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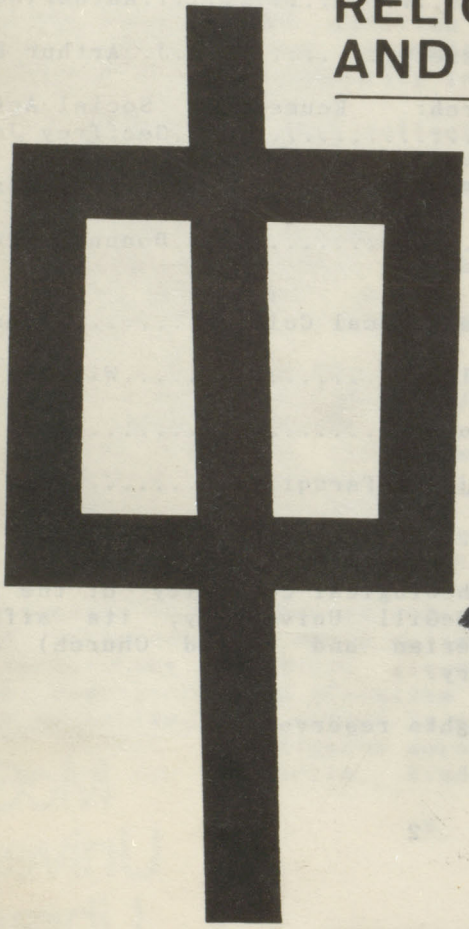
RELIGION AND ETHICS



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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

John R. Williams

In times past the single most important source of moral teaching in almost every human society was religion. Although there are still many individuals and even entire societies who look to religion for moral guidance, it is clear that the forces of secularism have greatly diminished the influence of religion on both social and personal moral decision-making and behaviour. As the moral dilemmas posed by new developments in science, technology, business and politics multiply, we wonder whether this trend will continue, or whether religion will recapture at least some of its lost authority in the sphere of morality.

The six papers in this collection all deal with challenges posed to religion, and in particular to the Canadian Christian churches, by contemporary moral issues. Some of these challenges come from outside the churches: e.g., from the feminist movement, biomedical technology, or other religions. Other challenges come from within, such as the Biblical teachings on social justice and recent church and inter-church attempts to apply these teachings to contemporary society.

Although ethics, as the study of morality, has traditionally been concerned more with individual decision-making and behaviour than with social policies and practices, the papers in this collection are in accord with the main trend of contemporary religious ethics in concentrating on the social dimension. If indeed the major ethical problems today are social rather than individual in nature, what role can we expect or hope for religion to play in providing solutions?

A considerable number of religious people would welcome some form of theocracy, in which religious laws are enforced by the civil authorities. However, given its poor record in the past and the ever-increasing pluralism of many, if not most, of the world's societies, this option is not to be recommended. A more moderate revival of religious morality could result in a form of Christian (or Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.) democracy.

Although Latin American liberation theology has provided some inspiring suggestions about how this might function, the existing political parties which claim a religious base are poor advertisements for religious morality. A third approach is for religious people to accept the fundamentally secular nature of contemporary society and to serve as advocates of justice, compassion and the other human values which tend to be neglected within secularism.

How can religion attain even this minimal degree of influence on social morality? First of all, religious authorities (including theologians) will have to address the major ethical issues facing society today. They will need to develop a suitable methodology for doing this; at a minimum the methodology will facilitate the input of both the appropriate expertise and experience of those affected by the issue in question and of theological considerations. Once positions or guidelines on the issue are developed, there still remains the task of communicating these to the other members of the religious body and to society at large in such a way that the teachings will be both heard and acted on. Most religious organizations have barely begun to develop the communications and pastoral skills required for these tasks.

Given the extent and complexity of the work required to develop and communicate ethical teachings, religious groups may conclude that this should not be one of their priorities. However, this would be most unfortunate. Religions have always attempted to promote human happiness in this life by teaching which forms of behaviour are acceptable and which are not. In other words, morality is and always has been an essential aspect of religious teaching. If religious organizations abandon this field, the purely "spiritual" functions which will remain may well be insufficient to retain the allegiance of their adherents. More positively, these organizations can provide their members with much needed guidance about how to deal with the bewildering array of moral options posed by new developments in science, technology, medicine and business. We are all affected in one way or another by these developments, and if religious wisdom will provide some enlightenment on how to assess them, both individuals and society in general will be well served.

WHAT IS FEMINIST ETHICS?[1]

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While feminists have always regarded feminism as an ethical stance as well as a political one, it is only within the past few years that efforts have been made to develop a specific feminist approach to ethics and ethical theory. The political issues to which feminists are committed are, of course, seen as ethical ones as well, but the ethical dimension has been assumed rather than consciously explicated. Thus concern with ethics has been framed in terms of the ethical demand for equal rights before the law and in the workplace, for liberal feminists; or, for radical feminists, moral issues of the exercise of patriarchal power over women's lives and bodies, such as rape, pornography, and reproductive freedom. Much of the writing in these areas has been done not by academic ethicists, but by women who have been politically involved, including journalists, literary figures, and political activists. While feminist ethics has always been part of the women's movement, it is only now that it is developing as a specific area within feminist theory and praxis. Feminist ethics, like all feminist scholarship, is interdisciplinary; and academic feminists from a variety of fields are raising questions about such areas as ethical theory or metaethics, moral agency, conceptions of moral development, ethics of research methods.

Feminist ethics grows out of that body of political and social analysis which has come to be known as feminist theory. Feminist theory is critical theory in that it articulates the invisibility of women in classical western political and social thought. It insists that the body of "malestream"[2] thought that is the western philosophical tradition represents the worldview and experience of a small percentage of the human race, namely a male intellectual élite; and this has provided the rational legitimation for the patriarchal structure of society. The analyses that make up feminist theory come from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including political philosophy, economics, sociology, psychology, theology, literary criticism,

and, more recently, the hard sciences, especially biology. They also represent a variety of political stances on a spectrum ranging from liberalism on the right, through socialism, traditional marxism, to radical feminism with its varying shades on the left.[3]

Feminist theorists move beyond critique to point to new visions of what human society might look like when women's perspectives and life-experiences are incorporated as data in the fields of human knowledge that both create and reflect reality. The foundational insight of feminist theory is the centrality of *experience*, and the difference between women's and men's experience. The feminist critical principle is that all formal reflection and discourse in Western civilization, no matter how "objective" it purports to be, reflects and affirms the *male*'s experience of the world. Therefore what must be done in every field or discipline is the reconstruction of both the tradition and the discipline to include and reflect *women*'s experience. But it is also recognized that this is not merely a question of a corrective achieved by "adding in women"; rather it represents a fundamental "paradigm shift"[4] that ultimately radically alters the whole notion of what passes for "knowledge".[5] This is an avowedly *political* project, with profound implications for ethics.

At the same time, in response to the critique made in recent years by black feminists, women of colour, and third world women, North American academic feminist theorists have made a great effort to recognize the limitations of their work by admitting their inability to speak for and analyse the situation of "all women" or some universal women's experience, even while maintaining the worth and validity of their effort, not only for an élite, but for all women.[6]

Looking back over the past fifteen years of the contemporary feminist movement, we discern three stages in the development of feminist ethics (not necessarily chronologically successive, for the first and second stages continue into the third). In the first stage, feminist ethics evolves out of political praxis. The contemporary feminist movement began with women's awareness and articulation of our oppression through the vehicle of consciousness raising. As women began to recognize our situation

and its inequities, the early "liberal" moral claims for equal rights began to emerge. Thus there are ethical assumptions underlying the political movement--e.g. justice and equal rights for women are assumed to be an ethical, as well as a political, requirement. In this stage, the politics are explicit, the ethics implicit.

In the second stage, feminist ethics develops out of political and social *analysis.* At this stage, the ethical implications of feminist political and social theory begin to be drawn, but this is done primarily in relation to *issues* rather than to theory or metaethics. Some of the issues that have emerged as significant in the early part of this stage have been issues related to sexual morality such as rape, pornography and reproductive freedom and reproductive technology. War and nuclear proliferation and, more recently, poverty and economic justice are issues being addressed in feminist ethical analysis. In the discussion of all these issues, the male use of power becomes a central focus. Rape and pornography, for example, are both seen as merely the logical conclusion of the view that women exist as instruments for the satisfaction of male sexual desire, an assumption that is institutionalized in the social forms of "compulsory heterosexuality" and the nuclear family. Reproductive freedom is the issue not only in abortion access, but also in the enforced sterilization of poor and ethnic minority women, as well as the unavailability of safe and reliable contraception. Feminist analysis sees the problem as rooted in the male desire to control women's lives by controlling and claiming their procreative powers. Feminist analysis of violence, war and arms proliferation (and related issues of environmental safety, nuclear wastes, etc.) sees male dominated political and economic structures (governments, multi-national corporations) as being irresponsible toward human life in general and the future of human society on the earth.

Initial attempts to go deeper than concrete issues and to consider what a feminist ethics might look like were mostly generalized critiques of the failure of western ethics to take account of women's personhood and the circumstances of women's lives.[7] In the third stage, which has just begun, feminist ethical theory begins to develop as critique and revisioning of the western and Christian traditions of ethics. It is this stage

which is the focus of the remainder of this paper.[8]

Theoretical approaches to feminist ethics are being developed from a number of different perspectives. Carol Gilligan's work is perhaps the best-known of the "female values" approach to feminist moral theory.[9] Her work has been much-analysed and much criticized, and I will not repeat this analysis and criticism at length here. While Gilligan's work suffers from serious methodological short-comings, as well as some problematic assumptions about male-female differences, it is suggestive of directions for future research into moral development and moral decision-making processes that will further call into question assumptions about "normal" development that are clearly biased to represent the masculine (and probably white western) as normative and the feminine as deviant. And also, regardless of the difficulty with Gilligan's "scientific" claims and data, her suggestions as to the importance of regarding responsibility in relationship as a fundamental moral principle are an important corrective to a view of ethics that relies almost exclusively on "objective" and rational decision-making procedures as an ethical ideal.

From the perspective of critique of Christian ethics, the first, and so far the only, book-length work on feminist ethics is Beverly Wildung Harrison's *Our Right to Choose: Toward a New Ethic of Abortion.*[10] In this landmark effort toward a systematic and explicit feminist ethic, Harrison zeroes in on one issue, abortion, in order to develop and enunciate a feminist critique of the Christian moral tradition that has never taken seriously women's personhood, well-being, and moral agency. This failure of Christian ethics gives the lie to the claim to be "pro-life" in opposing abortion. Harrison's work is very significant in advancing the feminist "pro-choice" position far beyond the simply cry for "woman's rights over her own body," and developing a tightly reasoned moral argument that is feminist in the best sense of the word, namely taking woman's well-being as a fundamental moral requirement.

