunately, for many divorced people the church continues to make them carry the cross; or they think they must carry the cross. The reason is that divorce has been officially denied. The problem seems to be that whereas there are caring pastors well qualified to handle the stages of dying and/or divorce, the church as an institution has not ritualized the death of a marriage or the celebration of the new life for divorced people.

A look at any typical book of Common Order shows the total lack of rituals for the divorced. There are services for the birth of a child and the birth of a marriage. Also to be found are services for the physical death of a person, but there is no ritual for the death of a marriage. Therefore, the church has no means, other than inter-personal, for congregations or couples to decently bury a marriage and enable the acceptance, on the part of a congregation or couple, of new life.

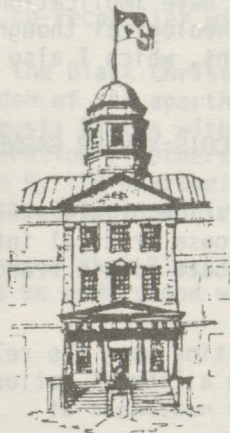
At the moment, liturgically, the only method the church has of affirming new life is if one or both of the partners establishes a new relationship with another person. The church then affirms this new life by allowing remarriage. No affirmation is available for those who choose not to remarry or who are members of churches which do not recognize divorce. It would be an interesting project to ascertain how much pressure is exerted upon the divorced to remarry if, in the Christian community, this is the only way the church can ritualize their new status.

Acceptance in the Christian sense has all the joy of the resurrection, the final lifting of a burden. Christians firmly believe it is *through* death, not by avoiding it, that we are set free. However, if this freedom is to be meaningful for all concerned, clergy and congregations, it is well to remember that death is not limited to the dying and divorce is not limited to the divorcing. There are two levels of drama, one taking place in the life of the divorcing couple and the other taking place in the Christian community. If the divorced persons and the community are to experience the resurrection it is necessary for both to face the cross. Both need to work through the five stages before acceptance and meaningful new life can occur for either the divorced members or the church. One of the most helpful ways the churches

can insure this is for rituals to be developed to acknowledge this new dimension in church and society.

Jean Ford
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RECENT GRADUATES

During the past summer the Faculty of Religious Studies conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on four candidates. The following are brief summaries of their theses.

REDUCTIVE EXPLANATIONS OF RELIGION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DURKHEIM (by Harvey W. White)

The positivist view of science and reductionism reached its apex in the work of Ernest Nagel. His view was severely criticized by recent philosophers of science, who also proposed a different model. Thomas Kuhn is a notable proponent of this new viewpoint, which is based on context. My thesis is that scientific explanations of religion can only be possible through ontological reductions of religious terms. Ontological reductions are justifiable by considerations based on values and the context of explanation, which I analyze.

To illustrate my thesis I critically examine the theory of religion proposed by Emile Durkheim, in light of his theory of knowledge. In so doing I bring out his basic assumptions and the values which are at the base of his reductive account of religion.

Finally, I show that scientific explanations of religion have implications for religion, some of which are demonstrable in recent theological thought. But scientific explanations also have built-in limitations, which I also discuss.

THE RETURN OF THE CATHOLIC PAST: THE DEBATE BETWEEN FRANCOIS-XAVIER GARNEAU AND HIS CRITICS, 1831-1945 (by David Ronald Mawer)

Garneau, author of a number of minor works, began publication of his *Histoire du Canada* in 1845. In the 1830s his writing began to arouse critical interest, and from 1845 until 1945 was the subject of keen debate within French Canada.

The thesis is a study of the past as ideology, concentrating upon the religious issues at stake, and examines the process by which a liberal nationalist historian came to be seen as the author of the *bible nationale* of Catholic French Canada.

The socio-cultural context of the debate was that of the liberally educated clergy and professional bourgeoisie, representing liberal, moderate and ultra-montane points of view. The outcome of the debate was a normative view of the historian, in which clerical view-points predominated, but others could share.

The debate reflects the rise, consolidation and decline of Catholic nationalist ideology in Quebec.