Feminist philosophers are approaching ethics with new insight into some of the traditional concerns of philosophical ethics. These include the central issues of automony and moral agency, self and personhood, human individuality and

relationality. There is an effort to develop a philosophical concept of self and personhood that includes the centrality of relationship, the essential, rather than accidental, nature of particularity and historicity of the moral subject. Feminist philosophers reject the reduction of moral agency to rationality, and the reduction of the human subject to mind. In this as in all areas of feminist theory there is an appeal to interdisciplinarity. A philosophical concept of self as relational must draw from social-scientific insights into the social and psychological development of self in relationship. Thus in philosophical ethics as in other areas of feminist theory there is a methodological as well as a content critique.[11]

As indicated above, feminist ethics as a field or discipline is in the early stages of development. There is much work that remains to be done, and many ways in which feminist theory and political practice can be applied to ethics. Some of these projects would include the following suggestions:[12]

1. While the (for feminists) ever-problematic relationship between theory and praxis continues to demand articulation, there is a need for a feminist metaethics, and it is time to begin the work of constructive feminist theorizing in ethics. This work must be done, of course, in constant reciprocity with feminist political activists, and with women in all circumstances of life, including, particularly, women who are oppressed not singly as women, but doubly or triply as women of colour, poor women, disabled women, and women from disadvantaged countries. For example, feminist political and economic analysis needs to be applied to construction of a feminist theory of *justice*.

2. The multidisciplinary aspects of feminist ethics need to be continuously articulated, with input not only from academic feminists representing a variety of disciplines, but also from "workers in the field" who often find academic concerns irrelevant to the hard questions they are faced with.[13]

3. Feminist ethical theory must not be formulated "anglocentrically"--that is to say, it must include consideration of the important theoretical work being done by European and Québécoise feminists.

4. Finally, new ways must be found of formulating some of the crucial ethical issues of our time that have particular bearing on women's lives. For example, the feminist concern with freedom to access to abortion as necessary for women's moral agency and responsible life-planning[14] has perhaps led us to overlook other ethical issues in reproductive choice. Should drug-addicted mothers be free to give birth repeatedly to drug-addicted babies, for example? What are the ethical and social policy implications of this question for a feminist analysis? Or, in examining the ethical issues surrounding the various new reproductive technologies to alleviate infertility, why are not feminists asking questions about the underlying value assumptions that pressure infertile women to seek biological motherhood at all costs, economic and physical?

Canadian feminists are in the vanguard of the development of this exciting field of feminist thought and praxis, as is exemplified by the attention to this area at the recent annual meetings of such organizations as the Canadian Society of Women in Philosophy, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, and the Canadian Society of Women and the Law. Articles on feminist ethics have appeared in the Journal *Canadian Woman Studies*,[15] and the *Canadian Journal of Feminist Ethics*[16] began publication in early 1986. While much of this activity is primarily academic, there is a strong desire and effort on the part of these groups to involve women outside the universities and professions in the development of a feminist ethics that will be meaningful to as wide a feminist constituency as possible.

NOTES

1. Some of this material has appeared in slightly different form in *Le Bulletin/Newsletter* of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1986), pp. 27-35, and in the *Canadian Journal of Feminist Ethics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1986).

2. Mary O'Brien seems to have been the originator of this now commonly used term in feminist writings. See her *The Politics of Reproduction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981),

pp. 5ff.

3. For a comprehensive overview and analysis of the range of feminist theories, see Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Totawa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983).

4. See Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad Press, 1983), p. xxi.

5. Sharon D. Welch, *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity: A Feminist Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985).

6. See, for example, Maria C. Lugones and Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory For You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice'" in M. Pearsall, ed., *Women and Values: Radings in Recent Feminist Philosophy* (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1986), pp. 19-31. In fact, as Beverly Harrison points out, it is perhaps the singular responsibility of white educated women to analyse that which is specific about women's oppression as women, since this becomes visible as a distinct issue only in the lives of those who are only singly oppressed as women, rather than doubly oppressed as black women, or triply as poor black women. See her *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), p. 25.

7. Early examples are found in Sheila Collins, *A Different Heaven and/or Earth* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1974), and Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), in her chapter titled "Beyond Phallocentric Morality."

8. What I have seen as three stages in the development of feminist ethics, Debra Shogan, in a recent article, approaches in terms of three "categories" of feminist ethics--feminist ethics as the basis of political action, as the moral agency of feminists, and as the work of feminist philosophers. One of the values of Shogan's approach is that it highlights the ongoing nature of these stages in current feminism. See her "The Categories of Feminist Ethics" in the *Canadian Journal of Feminist Ethics*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall, 1986), pp. 4-13.

9. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). An entire issue of *Social Research* (Vol. 50, 1983), was devoted to critique, feminist and non-feminist, of Gilligan's work.

10. Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Our Right to Choose: Toward a New Ethic of Abortion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

11. For a comprehensive bibliography of feminist philosophical work in ethics, see Sheila Mullett, "Feminist Ethics: Course Description" in *Canadian Journal of Feminist Ethics*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall, 1986), pp. 27-33.

12. The following points were developed in dialogue with Kathleen Martindale. See Kathleen Martindale and Martha J. Saunders, "Editorial" in *Canadian Journal of Feminist Ethics*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall, 1986), p. 2.

13. This was brought home graphically to me during my attendance at a recent conference on "Ethical Issues in Reproductive Health" sponsored by Catholics for a Free Choice in Washington D.C., Dec. 5-6, 1986. While this was in many ways an excellent conference, I heard repeated complaints from health care workers and others in service professions, that the issues dealt with were not the ethical problems they confronted every day in their work with women whose lives did not fit the middle class norm. The question below about drug-addicted mothers was raised by one of these women.

14. See Harrison, *Our Right to Choose.*

15. *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring, 1985).

16. *Canadian Journal of Feminist Ethics*, care of Department of Religion, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve O., Montreal, Que., H3G 1M8. Three issues have been published so far.

POWER AND DOMINION:
BIOMEDICINE'S CHALLENGE TO THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION

David J. Roy
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"Do you see this egg?
With it you can overthrow
all the schools of theology,
all the churches of the
earth."

Diderot[1]

"We have not yet seen
what man can make of
man."

B.F. Skinner[2]

I

Religious leaders and educators, theologians, and pastors carry a responsibility to interpret and grapple with the challenges confronting the beliefs and doctrines of the Judaeo-Christian tradition today. It is crucial to realize that technology, power, and a set of philosophical positions invoked to guide the utilization of technological power in society mark today's decisive testing ground of the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

It is in the realm of action and living that fundamental beliefs are thwarted, contradicted, or overthrown. This is because of the function of fundamental beliefs. They serve not as substitutes for human inquiry and innovative science, but as the basis for human living. They serve as the basis for answers to the oldest of human questions, the questions of how we should live and behave towards one another as human beings. We are no longer sure how to do this anymore and, indeed, in matters of the greatest importance.

Ethics today is in a profound crisis, the crisis caused by the combination of an "anarchy of human choosing with the apocalyptic power of contemporary man--the combination of near-omnipotence with near-emptiness."[3]

The crucial challenge to Judaeo-Christianity today comes from the certainty of our power and the uncertainty of our moral norms. We now possess a Promethean nuclear destructive power over life on this planet. We have no global macroethics, only a power politics as fragile as its competing nation states, to guide and contain the use of this power. With recent rapid advances in the life sciences, particularly in molecular biology and genetics, we are now approaching the threshold of utopian power over the course of biological evolution. It is undoubtedly true that "the description of life in molecular terms provides the beginnings of a technology to reshape the living world to human purpose, to reconstruct our fellow life forms--and even ourselves--into projections of the human will."[4]

As technological power, particularly biomedical power, reaches Promethean and utopian levels, traditional moral norms appear to have lost their authority. We repeatedly find it difficult, at times impossible, to distinguish right from wrong. In fact the meaning of authority itself has changed and continues to change in Western culture. Moral authority once belonged to those who knew, or at least successfully exercised the claim to know, the "why" of human endeavour. Today, authority increasingly accrues to those who know how to get things done. Power is becoming our new moral authority.

Ethics is in a foundational crisis because earlier intelligible orders that exercised sway over the mind and created a community of moral meaning have disintegrated or are in the process of doing so. A new intelligible order, a new unified moral field theory has not yet arrived. A new and vigorous voluntarism is arising within the space created by the disappearance of morally normative intelligible orders. Choice is the norm and choice becomes "an act of will responsible to nothing beyond itself."[5] On this basis, there is no conceivable constraint on what we shall try, no defensible perimeter at which we shall stop, for human desire *per se* has no internal limits. Power has found its congenial moral theory. Indeed, at this period of history, the major challenge to the Judaeo-Christian traditions is taking shape on the level of will as well as the level of intellect.

II

Bernard Lonergan, the renowned Canadian theologian, has said: "Power in its highest form is power over men, and the successful maker of myths has that power within his reach and grasp."[6] The makers of our new biotechnologies have come within reach and grasp of a corpus of knowledge and skills that suggest a new myth and deliver the power to achieve it. It may well prove true that we have not yet seen what man can make of man.

POWER OVER BIRTH

Prenatal information is power, the ability to do a number of things. But we do not yet know how to cure most of the defects we can now diagnose. We do not yet have therapeutic power over genetic disease. What prenatal diagnosis does deliver is power of selection over which foetuses are going to be allowed to be born. Prenatal diagnosis combined with selective abortion set up the possibility of quite thoroughly eliminating defective children from the population. These methods have already led to a dramatic reduction of the incidence of betathalassemia, a hereditary blood disease, in some parts of the world.

The rapid extension of prenatal diagnostic testing manifests an intensified urgency of demand for a normal child and an increased inability or unwillingness on the part of ever higher numbers of parents to accept and care for a defective baby.

How can the traditional Judaeo-Christian principle of protection of the weak be effectively expressed in our society without a clear and penetrating analysis of the cultural and societal causes of this contemporary evolution or revolution in parental and familial attitudes and practices? What are these causes and what is the direction of this evolution of attitudes?

POWER OVER DYING

The doctor-patient relationship obviously justifies high-risk invasions of the bodily integrity of human beings, acts that

would be criminal outside this relationship. What acts does the medical mandate justify when a patient is deteriorating beyond medicine's ability to cure? Are there any moral limits to the measures a doctor may take to alleviate pain, suffering, and a lingering process of dying? A patient, conscious and lucid, may request rapid and painless death from a doctor. In certain extreme cases of cancer, with respect to certain unsalvageable infants, and when faced with certain irreversibly senile patients in a state of painful and prolonged dying, doctors themselves may ask whether waiting for death to occur defines the limit of their moral and professional duty and power.

Many who hold that we may, in certain circumstances, allow a patient to die, even hope that the patient dies rapidly, still hold just as strongly that we may not in the same circumstances hasten death or kill the patient. What is the origin of this moral restraint? What purposes does it serve? How can such a restraint be justified when the act it prohibits appears desirable from every empirical point of view?

But how do we answer these questions? We do not really know, unless we appeal to a belief, philosophical, religious, or other. But an act of belief is an act of will. Do we not thereby confess that the human will rather than human intelligence is the ultimate foundation of ethics, in this context, of medical ethics? Scientific consensus is reached on the basis of data, evidence, and reasoned argument. If ethics is ultimately grounded in an act of will, does it not follow that consensus in ethics is ultimately unattainable? If the authority of reason is ultimately unable to resolve the most important of our ethical questions, what kind of authority or power is then morally normative?

HUMANNESS AS NORM?

Recent experiments utilizing gene transfer from one species to another show that genes are interchangeable. The idea that the genetic components of human life are, at an elementary level, interchangeable with those of all other life has led one scientist to wonder "if there is anything unique about humanness..."[7] How can an ethics of sufficient stature to match

the power of novel technologies be constructed on the shifting sands of an "image of man" that commands no reverence?

Since childhood, Christians have been taught and continue to believe that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. The Antiochean tradition used the concepts of sovereignty, authority, and dominion to interpret this foundational belief of Judaeo-Christianity. How is man God's image? Diodore of Tarsus answers: "By way of dominion, in virtue of authority.... Just as God rules over the whole universe, so too man rules over the things of the earth."[8] For John Chrysostom, the Biblical creation belief is an assertion of human sovereignty: "As no one is superior to God in heaven, so let no one be superior to man upon earth."[9]

Scientific and technological power will increasingly permit some to exercise great dominion over others, indeed, over future generations. Is it not possible that what is "distinctively human" will be increasingly reduced to the shrinking domain of features that have not yet been scientifically mastered or that cannot yet be technologically changed? The presence of God as conceived in the simpler images of the religious mind has receded from the universe with each advance of science. Could it not happen that science, in penetrating to the genetic origins of life, will offer an ironic demonstration of the Biblical statement that man is made in the image of God?

That was the point of Diderot's reductionism: God disappears if man, made in God's image, is nothing more than organized matter. Systems theory can take care of that kind of reductionism. But we have since penetrated to the core of the events in Diderot's egg. We are acquiring stupendous power over these events. Will we still hold to the foundational belief of Judaeo-Christianity, to the belief that man is created in the image and likeness of God, when we eventually come to see what man can make of man?

This question should mobilize, not paralyse, those who carry within their minds and hearts one of the most powerful ideas that history has ever produced, the belief that all human beings have been accepted unconditionally by the Creator. However, this belief has to be worked out, and its consequences have to be

interpreted, articulated, and implemented precisely in those places where the decisions that shape our culture and society are made. Activating the higher viewpoint of the Judaeo-Christian traditions means vigorously and intelligently challenging uses of science, technology, and power that block the emancipation of the emerging human spirit from the bondage of disease, ignorance and bias. The challenge is to demonstrate that transcendence is possible.

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9. John Chrysostom, *Homiliae de statuis 7*, 2 (PG 49, 93) cited in F.G. McLeod in the same place as in note 8 above.

MERIDA

Now in Merida
when the ancient sun
recounts a history
of stonecutting
and soothsayers,
the people, pausing
in their work
with eyes cast skyward,
salute a time of enemies
and rites of love.

Southeast in Chichen Itza
near the platform of Venus
and the Temple of Jaguars,
around the Castle of Kukulcan,
each grassblade and shrub
remembers its hieroglyphs,
nodding secret messages
as tokens of renewal
to celebrate a world
now instantly revived.

David Lawson

EUTHANASIA: TRADITIONAL HINDU VIEWS AND THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

Katherine Young

With the advance of medical technology capable of prolonging life and with the debate over personal autonomy, modern societies have had to explore the legal and ethical aspects of euthanasia. Euthanasia means literally "the good death" (Greek: *eu*, good + *thanatos*, death), yet euthanasia is fraught with controversy for it connotes both:

1. The action of inducing the painless death of a person for reasons assumed to be merciful,

2. An easy or painless death (*The American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 453).

At the heart of the controversy is whether euthanasia is to be understood as murder or suicide, or whether it is an act of mercy and a right to self-determination and death with dignity and ease achieved by poison or some other death-inducing agent.

When one approaches the topic of death in the classical Indian context, one encounters four basic types of death: natural, self-willed, accidental and murder. It is the first two categories that are of concern here, for, on the one hand, there was a strong brahmanical (Hindu) prescription to live a hundred years or at least to the end of the natural life span and, on the other hand, there developed an acceptance of some forms of *self-willed* death. This category of self-willed death includes three different types: suicide, heroic voluntary death (*mors voluntaria*), and what we shall term *mors voluntaria religiosa* or religious, self-willed death. By way of introduction, these three types may be distinguished by the following features. Suicide, which is prohibited, is self-willed death prompted by passion, depression, and/or uncontrollable circumstance. Heroic *mors voluntaria*, found mainly in the milieu of warriors in the early history, was: 1. a substitute for heroic death in battle which results in heaven, 2. a way to allow peaceful succession to the throne, or 3. a way to avoid calamity, e.g. when a woman

avoids rape or slavery by a conqueror by willing her own death. Closely related, both historically and conceptually, to heroic *mors voluntaria* was *mors voluntaria religiosa*, which emphasized the religious dimension, i.e. heaven, liberation, or *dharma* (duty and social order based on religious principles) rather than the heroic dimension. It was found outside the warrior milieu, though it may have drawn from the latter, and it was carefully distinguished from suicide, that is passionate, self-willed death.

Contained in the Hindu law books (*dharmaśāstras*) are a number of injunctions and prohibitions that reflect and provide guidelines for proper conduct as well as document changing attitutes in society. With reference to our topic of concern, we find that suicide is severely condemned throughout this period. It is worth quoting Kanes's summary of the *smṛti* statements on suicide (*ātmaghāta or ātmahatyā*) understood as self-destruction usually prompted by extreme emotion, depression and/or some external circumstance over which the individual thinks he/she has no control:

> The Dharmaśāstra writers generally condemn suicide or an attempt to commit suicide as a great sin. Parāśara (IV. 1-2) states that if a man or woman hangs himself or herself through extreme pride or extreme rage or through affliction or fear, he or she falle into hell for sixty thousand years. Manu V.89 says that no water is to be offered for the benefit of the souls of those who kill themselves. The Ādiparva (179.20) declares that one who commits suicide does not reach blissful worlds. Vas. Dh. S. (23.14-16) ordains "whoever kills himself becomes *abiśasta* (guilty of mortal sin) and his *sapiṇḍas* have to perform no death rites for him; a man becomes a killer of the self when he destroys himself by wood (i.e. by fire), water, clods and stones (i.e. by striking his head against a stone), weapon, poison, or ropes (i.e. by hanging)". They also quote a verse "that [a] *dvija* who through affection performs the last rites of a man who commits suicide must undergo the penance of Cāndrāyaṇa with Taptakṛcchra". Vas.Dh.S. 23.18 prescribes that when a person tries to do away with himself by such methods as hanging, if he dies,

his body should be smeared with impure things and if he lives he should be fined two hundred *paṇas*; his friends and sons should each be fined one *paṇa* and then they should undergo the penance laid down in the śāstra.
(Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol.II, Pt.II, p.924)

While the definition of suicide seems to be all-embracing, i.e. destruction as the consequence of one's own action, Brahman lawgivers as well as the author(s) of the epics make exceptions:

... But Atri (218-219) states some exceptions viz. "if one who is very old (beyond 70), one who cannot observe the rules of bodily purification (owing to extreme weakness...), one who is so ill that no medical help can be given, kills himself by throwing himself from a precipice or into a fire or water or by fasting, mourning should be observed for him for three days and śrāddha may be performed for him". Aparāka (p.536) quotes texts of Brahmagarbha, Vivasvat and Gārgya about an householder "he who is suffering from serious illness cannot live, or who is very old, who has no desire left for the pleasures of any of the senses and who has carried out his tasks, may bring about his death at pleasure by resorting to mahāprasthāna, by entering fire or water or by falling from a precipice. By so doing he incurs no sin and his death is far better than *tapas*, and one should not desire to live vainly (without being able to perform the duties laid down by the śāstra)".
(Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol.II, Pt.II, p. 926)

Clearly here, Brahman authors accept in no uncertain terms the practice of euthanasia, if we understand one meaning of euthanasia to be the "good death" which is self-willed and self-accomplished as a way to deal with the problems of extreme old age and severe illness.

Modern Western supporters of euthanasia often argue that it should be allowed when one is no longer able to live with dignity and comfort and when the quality of life is intolerably undermined. Brahman "jurists" have also sought to define biological, psychological, and social limits for the phenomenon.

This was necessitated by the considerable overlap between the desire to escape the difficulties of extreme illness and old age and the desire to commit suicide proper. For not only are they both forms of self-willed death, but also they both may be prompted by extreme emotion, depression, and/or uncontrollable circumstance. Therefore, to distinguish euthanasia from suicide a number of constraints were proposed. For example, either the illness cannot be treated and death is imminent or the condition of the aged person is such that there is no desire for pleasure. Because all social duties are finished, it is natural to withdraw from life. (In the terminology of modern gerontology this would be a case of disengagement.)

Brahman authors of the legal texts also give a religious dimension to the context of euthanasia, which helps to distinguish it from suicide. Euthanasia may be done when a person no longer can perform the rites of bodily purification, which may occur in the case of extreme illness or extreme old age. Because these duties are dharmic and required, the non-performance of them, according to the ritual logic of Mīmāṁsā, would ordinarily create demerit/sin (*pāpa*). Since the incapacitated person cannot perform mandatory religious duties because of circumstances beyond control, it was necessary to create an exception to the general rule regarding required acts. Consequently, non-performance of obligatory action by an *incapacitated* person is to be considered dharmic. If non-performance of obligatory rituals is considered dharmic for an incapacitated person, then euthanasia, which is defined in part by the situation of incapacitation, may also be considered dharmic. If euthanasia is dharmic, then, in brahmanical terms, it is righteous and religious. Finally, if euthanasia is dharmic and therefore religious, it belongs to the category of *mors voluntaria religiosa* and is definitively different from suicide. Such is the legalistic logic. It is important to note that once the jurists create legal scope for euthanasia, they allow easy means such as jumping from a precipice or into fire and water, unlike Jainas whose method of fasting to death is more arduous.

It is difficult to know whether the brahmanical legitimation of euthanasia was a departure from an earlier brahmanical reluctance to endorse any form of self-willed death, given the prescription of living the natural life span, or whether

euthanasia was occasionally practised among Brahmans themselves. What is important is that once Brahman jurists reflected on the issue, almost all agreed that it could be condoned *in special circumstances* for any individual, Brahmans included. One important implication of this "legal" scope for euthanasia is that responsibility for self-willed death rests ostensibly with the individual. The Law of Karma is the key to understanding the issue of individual responsibility. It is important for an individual to consider the various criteria for euthanasia and to determine whether the desire to die is legitimately a case of euthanasia or whether it is a case of suicide. The distinction is crucial, for the latter generates demerit or sin (*papa*) and leads to hell.

While an individual has responsibility to determine whether the desire to die is legitimate or not (perhaps by remembering the arguments made to convince King Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the Mahābhārata to live), society through its leaders had been responsible for the larger issue of whether *any* kind of *mors voluntaria religiosa* should be legitimated. The decision was made on the basis of the scriptures, the practice of the good people, and societal conditions. There was a recognition of the interconnection of human lives to determine the social order. One definition of *dharma* was, in fact, social order. Practices such as euthanasia were viewed critically in social terms so that the welfare of society was taken into consideration. Once this had been determined, then an individual was free to choose actions that may be optional but must be dharmic, in that they contribute to the general good of society or at least do not obstruct it.

During the period under consideration, when much of the *smṛti* literature was composed, two additional considerations arose for Brahmans reflecting on issues such as euthanasia: the principle of *ahiṁsā* or non-injury to any living thing and the concept of *saṁkalpa* or intention.