THANATOLOGY, EXISTENTIALISM, AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF DEATH (by Deane M. Perkins)

In their attempt to understand the experience of the dying, thanatologists have proposed that acceptance, or a certain degree of quiet expectation as a person contemplates his approaching end, is the appropriate attitude in the final stage of life. Is this attitude also appropriate throughout life? Existentialism suggests that it is, since life must be lived between the polarity of the affirmation of life and the acceptance of death. Not only is an awareness of this more realistic, it is more enhancing to life itself. Such is the conclusion which is seen to emerge from a careful study of the understanding of death, and of attitudes towards it, set forth in the works of Martin Heidegger and Albert Camus.

Some implications of this for the care of the terminally ill are noted.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN BLACK THEOLOGY: AN APPRECIATION OF GOD AS LIBERATOR AND RECONCILER (by Ishmael Noko)

From the perspective of South African Black Theology, God is depicted as One who, through the historical event of Atonement, liberates fallen man from the state of alienation, that is, a state of being separated from God and from one's neighbour. Through the same event God reconciles man with Himself and with his neighbour. Within this theological stance, Christian discipleship is interpreted as implying man's active participation in Yahweh's liberation and reconciliation of man in history, that is, man must become a co-liberator and co-reconciler with God.

For the Black Christian Community in South Africa that groans under the heavy burden of the apartheid system, belief in God as Liberator and as Reconciler entrusts Blacks with the responsibility of self-liberation and also with the liberation of others. This includes the rejection of the limits imposed upon them by the apartheid syndrome, thus defining their *raison d'être* on the basis of the Gospel of Divine liberation and reconciliation.

We argue that Black Theology's emphasis on God as Liberator and as Reconciler must be understood within the socio-historical realities of Blackness.

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

Dr. Gregory Bawn from St. Michaels, U. of T., is our visiting Professor this year teaching a course on Contemporary Catholic Studies as well as a graduate seminar in the area of Sociology and Religion.

Gustavo Gutiérrez from Peru is scheduled to visit us for a few days this fall. Dr. Gutiérrez is author of *A Theology of Liberation: history, politics, and salvation*.

Dr. D.J. Hall taught at the Vancouver School of Theology, U.B.C., this summer. He combined this with the preparation of a new manuscript entitled *Rethinking Christ*. Dr. Hall has also been attending the George Grant Symposium at the University of Toronto; essays will be published by the House of Anansi.

Archdeacon H. St. C. Hilchey, principal of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College, was re-elected Prolocutor of the General Synod of the Anglican Church at its recent meeting in Calgary. He will serve in that office until 1980.

Dr. Urban T. Holmes, Dean of the School of Religion of the University of the South, Tennessee, will lead an M.I.M. workshop on "Authentic Approaches to Ministry Today" during the first week of January.

Dr. Marie Isaacs from Heythrop College, London, will be a visiting Lecturer during the Spring Term offering courses in the area of New Testament.

Rev. William Lord of the United Church Field Staff will lead an M.I.M. workshop at the beginning of January with the theme "New Frontiers in Church Education".

The L.W. Anderson Lectures (Feb.23-24) will be presented by Dr. Paul S. Minear on the theme "Paul: Liberation Theologian".

Dr. Philip A. Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches since 1972 presented the Birks Lectures for this year. The topic of the three lectures was "The Ecumenical Vision".

Dr. D.R. Runnalls was in Israel for six weeks of the past summer. During that time Dr. Runnalls was able to pursue research in the libraries of Jerusalem as well as attend the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies.

Miss Linda Spear, a graduate of the Medieval Institute in Toronto will be assisting Dr. George Johnston in an experimental tutorial course designed to encourage students to pursue intensive reading with a minimum of lectures. Miss Spear will also be offering a course on Women's Studies.

United Theological College which has shared space in the Diocesan College for the past ten years has moved to new quarters. The three storey building at 3521 University Street includes office space, seminar rooms, lounge, kitchenette and possible living space for a few staff members and graduate students.

Dr. Art Van Seters (M.I.M.) and Dr. Sean McEvenue (Loyola/Concordia) are the sabbatical replacements this year for Dr. Robert C. Culley in the area of Old Testament.

THE NEED TO FEEL INNOCENT

The Editor of ARC has dutifully sent round his note with some questions we have heard before. What have you been up to during the summer? Have you travelled and, if so, where to? Have you published anything? Has some honour been conferred upon you?