Let us first consider the principle of *ahiṁsā* (non-injury), which is accepted by Brahmans in this period for their own code of conduct, no doubt as a reaction to criticisms made against them with reference to their earlier endorsement of violence, especially sacrificial violence. Once Brahmans accept *ahiṁsā*,

then how can they consider euthanasia to be dharmic when it involves killing the self and killing the self is an obvious denial of the principle of non-injury? As Arvind Sharma has argued in his article "The Religious Justification of War in Hinduism" (*ARC*, XIII, 2, Spring 1986) the pursuit and protection of *dharma* provides the religious justification of war. Whereas non-injury to living beings was a *sādhārana dharma* (duty which applies to all human beings irrespective of stage and station or caste in life), Kṣatriyas had protection of *dharma* also as the special duty of their caste, a duty which belonged to the category of *varṇāśrama-dharma* (duty according to caste and stage of life). According to Sharma, in case of conflict between *varṇāśrama-dharma* and *sādhāraṇa-dharma* (as in the case of the Ksatriyas), *varṇāśrama-dharma* (which includes both defensive and aggressive warfare when *dharma* was obstructed) generally had precedence in Hinduism.

Since we have found one situation where killing is dharmic, then we can extend the logic to say that euthanasia as self-willed death may also be viewed by Brahmans as dharmic given the new ideology of nonviolence, because euthanasia supports *dharma* (by allowing an *exception* to the general rule of *dharma* in special circumstances). By this logic euthanasia was reconciled with the principle of *ahiṁsā*.

Besides the principle of *ahiṁsā*, which helps to define the limits of the phenomenon of euthanasia circuitously through the legal idea of exception, another important restrainst imposed on *mors voluntaria religiosa* is the idea of decision or resolve (*saṁkalpa*).

The idea of decision or resolve is first given religious significance in the context of Vedic ritual. The declaration of intent to perform a sacrifice is formalized (*saṁkalpa*). So important is this pronouncement of intent that the ensuing action and even goal is but the automatic sequel of the resolve (with the qualification that the action be done properly). The resolve or will, therefore, generates a power and this *will power*, so to speak, can define destiny. Over time the concept of *saṁkalpa* extends beyond the sacrificial context to other types of religious practices, *mors voluntaria religiosa* notwithstanding. To will death is so powerful that it can burn up bad karma and

thereby expiate sin. It can produce good karma and thereby direct destiny including a visit to heaven. And it can even dramatically influence the course of destiny by 1. eliminating all karmas that cause bondage, thereby triggering salvation, or 2. by appeal to the Supreme Deity's grace to recognize this supreme self-sacrifice.

Now we are in a position to understand the importance of the intention (*saṁkalpa*), which is so intimately related to the goal (*artha*) through the intervening idea of *will power*. This idea of formal (and publicly announced) intention and the resultant will power helps to separate the phenomenon of *mors voluntaria religiosa* from suicide done usually privately out of passion, depression, etc.

While Brahman jurists endorse euthanasia for themselves as well as others in the society, they also probably continued to acknowledge, by the sheer weight of tradition, some practices of self-willed death performed by the warriors (Kṣatriyas) as legitimate *for that caste*.

Although there was positive evaluation of euthanasia in classical Hinduism, strong criticism developed by the tenth century C.E., which suggests that abuse occurred either of euthanasia proper or of other forms of heroic and religious self-willed death with which it was closely associated, despite the attempt to define parameters.

In sum, although there were attempts to prevent abuse, abuse did occur. Accordingly, it became a social issue and topic for debate. Euthanasia in the context of extreme old age and severe disease, it seems, while originally endorsed by the jurists as an exception to the general rule to await the natural end of life (even for Brahmans, which suggests they felt keenly the merits of the case) was swept up into the general debate over *mors voluntaria religiosa*. Perhaps because householder Brahmans were involved, it became one of the first forms of religious, self-willed death to be prohibited. The lesson to be learned from this study of euthanasia in the ancient Hindu context is that it is extremely difficult to limit euthanasia to certain contexts and to prevent abuse even when there is a strong religious disposition to live out the natural life span.

The question now is: have legal controls and a new emphasis on humanitarian values successfully relegated such abuse to the past?

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IMMORAL MAN AND MORAL SOCIETY?

J. Arthur Boorman

The title is surely unacceptable. One should say "persons" or "individuals," not "man," although one does not need to be a feminist to attribute most of the evils in the history of the Western world to males. Nor should one attempt in cavalier fashion to contradict the definitive work of Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the most influential Christian scholars of the past century, especially if one is a former student and admirer. Such an attempt might well merit one of Niebuhr's favourite labels--naive, pretentious or arrogant. My purposes are somewhat more modest. First, as the title suggests, I shall look at the political role of individuals in a democracy as exemplified and illuminated by a few of our current leaders. One may be justified in asking whether the harm wrought by "immoral men" has to be mitigated by "moral society." On the other hand, is a nation's leadership a reflection of its political morality? If, as it appears, the general level of morality in Canada, the United Kingdom or the United States of America, is deplorable, could inspired moral leadership make a significant difference? In theological perspective, does God--the God of hope--move the promise of the Kingdom toward reality through the instrumentality of moral leaders? If the answer is affirmative, as I believe it is, how does God raise up such leadership?

To a great extent, recorded history is the story of the exploits of good or evil men and to a lesser degree, women. Whether it be a Genghis Khan in olden times or a Hitler or Stalin more recently, individuals have had a vast influence for political evil. It is also true that tyrannical rulers may remain in power because of public apathy, connivance or a generally "immoral society." Hitler may not have come to power, for example, without the collective guilt to which signers of the Stuttgart Declaration confessed. At any rate, it is evident that even in democratic societies, immoral political leaders are capable of great social damage. No one was more aware of the need for vigilance as the price of liberty or of the importance of participation for a vital democracy than Reinhold Niebuhr. So

it is interesting to speculate what Niebuhr would be saying today, in the light of the recent furore in the United States over the affair concerning arms to Iran and the contras. Is it not possible that he would be asking, with regard to Lieutenant-Colonel North, Chief of Staff Regan, or even President Reagan, in their relation to Congress, "Immoral Man and Moral Society"?

Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver North is avowedly a Christian believer; he appeared on CBS news on Thanksgiving Day admonishing reporters to go home and thank God for America. As with so many others who regard themselves as the Moral Majority, North's religion appears to be a form of American civil religion as described by Robert Bellah rather than the Christianity of the Gospels. Without attempting here to outline the latter in detail, it would be fair to attribute to a Christian such qualities as humility, compassion, integrity and above all, love. Let us consider what might have been, had such a person with such qualities taken the ethics of the New Testament seriously. Would he have played any role, much less a major role, in the bombing of Libya which killed 37 persons? The avowed purpose of that raid was that it was in reprisal for the bombing a few days earlier of a West German discotheque frequented by U.S. servicemen, when one was killed. It was later reported that the link to Libya was not at all clear; as with other instances of "disinformation" this may have been a case where Syria, or possibly Iran, was the real instigator. But leaving aside the question of lying, what Christian purpose or any other moral purpose did that incredible venture serve? Apart from the morality of retaliation, which I shall mention again later, apart from motivation, what about means and what about consequences?

It was Machiavelli who set forth the view that a ruler not only may but should use any means, no matter how wicked, to achieve his purposes. He would have had no difficulty approving the bombing of Tripoli and Bengasi. He may, however, have had questions about the consequences. Instead of "destabilizing" Gadhafi, whom President Reagan described as "the mad dog of the Middle East," the bombing probably aroused Libyan citizens to rally around their leader. Nor is there any evidence that terrorism has diminished as a result of this action. Even in terms of Machiavellian realism, then, the validity of this adventure has to be doubted. As for moral alternatives, there

may be no specifically Christian suggestions, and it is not my intention to propose any. It may be worth noting, however, that troubles coming out of the Middle East will continue until a tolerable solution is found to the Palestinian question. It may also be true that the United States is caricatured as "the great Satan" because of "the arrogance of power," that is because of the tendency of that nation to use its military prowess to intervene wherever it thinks its interests are jeopardized.

The role of Lieutenant-Colonel North in the Libyan bombing is not clear, but he is mentioned partly because he regards himself as Christian and partly because he appears to have had a major role also in the scandal concerning arms to Iran and the contras. But our questions about the morality of his activities are even more pertinently applied to the President himself. As one whose record suggests an obsessive anti-communism, but particularly in virtue of his office as President, Ronald Reagan must be held accountable for American military action against Nicaragua, including the supplying of arms to the contras, most of whom were supporters of Somoza, the vicious former dictator. Moreover, one does not need to know all the facts to be sure that President Reagan did know, or should have known, about the arms shipments to Iran. In terms of political morality, quite apart from doubts about the strategy, one is bound to ask questions about the wisdom of that undertaking.

Concerning the Iran-Iraq war, Ronald Reagan declared in a television address on November 13, 1986, "The slaughter on both sides has been enormous, and the adverse consequences for that vital region of the world have been growing. ... We have consistently condemned the violence on both sides." So, as a cynic would have to say, the U.S. supplies intelligence data to Iraq and arms to Iran. The moral question, which does not appear to have been paramount in the various investigations, was raised by Ellen Goodman of the *Washington Post*.[1] She asks whether arms were regarded as "wampum" or a form of barter. How many arms represent how many hostages? And, in the admirable hope of freeing a few American hostages (there were three at the time Goodman wrote) is it conceivable, even if the deal had succeeded, that that would justify providing weapons which would certainly kill vastly greater numbers of Iraqis? There has been talk about credibility and damage control, but what about suffering and

death?

Let us return now to the question of individual morality in relation to political leadership. I know nothing about President Reagan's personal morals, but presume they are beyond reproach. Is there no continuity, however, between personal morality and social or political responsibility? Ronald Reagan was until recently, and may still be, one of the most admired and even beloved presidents in American history. He has been esteemed even when his policies were disapproved; polls suggested, for example, that more than sixty percent of U.S. voters disagreed with his support for the contras. President Reagan, like Oliver North, regards himself as a Christian. Christian or not, would not a more humane President have used his enormous popularity to relieve poverty and foster justice and equality in Central America rather than to pass out arms as counters in a game of geopolitics? It may be beside the point to wonder whether the consequences of that policy may be precisely the opposite to what was intended, giving Nicaragua no choice but to seek help from Russia. It is surely not pointless to ask whether such a leader, at once so popular and so powerful, might not contribute significantly to the level of political morality in his own country and in the world.

Even if it is too much to expect a democratic leader to care much about social justice outside the borders of his own land, human needs ought surely to be a domestic concern of a compassionate Christian. The President's recently proposed budget for 1988 allocates over $5 billion for Star Wars research while cutting $750 million from the allocation for school meals and child-nutrition. Proposed spending for the U.S. military adds up to about $302 billion.[2] Even if part of that astronomical amount could not be assigned to humanitarian concerns such as the alleviation of poverty and unemployment, the reduction of environmental hazards, or the assurance of universal medical care, it could at least be used more productively in the economy. In short, the question I am raising is whether a charismatic leader or simply a strong and popular one might use his influence for a more equitable and humane society and a more just and peaceful world.

It is already quite clear that I would answer such a

question in the affirmative. But let us look elsewhere for evidence, particularly (taking a leaf from the book of Amos) closer to home. It would be tempting to consider the harm done by "immoral woman," namely, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the pointless Falklands War, the abject support of the Libyan bombing, the shocking rise in unemployment in the United Kingdom due at least partly to a rigidly held economic ideology. But what about Canada and its leadership?

The present government was elected with one of the largest majorities in Canadian history. The Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, was swept into power with the enthusiastic support of Canadian voters, many of whom looked upon him as the counterpart of our southern neighbour's charismatic leader. What, then, has gone wrong? His party is hovering close to last in the rating of the three major parties; the Prime Minister himself is at this moment less popular than the other two leaders, according to the polls. My concern, however, is not with explanations for this drop in public support, but with the question of Mr. Mulroney's moral leadership. One evident problem has been the quality of his cabinet appointees. This, of course, was a major weakness on President Reagan's part; at least a half dozen of his closest advisors have proved sufficiently inept or immoral to require their dismissal. That has happened in Prime Minister Mulroney's case as well. It would not be unfair to assume that in both cases the choice of such people reflects to some degree the standards of their leaders. But what about the leader himself? What about his commitment to Christian ethical values?

To be fair in attempting to answer such questions, it would be necessary to look over the whole record of the Prime Minister's performance to date, or preferably to do so at the end of a full term of office. For my purpose, however, a look at two or three issues may suffice. First, why did Mr. Mulroney promise a free vote on the subject of capital punishment during his election campaign, if he was personally opposed to it? Although the Roman Catholic Church has been somewhat equivocal on the subject, all the other major Christian churches have been on record as against capital punishment for some time. For the first time in 1985 there was not a single execution in any country of Western Europe. Homicide rates are far higher in the United States, in which thirty-seven states have the death

penalty, putting them in the dubious company of the U.S.S.R., China, Iran and South Africa. The Prime Minister does not want Canada to rejoin that company. He could, I believe, have given a moral lead during the campaign by a strong statement on the subject, or at least avoided having to raise the whole wretched battle again.

It would be improper to suppose that Prime Minister Mulroney allowed himself to be unduly influenced by American attitudes to the death penalty, but one is bound to ask that question with regard to the bombing of Libya, the immorality of which I have suggested is beyond dispute. Why, apart from the United Kingdom, was Canada the only country that abstained in the United Nations from condemning that action? Was the Prime Minister thinking of the way out vote might affect the chances for a free trade agreement with the United States which he is pursuing with such single-minded intensity? There may be many times, as Niebuhr suggested, when compromise is necessary in political decision making. This was not such a time. In the eyes of the world as well as in the eyes of its own citizens, Canada's reputation as a peace-loving, peace-making nation was seriously damaged.

A final example may illustrate my question about leadership. At the end of his audience with the Pope, Prime Minister Mulroney was reported to be angered by a reporter's question implying a similarity between South Africa's treatment of blacks and Canada's treatment of its native peoples. Mr. Mulroney was right in repudiating that analogy, and probably justified in mentioning a planned constitutional conference on aboriginal rights. In a number of instances, however, aboriginal rights have been violated which could have been protected by a morally sensitive political leader. Whether it be simply standing aside while lumber companies move in with their logging operations in areas claimed by the Haidas or other bands, allowing NATO to conduct routine military flights at low level over traditional territory of the Innu (formerly called the Montagnais-Naskapi Indians), or rejecting the claim of natives to oil or mineral rights on their reserve, there are issues where a courageous leader could have helped to make Christian ideals of justice and fair play more of a reality.

Or, after all, am I entirely mistaken? Could it be true

that in politics, as in sports, Leo Durocher was right, "Nice guys finish last"? To repeat a question raised at the beginning, is a democratic leader never more moral than the people he or she represents? Why not leave the question unanswered, or simply say, "Immoral man and immoral society"?[3] That might be realistic, but it would also be too cynical and too pessimistic. At least in democratic nations, immoral leaders have been brought to account by society or its representatives, as occurred in the case of President Nixon and may also happen in the case of President Reagan. More positively, history provides a record of many national leaders, Christian or otherwise, who have contributed significantly to social values in their own lands and in the world. Surely there is truth in John Milton's famous statement in *The Areopagitica*: "for when God shakes a kingdom with strong and healthful commotions to a general reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is, that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities and more than common industry not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further and go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth."

It is here that I come to the crux of my argument. Our liberation theologians have been reminding us that God in Christ identified himself with the poor, the sick, the alienated, the disadvantaged, the oppressed. We are also learning from theologians such as Hans Küng, Jürgen Moltmann and my colleague Douglas Hall, that the Christian hope is not real unless it is social as well as personal, political as well as private. This suggests to me that both Milton and our contemporary theologians are right: God does love "the common people" personally and collectively, and that includes caring for their social and political well being, which requires good and wise leadership. Christians may believe, with Milton, that God raises up such women and men "of rare abilities." How he does so is beyond our full understanding, but our faith provides us with some clues upon which we must act, or neglect at our peril.

For many years the people of Canada and the United States have been subjected to the tirades of radio and television evangelists. In my view there is little inspiration and much harm in most of these programmes. There is, however, one central

and most vital emphasis in their messages, the emphasis on personal commitment to Christ. This is usually understood to be the result of conversion, of being "born again." Over a century ago, Horace Bushnell disputed that view in his *Christian Nurture* in which he asserts that "a child is to grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise."[4] There may be validity in both positions; in any case, there can be no hope of a more Christian society without committed Christians, nor hope of moral society without moral men and women. As for political leadership, it does not emerge from a vacuum; our leaders do reflect the society from which they come. If we would have Christian leaders, we shall have to look at the way people become Christian and what values that appellation implies.

One of Reinhold Niebuhr's main criticisms of Western Christianity, especially Protestantism, was its interpretation of Christian commitment as individual piety to the neglect of its social and political dimensions, a charge that is still true of the evangelists and probably a majority of Christians today. I wonder, however, whether Niebuhr did us a disservice by making too sharp a difference between personal and social standards, although he admitted in the preface to the second printing that the title, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, suggested "too unqualified a distinction."[5] On the other hand, he did not claim that there was any double standard ultimately, and would probably have raised questions about the same issues mentioned in this essay. At any rate, I would like to suggest that the continuity between public and individual morality is closer than Dr. Niebuhr seemed to suggest.

My view is, perhaps surprisingly, supported by Virginia Woolf, daughter of the famous atheist Sir Leslie Stephen. She wrote, "The public and the private worlds are inseparably connected; the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the others."[6] Violent individuals are creators of a violent society, and conversely a violent society spawns violent individuals. In a perceptive article entitled "Trickle-down Violence," the late William Stringfellow asked why the United States should be surprised by the frightful level of violence and crime in that nation, when it appeared to believe, with its enormous military power and its strategic policies, that violence was the best or quickest way to solve

international problems.[7] Stringfellow did not think Christians could or should believe that, and neither do I. To reinforce that point, let us look at the question of violence from the opposite point of view.

There has been growing concern in recent years about the shocking amount of child abuse that is occurring in our Canadian and American societies. An abused child often becomes an abusive parent, a wife-batterer or even a criminal. Why? Because he or she has been taught that violence is the way to solve a problem or win an argument, a lesson which may not have been intended but was clearly implied. Similar lessons are taught in our penal system, and probably also in states which deal with people who kill by killing them. Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, affirmed quite rightly in his book *Spiral of Violence* that violence begets violence.[8]

On the basis of such observations it seems clear that if we want a leader who does not believe that violence solves international problems we may need to reconsider our view of violence, personal we well as collective, in the light of our Christian faith. We may discover in the Bible the theological and ethical foundations for such social values as justice, compassion, toleration, equality and peace, but we also need to "go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth," that is, in the discovery of the full meaning of such values in their present context, and new ways of achieving their realization in our common life. Unless Christians understand the political implications of their faith, no matter how they become committed, and unless they are prepared to become fully involved in the political process, they will have little effect upon the moral character of their nation. But the way that faith is interpreted, ethically and politically, may make a profound difference, as the contrast between a Jesse Helms and a Jesse Jackson or the less radical but equally profound ideological differences between a Tommy Douglas and a Bill Van der Zalm would suggest.

When Jesus began his ministry, he read from the book of Isaiah:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,

for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favor.[9]

Here is the Christian's mandate and inspiration for active political involvement, whether as a leader or as an ordinary citizen.

ENDNOTES

1. Reprinted in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 21, 1986, p. 15.

2. Reported to Congress by Budget Director James Miller.

3. This would indeed be appropriate in the U.S. with respect to the Libyan bombing, in the U.K. with respect to the Falklands War, or in Canada with respect to the death penalty, a majority in each case reportedly favouring that action.

4. Horace Bushnell, *Discourses on Christian Nurture* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), p. 10.

5. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Renewal Edition, 1960), p. xi.

6. Quoted by Michael N. Nagler in "Toward Abolishing War," *Christianity and Crisis*, Vol. 40, No. 20, December 8, 1980, p. 351.

7. *Christianity and Crisis*, Vol. 41, No. 7, April 27, 1981, pp. 115, 126.

8. Helder Camara, *Spiral of Violence* (Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1971).

9. *The Jerusalem Bible*, Luke 4:18-19 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968).

THE LAND OF INTER-CHURCH
ECUMENICAL SOCIAL ACTION IN CANADA

Geoffrey Johnston

The interchurch coalitions are a peculiar Canadian device, an institutional response to the ecumenical possibilities that opened up after Vatican II. Once serious cooperation between Catholics and Protestants became possible, it was only a matter of time before adjustments were made in ecumenical machinery. Given the concern for social change characteristic of the late sixties and early seventies, we need not be surprised that the new ecumenical machinery specialized in social ethics. The purpose of this paper is to say a little bit about the people who form the coalitions, and a good deal more about what coalitions say.

GATT-Fly was the first of the series formed in January 1973. Ten Days appeared a few months later. Since then they have multiplied like rabbits, numbering now about a dozen, depending on which ones are included. Some, like the Inter Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA), have a clear regional focus. Others, like GATT-Fly and Ploughshares, use a more thematic approach. Two coalitions are straightforward funding agencies.

Coalitions are normally supported by the "PLURA" churches, Presbyterian, Lutheran, United, Roman Catholic and Anglican, with other churches joining in on a selective basis. Representation is not always the same. Most churches send members of the head office staff, but the Presbyterians, with less staff to go around, have relied heavily on volunteers. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops staff often represent the Catholic Church, but sometimes members of religious orders appear representing not the Conference, but their Order. In fact, no two coalitions are exactly alike.

The people who make up the coalitions are almost as diverse. In the spring of 1983 I circulated questionnaires to some 100 people, members of coalition boards and staff. Fifty

questionnaires were returned. The picture that emerged was that of a fairly typical group of Canadian church people, on the young side, well educated, and set apart from the main run of Canadian Christians by their concern for social justice.

Probably the most unusual characteristic of coalitions is the level of lay participation. 45% of the board members in the sample were lay people, of whom 25% were women. None of the staff people was ordained, and women outnumbered men three to two. In 1983 one could make a case for saying that the coalition movement was a lay movement, and especially a lay woman's movement. Since then, two key women, Renate Pratt, the senior staff person at the Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility (TCCR), and Frances Arbour, her counterpart at ICCHRLA, have resigned. At the moment there are five women in senior positions, Jeanne Moffat at Ten Days, Karmel Taylor-McCullum at Project North, Sr. Theresa Chu at the Canada China Programme, Margaret Bacon at the Inter Church Committee on Africa, and Moira Hutchinson at the TCCR.

Coalition thinking, on the other hand, is much more eccentric than the makeup of the boards would suggest. Two themes tend to stand out, dependency economics and liberation theology.

Dependency economics is best illustrated from GATT-Fly, although it is also present in Ten Days and to some extent in Ploughshares. At the very dawn of the coalitions, in an unpublished paper called "The Limitations of the Trade Issue," John Dillon, the Coordinator of GATT-Fly, took issue with what he called "developmentalism." In this view all countries started out as undeveloped, or backward, and the way ahead lay in the expansion of the modern sector, measuring progress by such standards as the Gross National Product. Dillon called this view "naive," arguing that there was a crucial difference between undevelopment and underdevelopment, of which the decisive factor was dependence on somebody else.