My reply to these questions has to be rather pedestrian and quite unexciting. There have been no publications, no honours, no travels. I have done some reading and some writing. There were certainly some gaps in a lecture course that I needed to fill. And there were some chores at the Faculty for which I was responsible. That does not sound very much but somehow the time flew by.

Perhaps I could mention that it was during my reading that I came across the longing for innocence.

In her classic study of *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* Anna Freud writes about a young woman, employed in a children's institution, who felt bitterly jealous of her brothers and fiercely hostile towards her mother. She could not abide that tempestuous old harridan! Her first impulse was to act out these feelings in various forms of unpleasant and unruly behaviour, but this could only make for an uncomfortable life at home, so she chose to prohibit her longings for revenge against those near her in favor of behaving like a battle axe towards another woman outside the home and like a sadist towards herself. In the end she was relieved of this discomposure when "the hatred which she had felt for female love-objects or their substitutes was transferred into the conviction that she herself was hated, slighted or persecuted by them". (p.49).

At first sight this reads like one of those nasty Freudian turn-arounds with which it is difficult to be patient. But perhaps Anna Freud's interpretation is not so far out as all that. After all, this defence did allow the young lady to feel innocent of hostility towards her mother and that was no mean achievement. The need to feel innocent is a very powerful one, so powerful in fact as to prompt us towards those contradictory and serpentine devices which have just been described.

We can, of course, fulfil the need to feel innocent in other ways. The resort to perfectionism is a case in point. The interpretation of such a manoeuvre runs something like this. "Since I cannot accept or like myself as I am, I must become perfect; and my efforts toward perfection are all I will let you see!". In this way an individual can feel innocent of his imperfections and of his tendency to make mistakes.

This particular segment of human experience (the need to feel innocent) has nowhere been captured more vividly than in a New Testament narrative with which most readers of ARC will be familiar. I refer to the account of the

The Editor of ARC has dutifully sent round his note with some questions we have heard before. What have you been up to during the summer? Have you travelled and, if so, where to? Have you published anything? Has some honour been conferred upon you?

My reply to these questions has to be rather pedestrian and quite unexciting. There have been no publications, no honours, no travels. I have done some reading and some writing. There were certainly some gaps in a lecture course that I needed to fill. And there were some chores at the faculty for which I was responsible. That does not sound very much but somehow the time flew.

Perhaps I could mention that it was during my reading that I came across the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. I was particularly struck by the article on the "Need to Feel Innocent" by Robert C. Marsh. It is a classic study of the role of the "innocent" in the history of religion. Marsh writes about a young woman, employed in a children's institution who felt bitterly jealous of her brother and his wife's attitude towards her mother. She could not abide that tempestuous old husband. Her first impulse was to act out these feelings in various forms of unpleasant and unwise behaviour, but this could only make for an uncomfortable life at home. So she chose to give him a battle axe towards another woman outside the home and this a subtle hatred which she had felt for female love-objects or their substitutes was transferred into the conflict that she herself was waged, fighting off her "seduced by them" (p. 49).

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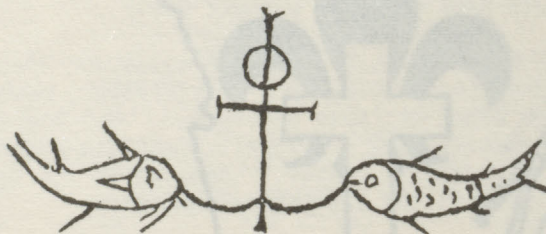
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But the people of faith also have something to say. They talk about the forgiveness of sins, a doctrine and an experience which were devised to deal with our need to feel innocent. It is possible to find at the heart of life enough grace and forgiveness to have our brokenness forgiven and blessed. What man wants to return to the land of innocence even if the realm East of Eden is full of sorrow and turmoil? A sign of the spiritually mature man is that he need no longer deny his loss of innocence nor feel that he needs to pay for it. Such a man is the second Adam, the new man.

Alas, Mr. Editor, there is nothing very special about all this but the thoughts did occur to me during the summer. They are part of the many things I was up to! And that, I believe was what you wanted to know.

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