The dependence characteristic of underdevelopment is fostered by the modern sector, the very part of the economy that developmentalism sees as the key to development. Colonialism promoted the exchange of raw materials for finished products, and

in the process reduced countries which had been self-reliant at a low level of consumption to hopeless bondage to the vagaries of world markets. Economic activity, of itself, would not create a developed society. It might well make things worse, if land once used for food were converted to export crops, and the imported substitutes turned out to be too expensive for ordinary use.

Therefore, concentration on the trade issue was not enough. GATT-Fly needed to know how the system as a whole worked. By 1975 the project had identified a loose coalition of transnational corporations and the *comprador bourgeoisie* as the managers of the system. Once the enemy was identified the task was defined. If the powerful were keeping the people poor, then justice demanded the support of the weak. Since the system applied as much to Canada as to the Third World, the most appropriate sphere of activity seemed to be Canada. Hence GATT-Fly shifted its emphasis from abroad to the homeland, to a country which, in the project's analysis, is in process of underdevelopment.

The classic example of underdevelopment is Canadian infatuation with energy megaprojects. In *Power to Choose* GATT-Fly argued that huge energy schemes were both unwise and unnecessary. They were unnecessary because the same result could be achieved through conservation, a cautious development of conventional resources and a serious development of renewables. They were unwise because such projects could only be financed by borrowing abroad, and the debt thus incurred would have to be repaid, with interest, by selling energy to the Americans. Development by resource exploitation, as country after country in the Third World can testify, is a fool's paradise.

That we should be so led up the garden path is a consequence of corporate activity. The root of the problem is the corporate drive to growth and profit. Without saying so in so many words, GATT-Fly sees government and public alike as subject to manipulation by the enormous resources of the corporate community. Demand can be manufactured like anything else. It is not the source of economic activity but the consequence.

GATT-Fly has thus developed what might be called a supply side ethic. The drive in modern economic life comes from

corporate rather than consumer initiative. Corporate activity, further, does not produce development but underdevelopment, dependence. The orthodox economics espoused by conventional wisdom is precisely what we do not want, in the Third World or in Canada.

Such an argument, while within the limits of accepted economic discussion, is not a view widely shared. Similarly, liberation theology is taken far more seriously in academic circles than in the Canadian Christian community. But coalitions take it very seriously; indeed ICCHRLA sees the dissemination of liberation theology as part of its mandate.

Latin America has traditionally been a society of the few rich and the many poor. Hierarchical societies are always dangerous, but those in Latin America became even more dangerous after the appearance of the national security state in 1964. In this kind of society individuals exist only as components within the state, and the state is the fundamental ethical reality. Furthermore, the state sees itself as locked in mortal combat with the communists and their sympathizers. The state is on a war footing; it must deal ruthlessly with enemies within and without. In such a society human rights can hardly exist. Since in Latin America the state tends to be an extension of the rich, the defence of human rights becomes virtually indistinguishable from defence of the poor.

Given that the preferential option for the poor is a central theme in liberation theology, ICCHRLA's adherence to that school was predictable.

But ICCHRLA is not alone. The Ten Days material shows a tendency in the same direction. In 1975 Janet Somerville contributed a long and carefully reasoned article entitled *Landowners Kings and Idols*, an exegetical piece dealing with the Jubilee regulations, the census and Israel's aversion to idols. Somerville confined the argument to exegesis and did not offer any soteriological conclusions. Ten Days did not follow up this cautious approach. Three years later they published an article by one of the gurus of liberation theology, Gustavo Guttierez. Guttierez pushed concern for the poor beyond ethics into the heart of the faith. Commenting on the parable of the Sheep and

the Goats he argued that the text reads, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat." Christ, not the poor, were fed in this story. Therefore doing justice is the same as knowing God. It is the faith itself.

How did such a relatively ordinary group of Christians come to produce such relatively unusual thinking? It would seem that a few key people had clear and distinct ideas, and either nobody else did or they agreed. Liberation theology provides the most widely advertised rationale for social action at the moment, and nobody within the coalition network has put forward a convincing alternative. In the same way, John Dillon's exposition of dependency economics became orthodoxy in the absence of clear alternatives, clearly put.

But in inter-church land theology is not the point. Common action is what matters. No coalition illustrates this point more clearly than the Task Force on Corporate Responsibility. TCCR uses the share holdings of some churches to gain access to corporate leadership, both privately and in annual meetings, to press for corporate decisions that do not cause social harm. Thus, in the South African case, where investment already exists they argue for the most liberal possible use of South African labour legislation. They oppose any loans to public agencies until apartheid has been dismantled. It is a cautious, reformist approach, much less imaginative than GATT-Fly's, because TCCR will not move beyond policy positions adopted by the supporting churches. The shares that are the basis for their action belong to the churches, not TCCR.

The TCCR experience brings out two essential points for the understanding of coalitions in general. First, the relative independence enjoyed by most projects gives them an intellectual and tactical freedom they would not enjoy if they tied themselves to church policy. It is much easier to get an idea through a coalition than through a Synod. Second, this freedom has meant that a relatively small group of people with reasonably clear ideas have given the coalitions a somewhat eccentric bias.

Eccentricity is not a bad thing. In the middle ages eccentric clerics who found the prince bishops somewhat inhibiting could establish their freedom by securing direct

submission to the papacy, an institution which was conveniently far away. In modern times a similar freedom can be found within ecumenical institutions, a freedom to explore new avenues for Christian action and new questions for Christian thought.

The coalitions are much better at the first than the second. After all, as one leading participant remarked, theology was not why they were formed. Coalition publications are full of news, documentation, updates, reports of actions past and calls for action in the future. Theological reflection is hard to find and sketchy at best. Nor does it seem terribly important. In social ethics it is often easier to agree on what to do than why to do it.

Typically, when the coalitions come to a crossroads, as they have today, the problem is not intellectual but organizational. The projects were invented because there was no readily available ecumenical machinery that included the Catholics. But recently the Conference on Bishops and the Canadian Council have reached an agreement whereby the Catholics will become associate members of the Council. When that happens the rationale for the separate existence of the coalitions disappears. At the moment we are working through a very democratic and very tedious process in an effort to build the coalitions into the new system in a way that makes organizational sense but does not stifle the creative pragmatism which has been the coalitions' great strength. Rational organization is essential to human life, but by itself it is rather dull.

A HANDY GUIDE TO INTER-CHURCH LAND

Coalitions with a Specific Regional Focus:

CAWG	The Canada Asia Working Group. 11 Madison Ave., Toronto, ON M5R 2S2
CCP	The Canada China Programme. 40 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto, ON M4T 1M9

ICCHRLA — The Inter Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America. 40 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto, ON M4T 1M9

ICCAF — The Inter Church Committee on Africa. 129 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, ON M4V 1N5

Coalitions with a Thematic Approach:

GATT-Fly — The name is not an acronym but a pun. GATT is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. GATT-Fly calls itself "A project of the Canadian Churches for global economic justice." 11 Madison Ave., Toronto, ON M5R 2S2

Ten Days — The Inter Church Committee for World Development Education. The nickname "Ten Days" comes from their programmatic concentration on the ten days before Lent. 85 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto, ON M4T 1M8

Share Lent — Inter-Church Campaign Committee. This body produces promotional and liturgical resources on development. Its material appears at the same time as Ten Days, but its emphasis is fund raising, whereas Ten Days is educational. Write to your denominational headquarters.

Project North — Project North specializes in support for native peoples north of the sixtieth parallel. 80 Sackville St., Toronto, ON M5A 3E5

Ploughshares — As the name suggests, this project specializes in peace and disarmament. c/o Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6

TCCR — or the Task Force. The Churches' Task Force on Corporate Responsibility. 129 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, ON M4V 1N5

ICCR — The Inter Church Committee on Refugees. 40 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto, ON M4T 1M9

Funding Agencies:

ICFID	The Inter Church Fund for International Development. 85 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto, ON M4T 1M8
PLURA	provides assistance for self-help projects in Canada. Unlike the others it has no central office.

RESISTANCE TO PROPHETIC PREACHING

Gregory Baum

It is often very difficult to introduce local congregations to the bold social teaching of the contemporary church. Today official church documents on social issues reflect an extended dialogue with church groups in third world countries and with organizations representing minorities in Canada, such as Native people, largely unknown to middle class Canadians. The new church documents are the result of dialogues in which the members of the local congregation have never taken part. It is no wonder that they are often surprised and even shocked by the harsh judgement church documents pronounce on contemporary society.

Many church documents use a language that in the past was found only in radical secular literature. These documents denounce racism, colonialism, imperialism, sexism and other forms of domination. They suggest that religion, including the Christian religion, has been used in the past to legitimate the domination of the weak by the powerful. In contemporary theology the use of religion to legitimate domination is called "sacralism." Theologians argue that in the crucified and risen Christ, God offers to deliver the churches from "sacralism."

The prophetic message is disturbing to many members of the local congregation. If the society we have inherited has these built-in contradictions and injustices, why did we not hear about this before? Our parents and grandparents were good Christians, and they had no difficulty in accepting the inherited ordering of society, including the British Empire, as the work of divine providence. Certainly, there were injustices. But the best among our ancestors were opposed to these injustices and favoured reform. They saw the positive elements in the political structures of empire and colonies, and they recognized the opportunities for the church created by these institutions. In those days the church blessed the society in which it lived.

And if the church was wrong in the past, why should we accept the directives coming from the church in the present?

The answer to this question is that in our generation, because of certain political developments, the Christian churches have been willing to listen to the victims of society. The churches have begun to listen to the colonized, the exploited, the powerless. The churches have begun to recognize the subjugation of women in the inherited culture. And because they have listened, the churches look upon society through the eyes of these victims and focus on the structures of injustice. This is new. In the past, individual Christians or groups of Christians were sometimes in solidarity with the oppressed and recognized the contradictions of society, but then the churches and their leaders paid little attention to them. What has happened on the highest level of church leadership in our day is startlingly new. This is true for the Protestant, Anglican and Catholic Churches. This development is a step forward in the fidelity to Jesus Christ.

Why should we follow the churches in their critical analysis of contemporary society? We must ask ourselves whether listening to the victims and focusing on the causes of their suffering is in keeping with the life of Jesus. Do the gospels authenticate the churches' approach to social issues? This is a spiritual question. Each person must resolve this question for himself or herself.

In this context, allow me to quote a sentence from "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis," a social message (1983) of the Canadian Catholic bishops. "As Christians, we are called to follow Jesus by identifying with the victims of injustice, by analysing the dominant attitudes and structures that cause human suffering, and by actively supporting the poor and the oppressed in their struggles to transform society."

It is very painful to recognize the measure of injustice in one's own society. When discussing these matters in local congregations, our good people are easily overwhelmed by guilt feelings. They feel guilty because they live in an affluent society while the larger sector of humanity suffers from hunger and deprivation. They feel guilty because they belong to the middle class, have benefited from a good education and are supported by the right social connections, while people caught in

poverty and helplessness exist in their own society. And if the analysis offered in church documents is correct, the affluence of upper sector is not unconnected to the deprivation of the lower.

Is feeling guilty the appropriate response? In my opinion, these very guilt feelings prevent our congregations from listening to the message and allowing it to sink in. Guilt feelings are appropriate for evil we have willed and chosen. Here the sense of guilt may lead to repentance, forgiveness, and reparation. But the structures of domination built into the society, the culture and the church we have inherited are not of our own making. We did not choose them. We were brought up in them, they have affected our consciousness, they have given us a distorted picture of the world, they have influenced our dreams and wishes: but we have not created them. While from one point of view, we who belong to the middle class derive benefits from the unjust division of wealth and power in the world, from another point of view we are also victims of the inherited disorder, victims because we have been socialized into a distorted perception of ourselves and our society.

I wish to argue, therefore, that guilt is not the appropriate response to the radical social message of the churches. In my opinion the preacher who introduces the congregation to the suffering caused by imperialism, colonialism, economic domination, racism and sexism must find a rhetoric that does not stir up guilt feelings. What we have to learn is that the social evil produced by our institutions is not necessarily the result of bad will or personal malice. Social evil is generated by discrepancies built into the institutions themselves.

It is my impression that Christians all too easily adopt a "moralizing" understanding of social evil. They too readily blame human selfishness. They easily think that empire and colonialism were harmful because bad people were in charge of decision-making. If the decision-makers had been better people, more loving and more just, then the social evil could have been avoided. But is this correct? Empire and colonialism have built-in structures of domination that are oppressive whether the decision-makers are good or bad people. The present corporate capitalism creates metropolitan centres and hinterlands where the

centres become rich at the expense of the periphery. Whether decision-makers are greedy or generous does make a certain difference, but their vice is not the cause of the hinterland's impoverishment nor can their virtue remedy the social evil. Recent church documents again and again speak of the contradictions built into the present economic order.

Because of this "moralizing" of social evil, Christians find it difficult to accept an institutional analysis. Patriarchy has institutionalized the subjugation of women. Its impact on women is therefore essentially independent of whether men are harsh or loving. Even if all men were saints, patriarchy constitutes a condition of inequality at odds with the divine promises.

The rapid entry into guilt feelings on the part of our congregations, I wish to argue, prevents them from grasping the weight of the social analysis provided by many contemporary church documents. By concentrating on the personal selfishness involved, that is to say the subjective dimension, they easily overlook the objective dimension, the structural cause of social evil. And because the cause of this evil is structural, good will alone is unable to provide the remedy.

While the conversion of the heart is indeed necessary, it is not sufficient for the creation of a just society. What is also needed are institutional change and the restructuring of social processes, and they depend on good will as well as on human inventiveness. We are confronted by massive economic and social problems for which there is no ready answer. Even if the majority of the population were committed to justice, the maldistribution of wealth and power could not immediately be overcome. What is needed are social experiments, alternative models of economic development, reflections on the mistakes of the past, and new, creative political movements.

If guilt is not the appropriate reaction to the massive evil revealed to us in contemporary church documents, what should our reaction be? We are called to mourn. We sorrow that we belong to a society that has these built-in injustices. We grieve that we are part of institutions that bless the existing order. We lament that we who belong to the middle classes actually derive some benefit from the exploitation and dominations taking place

in the world system. While this is not our own personal fault and while we are unable to escape from our social location, we grieve over the gravely unjust institutions we have inherited.

Mourning and lamentation are biblical categories. In the book of Lamentations and the prayer of Jesus over Jerusalem we are taught to weep over the suffering that has come and is coming upon the world. We have tended to neglect prayers of lamentation in our public worship. Today, as response to the cries of the victims and the church's discovery of social sin, mourning takes on a new meaning for us. If the congregation to whom the preacher explains the recent church documents enters into prayers of lamentation rather than guilt feelings, they will grieve, but they will be at peace, they will be able to look at the evidence and engage in social analysis. This mourning is for many the first step toward a critical distance from the social order.

In their pastoral letter on War and Peace (1983), the Catholic bishops of the USA asked the members of their church to influence public opinion in America so that together all Americans would come to sorrow over the decision of 1945 to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese population. This mourning is important not only for spiritual reasons. Without it, the bishops argue, Americans will not have the appropriate consciousness to solve their contemporary political problems without recourse to atomic weapons.

Guilt is the proper response to sin. Guilt feelings are salutary if we have broken a promise. They make us turn to God for forgiveness and provide us with the energy to repair the damage we have wrought. But guilt feelings over a sinful situation which is not of our making and which cannot be remedied by our good will, have problematic consequences. They can paralyse us. Or they can drive us to see everything people do simply as sin and then dispense ourselves from making a careful social analysis of injustice in our society. Or guilt feelings can be so painful that we refuse to listen to the church's prophetic message and blame church leaders for allowing themselves to be influenced by radicals.

Mourning is painful and peaceful at the same time. In mourning we stand with Jesus and the prophets. With them we

recognize the contradictions of society, the heritage of injustice in which we are caught; but with them, we experience the sorrowing against a horizon of hope.

Mourning does not exhaust the reaction of the congregation to the new social teaching. Because we recognize that we have been socialized into unjust structures and that for this reason we have said "yes" in our heart to these unjust structures, more than sorrowing is required. We have to say "no" to these structures. We have to recognize the moment of personal responsibility from which we cannot be dispensed. After the church's social teaching has raised our consciousness in regard to the society to which we belong, we are in a new moral situation. Mourning is the first step, but it is not enough. We have to acknowledge ourselves as responsible agents. We have to do something. The No in our heart must be expressed in some sort of action. Not that we can single-handedly transform society. Nor can we make a single enormous sacrifice, as Jesus did, leaving unprotected the conditions of our own survival. For such a sacrifice, one needs a special call from God.

What we have to do is to find a sphere in which we can act responsibly. How do we find the place where we can get involved? If the preachers who bring to the congregation the church's prophetic message fail to make concrete suggestions about what people could do, they leave the congregation frustrated and anguished. We are called to mourning and to responsibility. If at first we exercise this responsibility in a small project, possibly one organized by church people, we enter more deeply into critical consciousness, we begin to see more clearly the kind of world we belong to, and soon we will be led to participate in wider projects that move against the dominant culture. Is this a waste of time? I do not think so. If it is our call as a people to create an alternative society more in accord with God's justice, then this can only take place through an all-involving social project based on a cultural conversion and a groundswell of good will, an event prepared by convergence of progressive movements and social projects.

It should not be difficult for preachers who bring the prophetic word to the congregation to mention to their listeners the names of church groups and centres that deal with various

social justice issues and which they, the listeners, might join. The issues may be nuclear peace, or acid rain, or Native rights, or public housing, or race relations. Joining one of these organizations could initially mean subscribing to their publication and learning with them. As the Spirit moves people, they will find deeper involvement. Many Christians join secular movements, groups or parties that promote the cultural conversion and the vision of a more just society.

What I conclude from these reflections is that preachers of the church's prophetic message should find a discourse that invites the audience to mourn over the sinful social heritage and express the "no" in their hearts in acts of social involvement. Should the preacher expect the majority of the congregation to respond positively to the prophetic message? I do not think so. We are so much children of our culture, we are so deeply socialized in the inherited structures, that only the few are likely to be touched. We also hear a warning signal that the bold proposals for a society beyond domination will cost us our privileges and our preferred position on this earth. And yet God's call to justice is immovable.

DEAN'S DESK

Donna R. Runnalls

Last spring we received permission from the University administration to advertise three positions: associate professor of comparative religion, assistant professor of Old Testament (a person to pick up some of my teaching load along with some other teaching duties) and assistant professor of New Testament (replacing Professor Tom Wright). The search committees have been very active so that two appointments have now been made.

Professor Arvind Sharma will join our Faculty as an associate professor in comparative religion. Arvind Sharma has been teaching at the University of Sydney, but has often visited Montreal from Australia and taught in the Faculty in the spring of 1984. Many alumni may already know Professor Sharma, others will have read articles by him in ARC. Professor Sharma's permanent presence will add an interesting new dimension to the faculty.

Professor Patricia Kirkpatrick has been appointed assistant professor of Old Testament. Patricia Kirkpatrick has been teaching with us for the last three years on limited term contracts, but joins us as a permanent member of the faculty. We look forward to her continued lively contribution to the life of Religious Studies.

While the search for a person to fill the New Testament position continues, we have also advertised a further appointment in comparative religion. Professor Robert Stevenson has decided to take early retirement at the end of August. We will miss the quiet, calm, and efficient full-time presence of Bob Stevenson. He has been a constant source of advice and help to me, as I know he has to others. However, he has indicated a willingness to do some part-time teaching so we hope he won't be leaving us entirely.

1988 will be the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Faculty. It is my hope that we may have some suitable

celebrations to mark this anniversary, particularly around the Birks Event. If you have suggestions for special events you would like to see take place, please write to me. Perhaps you have ideas for an appropriate theme or speaker who should be invited on that occasion. Let me know. All ideas will be given careful consideration.

COLLEGE REPORTS
MONTREAL DIOCESAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

John McNab
Acting Principal
M.D.T.C.

Our academic year began with the Retreat at Epiphany House in Iberville. The theme was Relationships--with God, with other persons, and in community. This retreat was led by Rev. Grant and Dr. Wendy LeMarquand and myself.

Our Quiet Day at the beginning of the second term was led by Sister Emily Louise of the Sisters of St. Margaret. Sister addressed an issue about which frequent requests for help are made by the members of our community--"the prayer life and spiritual growth of the priest."

THE IN-MINISTRY YEAR

Of our 29 students enrolled at the College, eight entered the In-Ministry Year in September. The field placements of these students are chiefly in Montreal but two of this year's class are placed in Ottawa and one in Brockville. This makes supervision more difficult but it brings welcomed dimension to the life of the College.

WORKSHOPS

In addition to their regular courses in Liturgy and Preaching, Mission, Pastoral Care and Counselling, Education and Leadership, and Anglican Studies, students in the final year attend three workshops.

This year we began (some would say, very significantly) with a Workshop on "The Creative Use of Conflict." Later we had one on "Ministry to the Urban Poor," and at the end of term our "Rural Ministry Workshop" will be held in the Deanery of Brome-Shefford under the leadership of Rev. Murray Henderson. On their own initiative the students have arranged an additional workshop on "Liturgy and Music," and invited Rev. Paul Farthing to lead

it. They also plan a seminar on "Visiting in Hospitals" in which one of their own, along with Rev. Bryan Pearce, Director of the Pastoral Institute, will give the leadership.

PRINCIPAL ON SABBATICAL LEAVE

Principal Anthony Capon went on sabbatical leave in December. He has so far visited Codrington College in Barbados and is presently visiting theological schools in England.

TO THE SUDAN VIA KENYA

Grant and Wendy LeMarquand and their son David left us at the end of the first term to go to serve at St. Paul's United Theological College in Kenya. Their destination is eventually to be in the Sudan but the war there has caused the delay. They are constantly in our prayers and we rejoice in their response to the call to serve overseas.

THANKS

In conclusion, we wish to thank our Teaching Associates and Field Supervisors who render a great service to the College.

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE

William Klempa
Principal

ENROLMENT

Presbyterian College enrolment remains at the high level established several years ago with 29 students registered in the Bachelor of Theology/Master of Divinity programme. Ten persons have already indicated that they intend to enter the college this coming September. We continue to be pleased with the overall quality of the students who are entering the theological programme.

FACULTY

Professor Fred Wisse is on sabbatical during the present academic session. The college is pleased to have as a visiting professor of Christian Education during the 1987 winter term, Dr. Georgine Caldwell, who is on furlough from Taiwan Theological College and the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology. Professor Caldwell is a graduate of Gordon College, Princeton Theological Seminary and Columbia University from which she holds a Doctor of Education degree. She has published a number of articles in Taiwanese journals, both in English and Chinese.

CONTINUING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Thirty-eight ministers are registered for the two programmes of Continuing Theological Education which will be held March 2-6 and March 9 - 13, 1987. The leaders for the first programme are Professor Charles H.H. Scobie, Mount Allison University, Professor Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Calvin Theological Seminary, and Dr. Stanford R. Lucyk, Royal York United Church, Etobicoke. The leaders for the second programme are Professor Gerald T. Sheppard, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, Principal William Klempa, Rev. Glenn Cooper and Rev. Ian Victor, parish

ministers in Ontario and Dr. Harold W. Fehderau, United Bible Societies Regional Translation Co-ordinator.

ANDERSON LECTURES

As a result of its financial involvement along with the McGill Faculty of Religious Studies in the 1986 Calvin Symposium, the college did not appoint an Anderson lecturer for 1987. The 1988 Anderson Lectures will be held on **Wednesday, February 24, 1988,** at 1 p.m., 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. The lecturer will be the distinguished New Testament scholar, Professor Raymond E. Brown of Union Theological Seminary, New York. He is the author of Anchor Bible commentaries on the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John as well as numerous books and articles.

SYMPOSIUM ON PRESBYTERIANISM

Plans are under way for a fall 1988 Symposium on the Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture. This symposium will be sponsored co-jointly with Knox College in Toronto, it will be in two parts, and it is hoped that the papers will be published. More details will be provided as our plans proceed.

THE H. KEITH MARKELL HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

The manuscript of the late Professor H. Keith Markell's history of the college is in the hands of the printer and it is hoped that the volume, including photographs and a foreword, will be on sale shortly.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

The Senate Executive has given its approval to the memorandum of Agreement recently formulated by representatives from our three theological colleges and the McGill Faculty of Religious Studies. When it is approved by all three colleges there will be a formal signing ceremony.

The College is participating in the Association of Theological Schools Self-Study in preparation for an accreditation visit in the winter of 1988.

MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Discussions have begun through the Faculty of Religious Studies with the McGill Faculty of Education with a view to the establishment of a joint Master of Religious Education programme. It is hoped that our final year students will be able to take education courses along with M.R.E. students.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

E.J. Furcha
Acting Principal

United Theological College--like other training centres across North America perhaps--is caught up in the ferment of our times. Questions of global concern, justice and peace clamour for answers even as we seek to address major issues in our own back yard. Heavy demands, placed upon students and staff alike, often leave little time for intensive study, careful reflection and prayer. Many of us wish for an additional year of "preparation," though we are aware that more time in training men and women for the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care may not alleviate the problems. A radical systemic change perhaps is what is called for--the church at large re-defining its mission. Meanwhile we engage in the difficult task of blending academic excellence with integrity in contextual learning. Perhaps some answers are found in the doing of Christ's mission with the resources at our disposal; perhaps, we have to be content with not always knowing the answers.

Pierre Goldberger, Principal, in on a well-earned sabbatical this year. His absence has increased the work of Bonnie Burnett, Director of Studies, as well as that of Chris Ferguson and Ron Coughlin, our adjunct staff. More than ever, we value the friendly efficiency of Heather Hall in the front office. Our few committees, ably managed by students of the College, make my being acting principal a relatively pleasant task. I greatly value the willing cooperation of everyone.

There is a constant flow of visitors from different parts of our Canadian church and from partner churches outside our boundaries. Wednesday Noon Hour Sessions have been enriched by speakers on prominent ethical issues, on third world social and economic problems, on Christian and Jewish spirituality--to name but a few. Some of our students are currently meeting on Tuesday mornings with some of their colleagues from the Presbyterian and Diocesan Colleges for prayer. At regular intervals the tri-college luncheon meetings continue to be an integral part of College life.

The College community looks forward to this year's Convocation to be held on May 10 at 4:00 pm at Queen Mary Road United Church. The Rev. Dr. Garth Legge, retiring General Secretary of the Division of World Outreach, and Professor John Grew, renowned organist and former choir master in several congregations, will be awarded DD degrees (honoris causa). Garth Legge will briefly address Convocation on the subject of Justice and Mission in a Global context while John Grew will give a short recital as part of the convocation proceedings.

Staff and students of the College anticipate a stimulating summer of work and recreation, some exploring new fields as they take up internships in different parts of Canada.

Current indications suggest another large group of incoming students this Fall. We are excited by the prospects and grateful for the opportunity of serving as a theological training centre within the United Church of Canada and in cooperation with our sister colleges. With your continued support we hope to remain at the cutting edge of the theological enterprise in forthright response to the demands of the Gospel and in lively interaction with the context in which we are placed.

IN MEMORIAM

Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi (1921-1986)

In the 1960-61 academic session the then Faculty of Divinity at McGill was enlivened by the presence in its midst of Isma'il R. al-Faruqi who held an appointment as Visiting Fellow of the Faculty. Al-Faruqi was the only non-Christian member of the faculty at the time, the first, in fact, ever to be appointed to its number. al-Faruqi was a Palestinian, a member of a wealthy and well-known family which had lost its property and been driven from its home by the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. In consequence throughout his later life al-Faruqi was a determined and particularly effective spokesman for the Palestinian cause. The family settled in Beirut, and Isma'il al-Faruqi immigrated to the United States where for a number of years he worked in the construction business, eventually establishing himself as a highly successful contractor in the Indianapolis area. Not content with devoting his life to business, he turned to the academic world, took up the study of philosophy, and achieved the Ph.D. degree from the University of Indiana in axiology. In 1958 he was invited by Wilfred Cantwell Smith to join the staff of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill as a research associate. al-Faruqi spent two years with the Institute as a participant in its seminars and during that time laid the plans for, and partially carried out, a major research project on Arabism ('Urubah). Under the stimulus of constant discussions of Islam al-Faruqi became increasingly conscious of not only his Arab but also his Islamic identity.

When al-Faruqi's term in Islamic Studies was finished, Dean Stanley Frost agreed to an appointment for him in the Faculty of Divinity as a kind of experiment in cross-religious communication. al-Faruqi became an energetic and assertive participant in courses and seminars in the Faculty but especially in the monthly seminar conducted by and for members of the teaching staff. He was a man who loved the give and take of vigorous debate, the more rough and tumble the better, and one who was relentless in pursuing a point for all that it might yield. His contributions to discussion may at times have been disquieting to some, especially because of his irrepressibility

and force of expression, but they were always lively. There was no escape from awareness of his presence. al-Faruqi combined great personal warmth and the strong tradition of Arab hospitality with an almost measureless energy. While his opinions did not always find agreement among other members of the faculty, he was liked and respected. For many his appointment opened a new window on the relation between Christianity and the other great religious communities of the world.

Upon leaving McGill, al-Faruqi went to Pakistan at the invitation of his former McGill colleague, Fazl al-Rahman, to work for a time in the Central Institute of Islamic Research in Karachi. The Institue was established by Field Marshal Ayyub Khan, the military ruler of Pakistan, to advise his government on the Islamization of Pakistani society. al-Faruqi approached the work with enthusiasm but soon became disillusioned with events in Pakistan. Feeling that his efforts were ineffective, he returned to the United States with his family.

He then taught for a time in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University where he was responsible for putting into place a plan for an extensive programme in Arabic and Islamic studies for undergraduate students. It proved impossible, however, for the university to appoint the other persons needed to sustain these studies, and al-Faruqi was left to conduct the programme single-handed.

al-Faruqi's last academic appointment and that which gave him the greatest scope was in the Department of Religion at Temple University in Philadelphia. With that post as his base during the 1970s and 80s he emerged as one of the most important leaders of the Muslim community in North America. Through his contacts in the Arab oil producing states he was able to raise very large sums of money for Muslim organizations on this continent, to mount a major programme of Islamic Studies at Temple University, and to finance numbers of Muslim student, especially Arabs, to study with him in Philadelphia. The growing Islamic resurgence movements of the time attracted both his attention and his loyalty. As time passed, he took his own Islamic commitments ever more seriously and came to believe in the eventual conversion of all of North America to Islam. The basis of the soon-to-be conversion he thought to lie in the

appeal of Islam's egalitarianism and sense of social justice to the black population of America.

In the early morning hours of May 7 last year Isma'il al-Faruqi and his American wife, Lois, were brutally murdered in their home in the suburbs of Philadelphia by an assailant wielding a cheap hunting knife. A daughter of the family, who was pregnant, was also attacked and slashed repeatedly about the arms and upper body. She and her unborn child, however, survived the wounds after medical treatment. Another daughter saved herself and her sister's young child by hiding in an upstairs closet until the assailant had left the house. In the days that followed there was a massive outpouring of grief and protest over the deaths by Muslims in North America and across the world. In the press of numerous Muslim countries the murder of the Faruqis and speculations about who may have been responsbile were headline news for a number of weeks.

The police were initially baffled by the crime and tended to see it as an unplanned act of violence perpetrated by an intruder in search of valuables, possibly a drug addict. On January 16, 1987, the Philadelphia police, guided by a tip, questioned a man who was in custody on another charge about the murders. The suspect, a follower of Elijah Muhammad the founder of the so-called Black Muslim movement, readily confessed the killings, saying that he had slain the Faruqis because he believed them to have led the Muslims away from Islam. Isma'il al-Faruqi had been strongly critical of Elijah Muhammad for his teaching that Islam is the religion of the black race, a position that al-Faruqi considered to be racist and in conflict with Islamic principles.

Although Isma'il al-Faruqi's intellectual and religious development in his later years tended to create greater distance between him and his non-Muslim friends, he is remembered by those who knew him at McGill with affection for his warmth and friendship and with admiration for his intellectual drive and stamina. We shall not soon see another like him.

C.J. Adams
Institute of Islamic Studies
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NO MOTION

the sun is rising
the birds are churping . . . everything appears to be in motion
Yet Parmenides denied motion
said: no coming into being, no going out of being
Only BE-ING

but if there be no motion, there can be neither time nor space
by which motion is measured. And if there be neither time nor space
there cannot be any events . . . nothing occurs

the bodhisattva observes this
free from illusion, he abides in eternity
observing the workings of the whole
and refusing yet to renounce his mortality
he permits his soul to splinter into opposites:
playing with pleasure and pain he creates events

but with one eye always fixed on eternity, he drops his persona
fusing good and evil, he recreates the sacred
embracing from afar all parts, his passion flows outward
and behold, from time to time it returns

partaking of divinity, his heart melts in affection
his mind, rock-hard, without a scratch
as the sun retreats, a mild breeze caresses his hair
he drops his fingers to the ground, running them gently
through blades of grass, he observes with a mirror-like eye:
the quiet . . . the stillness . . . without motion
Yet profoundly alive

jim n.d. bardis

ARC is an attempt to provide a means of maintaining the ties that exist between the academic community and its alumni/alumnae. To aid in this continuing theological education, we are publishing two issues per year which are distributed to almost 1000 graduates and friends of the Faculty of Religious Studies of McGill University, its affiliated Colleges (Anglican, Presbyterian and United Church) and the Montreal Institute for Ministry. We are asking for an annual contribution of $5.00 per person in order to offset costs of printing and distribution.

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